

The power to enforce UN Resolutions, by military means if necessary, is a Canadian concept strongly supported by those Canadians who were architects of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Cold War froze the world into attitudes that were as unhealthy as they were unhelpful. While we lamented the overweening influence of the superpowers, so, too often, did we count upon it. The superpowers aren't so super any more, and that means other countries, other peoples, must accept more responsibility than we were able to before. The easy part of being Foreign Minister of Canada is to give solid Canadian advice to others. The harder responsibility is to decide what Canada is going to do, what price we are prepared to pay.

It is tempting to simply be a humanitarian country that tends to the wounded in any conflict. That says Canada should be a global paramedic, concerned only with the symptoms of conflict, not its causes nor its cures. That also assumes we have no views about the values in conflict; that we do not, for example, distinguish between a victim and an aggressor.

All wars seem depressingly similar. There are the bombs and bullets, the propaganda, the suffering of civilians and soldiers. There is always destruction and seldom construction. It is difficult to draw distinctions in such circumstances. But there are differences, and this conflict in the Gulf reflects profound changes in the international system, changes which form a foundation of hope for the world when war is over.

One difference, one change is the principle for which the Members of the United Nations are now at war. In the past, wars were usually fought for reasons of ideology or ambition or pride. Those were wars which failed to sow the seeds of peace. They were wars fought by nations simply for national interests.

In that context, it is important to distinguish what this war in the Gulf is not about.

For example it is not about oil. Certainly, oil was a factor in Saddam's calculous of aggression. And that aggression had an impact on oil prices, sending developing countries and the new democracies of Eastern Europe into a tailspin. And certainly, the prospect of 40 per cent of the world's oil being in the hands of Saddam Hussein can give comfort to no one. So oil is a factor. But oil is not the principle. The forces of 28 nations from every continent of this planet -- some oil exporters, some oil importers -- are not in the Gulf for the sake of a few cents a litre on the price of gasoline.

Nor is this conflict about the defence of democracy. Kuwait has been a semi-feudal state, although it was beginning to