

A final note in this regard is raised by the declarations and subsequent dismissal of US Air force General Michael Dugan, regarding offensive plans for air strikes against Baghdad and the Iraqi leadership. It should surprise no one that the US air force has considered such plans as part of possible retaliatory or military enforcement scenarios, but the fact that they are there does not mean they will inevitably be implemented, as Secretary Cheney's firing of the General should underline.

No one should have enthusiasm for any aspect of the current crisis -- it has already cost many lives and great suffering, and the potential exists for further horrific destruction. The international community did not choose confrontation, but in this new historical era it has for the first time not shrunk from a firm collective stand. There are still many acceptable possibilities for resolution without further loss of life, but not through compromise in the face of military aggression and expansionism which is obviously still an ugly fact of life. This time, firmness without bravado or bluster could permanently make the world a less dangerous place. Canada could not expect to steer the course of events, but as in the past, including the Korean War and its resolution, Canada can play a substantial part. It is a testing time, in every sense.