

At the outset, I would like to offer my congratulations to the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament for the project we are here to help launch tonight. The Centre is one of only three institutions chosen from dozens by the Ford Foundation to study the future of peacekeeping. That in itself is an achievement, and it is testimony to hard work, and the good reputation the Centre has built up since its foundation. It will be no surprise to people in this room that there have been occasions on which the Centre and the Government have disagreed. But that is as it should be. The Centre has helped bring to discussion in Canada an expertise and dispassion which have been all too lacking in the past. It has helped inform Canadians. It has stimulated debate. It has proposed alternatives. And all that is not only desirable, but vital, in a democracy dedicated to delivering a foreign policy that secures Canada's interests in the world.

I have been asked to talk today about peacekeeping and about Canadian foreign policy. I will also talk about the Persian Gulf. Those may sound like three topics. They are not. Those three issues are closely connected.

In recent weeks, there have been attempts to draw distinctions between what Canada is doing in the Gulf and what we have done over the years as peacekeepers, or indeed between our presence there and the fundamental principles of Canadian foreign policy. Those are false distinctions.

Peacekeeping is building international order. What we are doing in the Gulf is seeking to keep and build international order. And that is the most fundamental purpose of Canadian foreign policy.

It has become a truism that, with the Cold War over, a new era of international co-operation has begun, that the old ways are over. To a degree we should not underestimate, what is happening in the Gulf will determine whether or not that truism is true. For what is happening there is a contest between old ways and new.

The old ways are what started this crisis: the idea that strong nations can invade weak ones without provocation; the idea that aggression will be rewarded and that punishment can be avoided; the idea that might is right, that the Charter of the United Nations is to be ignored, not obeyed.