

We recognize as well that our collective security depends upon democracy and respect for human rights.

The Effectiveness of the UN

Mr. President, the Gulf crisis showed that the United Nations has the will and the capacity necessary to repel military aggression.

But can we meet other challenges -- challenges to economic and social development, to human rights and freedoms, and to the environment?

For Canada, the single most important priority is to make the United Nations stronger, more effective and more relevant to today's challenges.

Mr. President, we can begin by taking a fresh look at both the UN Charter and the Security Council.

Few people, for example, realize that seven countries, which have joined the United Nations and are now serving it with distinction, are still identified as "enemy states." We can and should find ways to remove this archaic stigma.

As for the Council itself, we, like others, are looking for effective leadership from the current five members who today are working together in the kind of partnership envisaged in the Charter. Canada believes it is not too soon to start looking ahead to the day when key countries, representing all regions of the globe, are permanent members on the Security Council. In the meantime, our immediate priority is to ensure that the Council, in its present form functions with vision, effectiveness and wisdom.

As a starting point, we must strengthen the Council's capacity to take preventive or anticipatory actions.

An ability to assess impending flash-points, engage the necessary political will at the earliest stage, and act effectively and decisively in timely ways, will increase the lead time in reacting to events, and will reduce the security risk by minimizing the element of surprise. Indeed, the very capacity of the UN system to provide early and effective warning may, itself, discourage recourse to conflict.

I believe we can accomplish this within the existing Charter as long as the Secretary-General can continue to play a strong leadership role. We can be proud -- as can he -- that Javier Perez de Cuellar has achieved a number of remarkable accomplishments despite enormous constraints. In recognizing his achievements, we acknowledge that his office needs stronger