

returning to it. And this is not contrary to peacekeeping. Peacekeeping was invented because the UN did not work, because the great powers did not want it to make peace, only to supervise truces. Those who invented peacekeeping -- Lester Pearson included -- lamented the inability of the world community to make peace. What the Gulf is about is returning to the principle that the best guarantee of peace is the guarantee that aggression will not be accepted.

The United States has returned to the United Nations. So have others. And in so doing, national purposes have been modified, compromises have been made and consensus has been built. What possible incentive would any great power have in returning to that organization in the future, in making compromises, in seeking consensus, if now, after all this, one of the most naked acts of aggression in 50 years is allowed to succeed? And what possible Canadian interests does it serve to have unilateral action rewarded -- whether by Saddam Hussein or other aggressors or others who would respond to aggression?

I do not want to overstate the case. If there is war in the Gulf, it will not be the war to end all wars. But I do not want to understate the case either. There will be no hope to deter aggression, no hope to reverse aggression, no hope to keep peace or to make it co-operatively, if the world fails the UN here.

In his memoirs, Lester Pearson records one of the saddest episodes of international diplomacy in the 1930s, an episode which helped sow the seeds of the World War which was to follow. That episode was the consideration, by the League of Nations, of steps to be taken to counter Italy's unprovoked invasion of Ethiopia, another small country. Mr. Pearson, who was a Canadian representative to the League at that time, describes the heady start, the hopeful consensus at the beginning that sanctions should be applied, that Italy's aggression should be reversed.

He then catalogues the steady erosion of that consensus, the collapse of resolve, as government after government became timid, pre-occupied by narrow self-interest. What was to be the salvation of the League of Nations became its downfall, and the world lurched towards war. He concludes his commentary with the following observations:

For collective security to have real meaning for peace, all members must be prepared and willing to join in precisely the kind of action, economic and military, which is necessary to prevent or defeat aggression. Otherwise, an aggressor has nothing to fear from the international community but pinpricks.