

the same time, the lifting of the omni-present hand of those powers may also encourage or permit new assertiveness, aggressiveness and opportunism by others.

### **The Kuwait Invasion as Test Case**

It will be long debated whether Saddam Hussein's aggression in Kuwait was spurred by a calculation that he had a new opportunity in the wake of the Cold War but, if so, he appears to have made a colossal blunder. The world's response to this aggression is the first test of the post Cold War era and the post Cold War order, and by all historical standards the international community has responded with remarkable skill and unity of purpose. It should be stressed that Kuwait is a test case, not only for the Middle East but also for conflicts everywhere else on the planet, including future relations among some of the Cold War "veteran" countries themselves.

There are arguments made against the claim that this is a test case for world order, and it is worthwhile to address these because they go beyond the current debate to some fundamental attitudes toward international standards and toward order itself.

Some argue that oil, rather than order, has caused the response to this aggression, and that the world cannot hope for consistency or constancy in other crises where the direct interests of the rich and powerful are not so directly engaged. In taking this cynical view, many of yesterday's "idealists" about international relations are becoming today's "realists". They may ultimately be proved right, and they may contribute to the realization of their own prophecy. "Hell no, we won't go, we won't die for Texaco!" is a slick piece of street sloganeering, but it obscures far more than it clarifies. It is a bizarre twist of logic to suggest that because this challenge comes in a strategic region and because there is a perceived threat to the energy jugular of the industrialized and developing worlds, this crisis is in some way disqualified or diminished as a test of international order.

A related argument against the world treating this aggression as a test case is the assertion that a double standard is being applied. There is no question that the international community has not responded similarly in the past, although it is also worth recalling that the aggression in Kuwait is a very unusual kind of aggression: an outright, naked, unprovoked aggression with annexation. No claim was advanced, or could be, of any defensive pretext, or of a temporary intervention to re-