

for a framework, forum and ultimately a regime for security and cooperation in that region. Lessons of various kinds might also be integrated into Central America's own continuing peace processes.

At the same time the world should be looking elsewhere for "success stories" and useful lessons. It is worth recalling that 10-15 years ago, among the potential trouble spots in the world, the "ABC" countries – Argentina, Brazil and Chile – were invariably included as a serious region of tension, military and political competition, and potential conflicts. For a fascinating set of reasons the region has come off the critical list; essentially, some new kind of stability has been achieved. Whether the new stable situation is permanent or not, the reasons deserve analysis for possible application and adaptation elsewhere.

There is no reason even to despair of the potential for new security arrangements in South Asia or the Middle East in this new global climate. Even though the stakes are high and the conditions volatile, the ending of superpower competition clears many complications and many excuses for procrastination.

The countries of the South Asian region themselves launched a major effort toward cooperation in 1985 and, in spite of all the pressures to which it has been subjected, the "South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation" (SAARC) network remains a beacon of hope that can be strengthened.

In the Middle East, if the initiative is maintained and properly managed by the international coalition – with vigorous initiative by those countries in the world community which take the security interests and concerns of Israel seriously – the world could even see a new era of security and cooperation in the Middle East encouraged and advanced by the resolution of the current situation in the Persian Gulf. It is crucial that Saddam Hussein not be allowed to succeed in obscuring his aggression or blunting the international response to it by attempting to create "linkages" where none exist – Israel had nothing whatever to do with his invasion and annexation of his Arab neighbour. Moreover, he is one of the least promising candidates on the entire planet for successful promotion of a wider resolution of the problems in the Middle East.

The "linkages" that the Persian Gulf crisis reveal, however, can no longer be ignored or wished away. It does constitute a linkage that Saddam Hussein could engender dangerous levels of support when he