

eye-witness testimony of cruelty and violence directed against Kuwaiti civilians by the occupying force. An unknown number of Iraqis were killed, the indirect victims of Saddam Hussein's aggression. Hundreds of those Kuwaiti and Iraqi dead were Palestinians and the aggression and invasion set back sharply the prospect of progress on the Palestinian question generally. The fear and antagonism between Israel and the Palestinians has deepened. The natural environment has become a weapon of war.

Our immediate imperative is for Iraq to accept the Security Council Resolutions and withdraw from Kuwait, and to permit the world to begin to repair the terrible damage Saddam Hussein triggered when he attacked Kuwait.

But there is a larger dimension to this conflict. What brought the world together was the principle that aggression will not be tolerated as an exercise of state power. Nations united to defend the rule of law.

That principle is not new. It is the primary principle which infused the Charter of the United Nations, drawn up 46 years ago in San Francisco. It is the principle which lay behind earlier efforts, like the League of Nations, efforts which failed with such tragic consequences. It is the principle which all have accepted in theory, but too many have ignored in practice.

But if that principle is not new, our ability to act upon it is. The liberation of the United Nations from the shackles of the Cold War has removed old excuses. The UN is now free to defend its principles, or to disregard them. In responding as it has to the invasion of Kuwait, the members of the UN chose to defend its principles, not disregard them.

The question now is: will that willingness to make use of the UN extend beyond the crisis in the Gulf?

Canada believes it must. If nations, particularly powerful nations, were to back away from the UN now, that would feed a cynicism that, in the Gulf, the UN was nothing but a "nom de guerre" for countries exercising power in old ways for old reasons. That, in turn, would sharpen antagonism between developed and developing countries, and could imperil the capacity and standing of the UN.

If, however, the unanimity that was invoked to stop aggression can be applied to other issues, the international community will become much stronger. Canada believes that it is important to plan now, so that the UN can be as successful in post-crisis times as it has been in defending the principle of non-aggression.