

problems of this troubled region must be found. We have also made clear our willingness to participate in establishing a peace-keeping presence in the region, should this prove useful, in a post-withdrawal period. These questions will be pursued by the Associate Minister of National Defence in her visit to the region which starts this weekend.

As the year draws to a close, I think that all Canadians can take great pride in the role that their country and their compatriots are playing in this crisis. We have been active diplomatically in the region and elsewhere. We have played a constructive part in the deliberations of the United Nations Security Council, on which our term is now drawing to a close. We have been in the forefront of the programs of economic assistance to countries most severely hurt by the crisis and have chaired a key UN sub-committee charged with the coordination of that assistance. The staff at our Embassies in Kuwait and Baghdad have worked tirelessly, and in the face of some personal danger, to ensure the safety and well-being of Canadians and, indeed, of others, caught in the vortex of this crisis. And many young Canadian men and women remain, of course, in the region today as part of our military contribution to the collective effort to oppose aggression and to make clear that the world we believe in is founded on respect for international law.

Irrespective of the events of the coming weeks, there are lessons we are already learning from the Gulf crisis. These are consistent with Canada's approach to international politics since our beginnings as a country. The first and most important lesson is that the crisis has galvanized the international community to use the United Nations in the way that its founders intended it should function when they drafted the UN Charter at the close of the Second World War.

A second lesson is that we must reinforce our efforts to deal with the risks and problems associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These are issues, among others, to which we must and will be turning our efforts in the months to come.

I know that all Canadians share with us, especially as they reflect during this holiday season upon 1990 and the year to come, the hope that war can be avoided in the resolution of this crisis. Possibilities for peace are not yet exhausted. I personally remain hopeful that Iraq will realize the depth and extent of the world's determination and reverse its annexation of Kuwait, just as it reversed its decision to retain international hostages.