

determined to stay. He shows every sign of trying to out-wait the international community in the hope that events sooner or later will split the United Nations coalition. And given the volatility of world affairs, especially in the Middle East, his gamble might very well work.

In weighing the arguments in favour of using force, it must be conceded that the risks and costs of a war are literally incalculable but that they would certainly be substantial in lives and resources. How risky and how costly would depend on a number of factors. How long would war last? How strongly would the Iraqi forces and the Iraqi people resist? Could war be limited to the Iraq-Kuwait theatre or would it spread? How much damage would the environment sustain? These are fundamentally important questions and unfortunately there are no firm answers to them at this time.

But while we properly concern ourselves with these questions, we must also guard against the tendency to regard waiting as cost-free. The fact is that there would also be incalculable risks and costs to waiting. The destruction of Kuwait continues. An entire nation is being systematically dismantled and destroyed before our very eyes and human rights abuses continue at a pace and on a scale with few precedents in modern times.

Furthermore, the international economy is being damaged, and the poorest people in the Third World are most affected. The funds that are paying for a massive military presence in the Gulf are not available to the fledgling democracies of Eastern Europe, with potentially critical consequences for their futures. And all the while we wait for sanctions to work, the Iraqi defences become increasingly formidable. If it requires hostilities to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, the costs in terms of casualties among the coalition partners, including Canada, probably increase with every day and week that pass.

So while a war is certain to be very costly, waiting to see if sanctions will work is far from cost-free. And, if sanctions failed, there is no guarantee that the coalition would still be united and able to fight even 16 months down the road, let alone 60. Were Saddam Hussein to succeed, the costs to Canadian interests -- the discrediting of the U.N., the distortion of international order, the trampling of human rights and the impact on the world economy -- would be unacceptable. For all these reasons, the government believes that Canada should continue to support the U.N. in taking all possible measures to cause Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

Some allege that the government is simply following the lead of the U.S. Administration on this issue. This is perhaps the most tired and threadbare accusation of all. Because, as Prime Minister Pearson wrote derisively in his memoirs, "a sure way to get applause and support at home is to exploit [Canadians'] anxieties and exaggerate [their] suspicions over U.S. power and policies."

It should not be surprising or offensive that the views of free nations often coincide. In fact, in this case the views of all of the leading western nations, -- led by