

In bringing this debate to a close, I want to restate the key issues. Mature and informed judgement of Canada's interests must be the basis of our decision. Wishful thinking that evil will go away if we want it to badly enough has no place in serious decision making.

The first interest we have at stake is simple morality. A terrible wrong is being perpetrated in Kuwait by Saddam Hussein. The world community has a moral obligation to step in and stop it. Canada shares in this obligation. And Canada cannot and will not leave others to defend its principles. We never have and we never will.

The second interest we have in this conflict is the construction and maintenance of a system of international peace and security that has the capacity to deter aggression and where necessary, to stop it. For decades, Canada has sought an effective system of international law and order based on the principle of collective security. With the exception of Korea, we have been stymied in that effort by ideological confrontation -- by the Cold War -- which paralysed the U.N. Security Council and which made collective security impossible. Collective security is not an alien objective. It is very much in the best of Canadian traditions.

As Geoffrey Pearson said recently in speaking of the urgent crisis in the context of Canadian traditions: "My father was not a pacifist. His policy was based above all on the U.N.'s importance to preserving peace. But once war broke out, he felt that U.N. member countries should use military intervention to oppose an aggressor." That is a Canadian article of faith, learned at the cost of countless lives -- many of them Canadian -- in two world wars and Korea.

But some Canadians, and some Members of this House, have asked why now, why here. Some argue that because the U.N. did not always suppress aggression in the past, it should not do so now. But when action was not taken in the past, when nations walked away from the U.N., the organization was undermined. Its security role atrophied. And conflict followed conflict. That is not an argument; that is history.

To say that because the U.N. did not work in the past, it should not be used in the present is to condemn it to perpetual irrelevance. If, on January 15th, the United Nations coalition had fragmented or had abdicated its responsibilities, I do not believe it inaccurate to say that the U.N. would have been discredited for decades to come, and quite possibly forever. If the U.N. had backed away, then why would any aggressor bother in the future with an international body that lacked the will and strength to follow through on its own decisions? Canada needs a U.N. that can both talk and act. It is a vital national interest. The best hope we have for a safer world is to give the U.N. the support it needs to work.