

Today we are on the eve of an important Security Council vote. I think it right for Parliament to consider the implications of the crisis that prompts this vote. I would like to take this opportunity to set out the thinking of the Government on the issue before us.

This vote comes near the end of Canada's two-year term on the Security Council. It is our fifth such term, a record for non-permanent members.

That is an appropriate record, because no other country, I dare say, has been as loyal a supporter of the ideals of this world organization, in whose founding Canada participated actively and creatively.

When we look for a noble and far-sighted vision for managing world affairs, in what will be a difficult decade and century beyond, we can hardly do better than to draw on the vision of the UN Charter.

The great sadness of our times has been that the Charter was a dead letter for 40 years, because of the paralysis of the Cold War.

The Cold War is over. I was in Moscow the week before last, and I found an extraordinarily different country from the austere monolith I had visited five short years ago. Sadly, their problems are enormous, but they have a country and a leadership and a people with great reserves of strength, and nations like Canada will -- and must -- help them where we can.

The tremors of the Gorbachev reforms have allowed profound change through Eastern and Central Europe that not only helped end the Cold War, but set the stage for the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) Summit in Paris last week. In some respects, that Summit marked the end of the Second World War.

The Paris Summit -- and there I would like to share with you the words of Vaclav Havel -- playwright, prisoner, President. He said: "Participating in this Summit is the pre-eminent moment in my life" -- because it brought to pass the goals of freedom and comity he had spent all his days pursuing. The Paris Summit should have been an unqualified celebration of the new possibilities before us, of our shared determination to build a new European common home to be secure from Vladivostok to Vienna to Vancouver, as Eduard Shevardnadze has said. It should have been a celebration of the growing willingness to use the United Nations in the way it had been intended, to bring peace and greater security to the world.

But the celebration in Paris was muted. Because we all understand that a terrible breach of faith and of law and of order has happened: an act of war by Iraq, which imposes on the