

And outside that region, devastation and deprivation would continue and accelerate if the world delayed. I am not talking about developed countries like Canada. I am talking about developing countries whose very existence as functioning societies is at stake. Terrible poverty is being made more and more unbearable. Governments in Africa are going broke, lurching towards disintegration. Inflation rates are doubling and tripling, deficits are ballooning, basic human needs are not being met. Governments in Africa have asked Canada if they can convert money meant for education to funds they can use to buy basic goods. Their development as civilized societies is in jeopardy. And in Eastern Europe, the dramatic escalation in oil prices has become the singular reason why the progress they have made thus far -- and the progress that must be made in the future -- is in jeopardy. Czechoslovakian Finance Minister Klaus told me in November that this crisis had gutted their economic reform plan and cost his country billions. Saddam Hussein does not simply destabilize the Gulf. He destabilizes Eastern Europe and Africa and Asia and Latin America.

Rather than delay, some say deal. Let Saddam claim other victories to justify his aggression. But that would be a reward for aggression, an invitation to other conflicts, other tyrants. It would be absurd to give a bank robber the money he has stolen or to take that money back and give him gold in return. Law and order would crumble if societies worked that way. It is no different internationally.

At this very moment, plans proposed by France and others are being discussed in New York. Although there are important details to clarify, those plans have positive elements. They are very similar to a proposal put by the Prime Minister to the Secretary-General before he went to Baghdad. That proposal -- a Canadian proposal -- included the following elements:

- an international guarantee of all borders in the Gulf area from attack;
- the initiation of a process to settle Iraq's differences with Kuwait;
- the departure from Saudi Arabia of all forces from outside the region and the creation of a peacekeeping force drawn primarily from the Arab States;
- a firm commitment in principle to a process to resolve other issues in the Middle East.

Those provisions are at the centre of the proposals now being discussed. What is missing now -- what has always been