

It could have been different. In the past, it often has. We are used to aggression being met either with a blind eye or with blind fury. But that did not happen here. Countries did not appease, and countries did not rush to arms. After August 2nd, what happened was an extraordinary period of persistent, insistent diplomacy -- the most widespread and intense in modern history -- a time when countries the world over, from every continent, of every faith and every ideology, sought to reverse aggression peacefully.

Canada played a proud part in that effort. We co-sponsored 10 of the 12 Security Council Resolutions. We worked ceaselessly to ensure that whatever action was taken by the world proceeded under UN auspices. Saddam Hussein had challenged international order. We wanted that challenge to be met in a way which built order, not corroded it. We wanted that challenge to be met by measures authorized by the only universal organization the world has at its disposal to uphold that order -- the United Nations.

That effort succeeded, but it might not have. Early on, President Bush was under pressure to launch a unilateral surgical strike in response to Saddam's aggression. The Prime Minister met with the President at Kennebunkport and said that would be a course which was neither wise nor acceptable. The U.S. did not launch that strike. The U.S. turned to the United Nations.

Later on, at the United Nations, the view was expressed that UN authorization was not needed for force to be used. Once again, our Ambassador to the United Nations argued forcefully that action had to be authorized by the UN -- not because we saw the UN as an end in itself, but because we saw the UN and its Charter as the means to the end we sought -- international order and the maintenance of international law.

And here too, our views -- shared, of course, by others -- prevailed. Every step, every action, undertaken by the world community to convince Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait proceeded under the explicit and clear authority of the United Nations Security Council.

In November, as the hope for peace began to fade, I met with Presidents Ozal and Mubarak and with King Hussein and Prime Minister Shamir, seeking their views. Based on those discussions, the Prime Minister wrote to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, on the eve of his last, fateful mission to Baghdad. That letter contained the basic elements of a peace package we thought might work: complete Iraqi withdrawal; a process for settling outstanding differences peacefully between Iraq and Kuwait; a guarantee of all borders from attack; and an undertaking to look at other problems which