

meaningless and societies themselves cease to be peaceful for anyone. And so, with the sorry history of the League of Nations behind them, with the awful consequences of appeasement to guide them, they crafted a Charter which would give the world the right and the capacity to deter aggression and to reverse it, by force if necessary, when it occurred.

Those purposes permeate the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. But those purposes went unfulfilled for decades because a new war intervened -- the Cold War -- a conflict which turned the UN into a mere shadow of its intended force. And so we had wars -- dozens of them -- which went undeterred and unpunished. Conflicts which flourished because the UN was frozen.

That Cold War is over. And with the end of that war, old excuses have disappeared and new opportunities have emerged. An opportunity now exists to make the United Nations united not simply in name but in fact.

That has been our accomplishment thus far. The Security Council of the United Nations has worked as its architects had intended. The Charter of the United Nations has been acted upon. The process of seeking adherence to resolutions has been followed.

And so, we are approaching the moment where our words may have to become deeds. It is a difficult moment. It would be easy now to back away, to act not as we have resolved but rather to retreat from our principles and our promises. After all, some say, it is only Kuwait, a small country. Or, some say, let us retreat part way and create a new deadline, perhaps months from now. Or, some say, let us go halfway and give Mr. Hussein some of what he says he wants. After all, some say, no principle, no law or Charter or United Nations are worth the risk of war.

These are troubling arguments because they appeal to our natural desire to avoid bloodshed and war. But to those who would have us appease, there are other troubling arguments, worrisome questions.

Of what value would the United Nations be if we now said we were not serious? After 12 resolutions -- clear and unequivocal -- do we say that, after all, we were just bluffing? Do we say to future aggressors that all they need do is hunker down and wait us out, that we are hollow in our principles and words? Does Canada, not a great power in the scheme of things, say that Kuwait, also not a great power, is expendable? Do we say there are rewards for the ruthless, prizes for the powerful? Do we attempt to justify a wrong by saying that we accepted wrongs in the past and did not act then? Do we say we can do no