

rule of law? There are differences of opinion on this very important question in this House. I respect the views of all members as they consider it.

The Government of Canada, and I as Prime Minister, have reflected carefully on this crisis. Our entire policy has been designed to achieve a peaceful solution to it. If, however, Saddam Hussein continues to reject the will of the United Nations, Canada will join with the United Nations in expelling him from Kuwait by force.

Kuwait may seem a remote place geographically, and culturally, but so did Manchuria in 1931, Abyssinia in 1935 and Czechoslovakia in 1938. While, in the '30s, these were little known places, in the '90s they figure in our history books as the stepping stones to World War II. In each case what has been described by a leading historian as "a profound pacifism, an almost doctrinaire insistence on peace regardless of the circumstances," led the League of Nations to turn a blind eye to aggression -- and the world paid a price in millions of avoidable deaths in World War II.

What is happening in Kuwait has direct and substantial effects on Canada's interests. As a country with a comparatively small population, with two superpowers as neighbours, and with our own limited military capacity, Canada's most basic interest lies in the preservation of international law and order.

The United Nations and its Charter are essential to the rule of law and to the respect of the integrity of small countries by larger neighbours. The architects of the United Nations were determined "to make certain", as Lester Pearson wrote in 1945, "that never again should an aggressor be permitted to strike down one nation after another before the peace-loving nations of the world organize and take concerted action against it."

The fundamental purpose of the United Nations, as proclaimed in Article 1 of its Charter, is "to maintain international peace and security" by taking "effective, collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace..." But with the exception of Korea, the U.N. has been prevented by the Cold War from either suppressing acts of aggression or preventing them, as the Suez crisis, Vietnam, Afghanistan and the Arab-Israeli wars, among dozens of other conflicts, make clear. With the extraordinary unanimity that has accompanied the relaxation of East-West tensions, the authority vested in the U.N. by its architects -- including Prime Ministers King, St. Laurent and Pearson -- can be exercised by our generation to preserve international law and order.

Saddam Hussein's challenge raises the stakes for the U.N. Because, while this crisis provides an opportunity for the U.N. to play the role Canada has always wanted it to play, regrettably it also provides an occasion for the U.N. to fail to do so. And if the U.N. were to fail to do so, a large part of the principles and objectives and efforts of 45 years of Canadian diplomacy would have been for nothing.