

Canadians are a peaceable people. We do not fight wars at will. But we are at war now. No Canadian is happy with what is now happening. War -- any war -- is a failure of diplomacy. Wars destroy; they do not build. They bring sacrifice and suffering to those called upon to fight and to those innocent civilians who are caught in conflict. War should never be a point of pride. However, some wars can be a point of principle. This is one of those wars.

I want to talk today about that principle. And in so doing, I want to talk about the choices the world has made, the consequences which come from those choices, and the obligations we now bear as Canadians to ensure that this war helps build a durable peace.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, he threw a gauntlet down to the world. The world then was faced with hard choices. One choice was to do nothing, as so often in the past, to allow aggression to proceed unopposed and in so doing to confirm the arithmetic of aggression, the age-old power of the strong over the weak. The world rejected that choice.

There was a second choice that could have been made. And that would have been for individual countries to respond immediately, unilaterally and with force. That action might have reversed Saddam's aggression. But in rejecting diplomacy and ignoring the United Nations, it would have done nothing to reinforce institutions of international order or the use of diplomacy as an alternative to war. The world rejected that choice as well.

The world made a third choice, an historic choice, a choice it had not made for 40 years. That choice was to work within the United Nations. That choice was to give peace a chance.

In the fog and frenzy of war, we must not lose sight of the painstaking diplomacy that was tried and failed. After Iraq's attack on August 2, there was a long pause for peace, a pause designed to give diplomacy a chance. Twelve resolutions were passed by the United Nations Security Council, almost all without dissent. Comprehensive and mandatory sanctions were applied universally to a degree never seen before. Dozens of countries were involved in the most intense period of diplomacy mounted in modern history to avert conflict.

Those facts demonstrate the absolute preference of the world to avoid this conflict. War was not the first choice, but the last.

That period of intense diplomacy -- a period lasting almost half a year -- bore no fruit. Every door the world