

mobilization and deployment of the military might of the superpower, or become wary when they hear the bellicose rhetoric that accompanied it from many quarters in the US. There are mixed feelings of relief, guilt, resentment and suspicion when we are all suddenly revealed to be so dependent on one country as the world's chief policeman, especially when its own record of intervention is far from unblemished.

But for several reasons it would be self-indulgent and even dangerous for the world to be sidetracked in this crisis by hand-wringing or petulance about the disproportionate American role, or to be overly rattled by the heady rhetoric from some Americans. Given Iraq's blatant aggression and its imminent potential for more (e.g. against Saudi Arabia) the international community must be thankful that there was a country ready, willing and able to muster dissuasive armed force in a world that has no police force, but obviously does have its heavily-armed and dangerous criminals.

With one possible and brief exception, American actions since August 2 have been in full conformity with the letter and spirit of international law, the UN Charter and the unprecedented series of Security Council resolutions that are binding on all member-nations. The possible exception was in Washington's declaration on August 12 that it would enforce a naval blockade to ensure the efficacy of sanctions, prior to the passage of Resolution 665 on August 25 which authorized such actions.

Apart from the indispensability of America's ready power, and its careful observance of legal norms in this case, however, there is a much larger reason to welcome, reinforce, and complement the American effort. This crisis and President Bush's response have the potential to mark a dramatic turning-point in America's whole post-War approach to international order. Where his predecessors have tended to ignore, discount, circumvent or even attack the United Nations, this President has made a point of carefully working with and through the world body, and to explain to his fellow-citizens that he is doing so.

The cynical explanation for this departure is that by stressing the collective umbrella for the response, Mr. Bush seeks simply to gain legitimacy at home and abroad for risky