

UNB Brunswickan

Perspectives: First Principles in a Post Cold-War World

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"International cooperation for peace is the most important aspect of national policy." - [Lester B. Pearson](#), 1972

The Persian Gulf crisis presents Canadians with no less than a crucial challenge to our historical role as international peace-keeper.

The dilemma is straightforward: should we or should we not allocate significant Canadian military resources to the Persian Gulf? Should we risk Canadian lives, and what little remains of our international reputation as a peace-keeping middle power, by placing the Canadian military in a war zone?

This issue is as tangled as they come, with pros and cons and rights and wrongs on all sides, but when everything is said and done, I believe that we are presented with a clear choice: either support the emerging new international order by military support of the United Nations resolutions, or be profoundly embarrassed on the world stage by failing to do so.

The question is particularly difficult because of the underlying dynamics. Every side seems to have a valid point.

For example, it is true that Kuwait has been 'slant-drilling' from an oil field that lies under both Iraq and Kuwait. It is true that Kuwait has been overproducing above OPEC's quota for some time, at significant cost to the Iraqi economy, and that Iraq has tried and exhausted numerous avenues in an attempt to peacefully resolve the issue within the Arab world, within OPEC, and in international forums.

It is true that for eight years Iraq was both the Western and Soviet sponsored good-guy in its conflict with Iran, protecting the other Gulf states from Iranian designs to export their revolution at enormous personal and economic cost to Iraq. It is also true that Iraq deserves better access to the Persian Gulf.

On the other hand, it is also true that Saddam Hussein is the quintessential bad guy, a dictator, killing political dissenters on the slightest provocation, killing thousands of his own citizens by poison gas, and with a well-declared intention to obtain a nuclear capability and solve the Israeli question in a particularly final and ugly way.

On the other hand, it is also true that after twenty-three years it is time that Israel either annexed or returned the "occupied territories", preferably the latter. Israel has ignored

all U.N. resolutions to this effect, and the US. has blocked all attempts at more substantial Security Council resolutions with sanctions and other penalties for failure to comply.

But on yet another hand, its is doubtful that Yasser Arafat can control the more radical elements of the PLO, despite their recent formal renouncements of terrorism. On the other hand... But you get the idea. The situation is nothing if not complex.

The essential point, however, remains profoundly simple: we are witnessing the emergence of a new world order that is based fundamentally on one universally acknowledged and non-negotiable cornerstone: military aggression is absolutely unacceptable, regardless of the circumstances.

This is a profound victory for all the innocent victims of war since time immemorial. It is a victory for the people, a people who have finally found the will and the way to say "No more", and to make it stick.

Canada must stand four-square behind this new world view. It may be tempting to avoid any firm resolution and speak instead of "concentrating our efforts on the diplomatic side and centering our efforts on the development of an United Nations solution." These things we must do, because they are in the Canadian tradition. But it would be an egregious error to view the allocation of Canadian military resources in the Persian Gulf as an aggressive alignment.

We must provide tangible support for the United Nations resolution that Iraq's military aggression is unacceptable in the modern world, and because we have the capability, it would be craven to do any less than back up our convictions with our F- 18's.

As the [preeminent peace-keeping nation](#) of the planet, it is the right thing to do.

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