



World Community or World Chaos?

Letter to the editor, Ottawa Citizen, January 26, 2004

Re: Canada needs better friends than the UN, Jan 24. The Citizen's proposal that Canada not put the UN at the forefront of our national interest but join the United States and the "coalition of the willing" is not only opposed by a clear majority of Canadians but shows a complete disregard of recent history.

The attack on Iraq last March both failed to receive the support of the UN Security Council and was opposed by the overwhelming majority of the world's people. Not only did the attack lack international legitimacy but the main justification for the United States pre-emptive attack, Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction, now appears groundless. The former top US weapons inspector in Iraq, David Kay, said recently that he "believes Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction before the invasion."

The Citizen should also note that the same UN which a few months ago was called "irrelevant" is today being courted by the United States for a way out of its present difficulties. With the Iraq insurgency continuing, casualties mounting, the US deficit climbing to \$500 billion, and an American election approaching, the Bush administration is going cap in hand to Secretary General Kofi Annan to request the UN to assume a governing role in Iraq pending the establishment of Iraqi self government.

The Secretary General of the UN has correctly stated that if the will of the international community is ignored, and each nation is permitted to go its own way in settling international differences, it will be a return to the law of the jungle. Today no nation, not even the most powerful, possesses the means to provide for its own security without the support of the world community, a lesson the US will learn at its peril.

Yes, the United Nations has its shortcomings and is a very much a less effective organization than what we would all like. But it is important to remember that the UN is a reflection of the world as it is, not what we would like it to be. A much improved and strengthened international organization requires greater support by its member nations, not one-sided criticism and requests for UN support only when it may serve a nation's narrow self interest. The alternative to a world community working together to solve the world's problems will be a world in chaos and anarchy, leading ultimately to the destruction of human civilization.

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