

Feb. 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

The coalition remains strong and united.

Note: Press Secretary Fitzwater read this statement to reporters at 12:48 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. The

statement referred to President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Persian Gulf Conflict *February 23, 1991*

CENTCOM reports that they have detected no military activity which would indicate any withdrawal of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Similarly, there has been no communication between Iraq and the United Nations that would suggest a willingness to withdraw under the conditions of the coalition plan. Iraq continues its scorched earth policy in Kuwait, setting fire to oil facilities. It's a continuing outrage that Saddam Hussein is still intent upon destroying Kuwait and its people, still intent upon destroying the environment of the Gulf, and still intent upon inflicting the most brutal kind of rule on his own population, yet appears to have no intention of complying with the U.N. resolutions. Indeed, his only response at noon was to launch another Scud missile attack on Israel.

The coalition forces have no alternative but to continue to prosecute the war.

As we indicated last night, the withdrawal proposal the Soviets discussed with Tariq Aziz in Moscow was unacceptable because it did not constitute an unequivocal commitment to an immediate and unconditional withdrawal. Thus, the Iraqi approval of the Soviet proposal is without effect.

President Bush today spoke with Prime

Minister Kaifu of Japan, President Ozal of Turkey, and President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. The phone call from President Gorbachev occurred at 11:15 a.m. and lasted for approximately 28 minutes. President Gorbachev informed the President that he asked for a U.N. review of his proposal and said that he had talked to Prime Minister Major and President Mitterrand about his plan. Both of the allied leaders indicated full support for the coalition withdrawal plan. President Bush thanked President Gorbachev for his extensive efforts and reflected our general disappointment that Saddam Hussein has chosen not to respond positively.

Note: The statement referred to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM); President Saddam Hussein and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz of Iraq; Prime Minister Toshiki of Japan; President Turgut Ozal of Turkey; President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union; Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; and President Francois Mitterrand of France. The statement also referred to an allied peace plan that required Iraq to begin withdrawing its forces from Kuwait by noon, e.s.t.

Statement on the Persian Gulf Conflict *February 23, 1991*

We regret that Saddam Hussein took no action before the noon deadline to comply with the United Nations resolutions. We remain determined to fulfill the U.N. reso-

lutions. Military action continues on schedule and according to plan.

Note: The statement referred to President

Saddam Hussein of Iraq and an allied peace plan that required Iraq to begin withdrawing its forces from Kuwait by noon, e.s.t.

Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Ground Action in the Persian Gulf

February 23, 1991

Good evening. Yesterday, after conferring with my senior national security advisers, and following extensive consultations with our coalition partners, Saddam Hussein was given one last chance—set forth in very explicit terms—to do what he should have done more than 6 months ago: withdraw from Kuwait without condition or further delay, and comply fully with the resolutions passed by the United Nations Security Council.

Regrettably, the noon deadline passed without the agreement of the Government of Iraq to meet demands of United Nations Security Council Resolution 660, as set forth in the specific terms spelled out by the coalition to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait. To the contrary, what we have seen is a redoubling of Saddam Hussein's efforts to destroy completely Kuwait and its people.

I have therefore directed General Norman Schwarzkopf, in conjunction with coalition forces, to use all forces available including ground forces to eject the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Once again, this was a deci-

sion made only after extensive consultations within our coalition partnership.

The liberation of Kuwait has now entered a final phase. I have complete confidence in the ability of the coalition forces swiftly and decisively to accomplish their mission.

Tonight, as this coalition of countries seeks to do that which is right and just, I ask only that all of you stop what you are doing and say a prayer for all the coalition forces, and especially for our men and women in uniform who this very moment are risking their lives for their country and for all of us.

May God bless and protect each and every one of them. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.

Note: President Bush spoke at 10 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his address, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf. The address was broadcast live on nationwide radio and television.

Remarks on the Observance of National Afro-American (Black) History Month

February 25, 1991

Thank you very much. It is a great, great pleasure for Barbara and me to welcome you all to the White House. It's good to see so many friends here today, including so many members of our administration: our Vice President, of course; and Lou Sullivan; Jack Kemp; Lynn Martin; of course, the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs, General Powell; Connie Newman; Art Fletcher; and

so many more. I salute our red-coated special guests. You bring honor to this place, and we're delighted to have you here.

I know that the issue on all of our minds is the war in the Gulf. And I'm glad to report, after consultation a few minutes ago with Chairman Powell, General Powell, that the news is good. Coalition air and ground forces are advancing on their objectives.