

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Cornelio Sommaruga of the International Committee of the Red Cross

March 8, 1991

The President. I might take this opportunity just to salute the International Red Cross. And from the very beginning, it seemed to the Americans that you tried very hard to do what was compassionate and right, and you ran into some obstacles, but you stayed with it. And I think we owe you a vote of gratitude. And I want to assure you of our continuing interest and support, and of course, we're very proud of the new president of the American Red Cross because Elizabeth Dole being there, I think, is more than a symbol—it shows a part of the commitment that we all feel to the work of the Red Cross.

So, it gives me a chance anyway to welcome you back and to say thank you.

Mr. Sommaruga. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am extremely glad to be here today; also to express appreciation for the excellent cooperation we were able to have in the field with the military, with the commands of the coalition forces, in order to carry out our mandate, which is

a mandate given us by the Geneva convention. And we will continue to carry out this mandate. And I think that what happened in the Gulf will also be for us all a sort of lesson on how one has to proceed in the implementation of internationally maintained law and possibly also in the enlargement of it.

Q. Mr. President, is there any indication that the POW's were mistreated?

The President. I'll not take any questions here. I am concerned about reports that some of them were clapped on the ears and it affected their hearing. But I don't know the details yet on all of that.

Note: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole, president of the American Red Cross. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Memorandum on the Return of Desert Shield/Desert Storm Participants to Federal Civilian Employment

March 8, 1991

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Return of Desert Shield/Desert Storm Participants to Federal Civilian Employment

Now that our Armed Forces and their Coalition partners have achieved success in meeting our military objectives in the Gulf region, we can look forward to the return of the valiant men and women who participated in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Many of these participants are members of the Reserve Forces and the Air and Army National Guard who left their regular civil-

ian employment to join in this national effort, with great disruption to their families and their normal pursuits. In recognition of the sacrifices they have made, it is essential that their civilian employers do everything possible to ease their return to civilian life.

The Federal Government has always been a model for other employers in the protections and benefits provided for those who serve, and I am committed to ensuring that we continue to set an example for the Nation in this regard. Accordingly, I have determined that the following actions by executive departments and agencies are appropriate:

- Military reservists and members of the Air and Army National Guard who are returning to their Federal civilian employment should be restored to the same jobs they left, and the legal flexibility of placement in equivalent jobs should be used only when absolutely necessary.
- Desert Shield/Desert Storm participants who are returning to their Federal civilian employment should be afforded 5 days of excused absence from their duties, without charge to leave.
- Federal employees who have served in the Armed Forces during this emergency and who qualify for retirement may do so without returning to their civilian employment under 5 U.S.C. 8332(g).

The Office of Personnel Management will be issuing guidance on these matters, and I urge the heads of executive departments and agencies to take all necessary action to provide for prompt implementation.

As our regular troops return, we can ex-

pect many to be seeking civilian employment in the future. I am directing the Office of Personnel Management to take such actions as are appropriate, in cooperation with executive departments and agencies, to ensure that Federal civilian employment opportunities are made available to the greatest extent possible to these veterans, particularly those who have become disabled as a result of their military service. This will assist not only the veterans, but also the Federal Government, which will be able to benefit from their skills and abilities.

Finally, we must all recognize the many contributions that have been made to our successful military operations by Federal civilian employees, both in the Department of Defense and elsewhere in the Government. I urge the heads of executive departments and agencies to recognize these accomplishments and to use fully the Federal employee incentive awards program for this purpose.

GEORGE BUSH

Message to the Congress on the Termination of the Sanctions Imposed With Respect to Kuwait

March 8, 1991

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby provide notice, consistent with section 586C(c)(2) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1991 (Public Law 101-513), of my intention to terminate, in whole or in part, no sooner than 15 days

after the date of this notice, the sanctions imposed with respect to Kuwait pursuant to Executive Order Nos. 12723 and 12725.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
March 8, 1991.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Telecommunications Trade Talks With the European Community and Korea

March 8, 1991

Dear 111111 :

Pursuant to section 1376(c)(2)(B) of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 ("the Act") (Public Law 100-418; 102

Stat. 1221), I am hereby transmitting my report that finds that substantial progress has been made in telecommunications trade talks conducted under section 1375 of the