

Mar. 14 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

cause we're here on the American continent side of the ocean, so it's natural that wasn't the main thing that you were concerned about, I did want you to know that we did talk about Europe, too. We have problems there, too.

Well, anyway, thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you very much for your presence in our midst. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen. We will be meeting again soon, but somewhere else.

President Bush. Mr. President, with your permission—she asked both, and I didn't pop in there. But on Cyprus, again, the U.N. mandate is the thing, and the mandate of the Secretary-General. Those are the key words in terms of the resolution of the Cyprus question in terms of U.S. policy. And that's what we will be backing, is the Secretary-General's mandate, hoping that that will lead to peace in Cyprus.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President's 74th news conference began at 4:30 p.m. in the Bougainvillier Room at the Hotel Meridien. President Mitterrand spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In the news conference, the following persons were referred to: Deputy Aime Cesaire, former President of the Regional Council of Martinique; Secretary of State James A. Baker III; Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization; President Hafiz al-Assad of Syria; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel; and Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid, Moslem religious leader and Hizballah leader who was abducted by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon in 1989. Parts of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete. Following the news conference, President Bush traveled to Bermuda.

Nomination of William G. Curran, Jr., To Be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

March 15, 1991

The President today announced his intention to nominate William G. Curran, Jr., of New York, to be U.S. Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the Department of Treasury in Washington, DC.

Currently he is a member of the council and chairman of the European working party for FIMBRA (Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association) and a special adviser to the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities in London, Eng-

land. From 1988 to 1990, Mr. Curran served as a private financial consultant in London, England. Prior to this he served as chairman of First Chicago Ltd. in London, England, 1970–1988.

Mr. Curran graduated from Yale University (B.A., 1951) and the University of Southern California, London program (M.A., 1979). He was born June 10, 1927, in New York, NY. Mr. Curran served in the U.S. Marine Corps, 1951–1953. Mr. Curran is married, has two children, and resides in London, England.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom in Hamilton, Bermuda

March 16, 1991

The Prime Minister. We might start now if everyone is content. We have very little

time, I'm afraid, only about 15 or so minutes. So we'll be——

Q. I have a question, I have a question.
[Laughter]

The Prime Minister. Well, I'll see if I can flush you later.

We have about 15 minutes, so we'll be as swift as we can. Can I just say by way of introduction, we've had some extremely useful discussions this morning covering a very wide area. I think they have come at a very appropriate time at the end of the Gulf conflict. There was a great deal to discuss, a great deal to learn from the conflict. And it also gave me the opportunity of expressing to the President the tremendous admiration that is felt in the United Kingdom and elsewhere for the remarkable way in which he led this particular enterprise.

Amongst the matters we were able to discuss this morning were, of course, the aftermath of the Gulf, the general position of security in the Middle East, the present circumstances in the Soviet Union, the GATT rounds, the developing situation in South Africa, arms control, and an interim report on Secretary Baker's talks in the Soviet Union.

So, it was a fairly wide agenda. But I won't elaborate on it now. I'll invite the President to say a few words, and then perhaps we can take your questions.

The President. Mr. Prime Minister, all I want to do is thank you for the hospitality, thank the Governor General of Bermuda and, of course, the Premier, and say we've enjoyed it. And I agree with you that these talks are very, very helpful. And I think it's fair to say that we are determined now to go forward and each country try to be a catalyst for peace, building on our success in the Gulf.

And so, thank you, sir, and I'm just delighted to be with you once again.

The Prime Minister. Right. Shall we take some questions then? Can I take the lady in the second row?

Situation in Iraq

Q. Thank you. We just listened, Mr. President, to Saddam Hussein's speech, and he said the insurgency in the south had been crushed but continued in the north. And he also seemed to be issuing a very strong threat once again to the Kurds, say-

ing that if they persisted they would be crushed like those who preceded them. Do you have any comment on that?

The President. Crushed like those that preceded them?

Q. Like those who preceded them. I think it was a reference—I don't want to put words in his mouth, but—

The President. No, I have learned long ago not to comment on something that I haven't heard or haven't authoritatively read, but there is dissension inside Iraq. That is a matter that we're not involved in. And I would simply repeat that Saddam's credibility remains at an all-time low ebb as far as the United States is concerned.

Q. I wonder if I could ask you both if you see any possible role for either British or American forces intervening militarily in Iraq?

The President. I do not. We are not—that would be going beyond our mandate. Now, I will say this: that at the tent meeting, certain arrangements were made and certain ground rules spelled out—British and U.S. commanders agreeing, the Saudis, all the coalition forces, agreeing and telling Iraq certain things should not happen. The movement of aircraft, for example. And so, they should not violate the conditions that they agreed to.

But having said that, none of us want to move forces into Baghdad or to—frankly, we don't want to have any more fighting. But they know what the ground rules are, and they ought to play by those rules, live by them.

The Prime Minister. There's no more to be said. I think that's precisely it.

Q. Mr. President, in that speech of Saddam Hussein, he also indicated that he was willing to set up some kind of multiparty system, even perhaps verging on democracy. What do you make of that kind of talk from Saddam Hussein? And also, would that be something that the United States could live with? Could Saddam Hussein stay in power in Baghdad under that kind of arrangement?

The President. I find it very difficult to see a situation under which we would have normalized relations with Saddam Hussein

still in power. His credibility is zilch, zero, zed. And if he wants to talk about this, fine. But what people are looking for I think is compliance with—fully compliance of United Nations resolutions. It is complying with the cease-fire terms. And I don't know what this speech is about; I simply can't comment on it. But if he's proclaiming that Iraq will be a democratic nation, fine. But that's—I want to see—the proof of that pudding is in the eating.

Soviet-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President and Prime Minister: You mentioned the interim report from Secretary Baker on his talks yesterday. What conclusions do you draw about future relations with the Soviet Union in view of the apparent lack of progress on control, both CFE [conventional forces in Europe] and START?

The Prime Minister. Well, insofar as CFE are concerned, Secretary Baker reaffirmed what I said to Mr. Gorbachev 2 days ago about the resubordination of a larger amount of Soviet military to the Navy. I think Mr. Gorbachev has taken the point. It's a matter he'll clearly have to look at. His military are a good deal more hard-line about that matter than I think he is, but I think he now understands the absolute imperative of sticking with the CFE agreement that he signed.

On START, I think there's a general wish to proceed with the START talks again. We must hope that that proves to be possible. But we must make sure, in my judgment, that the CFE agreement itself is actually enacted before one can go too far on START.

The President. I can't add to that because the Baker-Gorbachev meeting and Baker-Bessmertnykh meetings have tracked very much what the Prime Minister has just said came out of his meeting. So, the Soviet position has been—I think the Prime Minister expressed it very well, and Jim Baker made clear, as did the Prime Minister in his meetings, that the naval infantry question must be resolved and that we've got to go forward to CFE agreement as we all—along the lines that we thought we were entering into. So, I have no difference at all there.

Sanctions Against Iraq

Q. Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, what kinds of steps do you think Iraq needs to take in order for the economic sanctions to be lifted, and is the supervised destruction of their chemical weapons stockpile one of those steps that you think has to be taken?

The Prime Minister. I certainly would like to see the supervised destruction of their chemical weapons. I think that is extremely important for future security in the Middle East. There are a raft of matters, most of which—all of which I think spring out of the Security Council resolutions of recent months that will need to be incorporated in the cease-fire proposals. There's a considerable amount we need to see. I think we do need to see, for example, the destruction of the chemical weapons; that's certainly the case.

I think there's a good deal else we need to see. We need to make it absolutely clear, and it needs to be absolutely clear for the Iraqis, that they actually recognize the position that now exists in Kuwait and that that is going to be a permanent recognition. We need some assurances on that.

I think we have to look at wider issues as well. We'll certainly have to look at the question of arms control in the area. That's a matter that will need to be developed, I think, very probably amongst the Permanent Five, though there are other mechanisms for doing it.

The President. The only thing I could add to that, some arrangements for peace-keeping—perhaps a role for the United Nations, perhaps a role for an Arab force. But there's a lot of details that have to follow. But the Prime Minister clicked off the major concerns that we have, and I would say, sir, that our coalition is united on this.

The Prime Minister. I think the two things, actually, one might actually add to that, of course, are the release of Kuwaiti detainees and perhaps some hypothecation of oil revenues in order to meet some of the loss and costs that have been incurred in Kuwait.

European Security

Q. There seems to be a growing discus-

sion in Europe about a defense unit for the security of Europeans. What I'm wondering is whether, Mr. Bush, you see this as an exclusion of the U.S. and how you feel that may affect NATO? Because that's been its traditional role. And Mr. Prime Minister, what's your thoughts on it?

The President. I'll be glad to start by saying certainly in the conversation that we had today there is no differences in terms of where the U.K. and the United States stand. I mean, I don't think the United Kingdom is foreseeing the pulling out from our responsibilities for security by the United States. So, I had discussions of this with President Mitterrand, and there have been some nuances of difference, perhaps—not necessarily between the French and the United States but between some in Europe and the United States—and I think that they're manageable differences.

The United States has a key role. We think that we've performed that role adequately in the past, and we have every intention of fulfilling what is in our national security interest in the future. And I think the presence where we continue to have a strong NATO, for example, is in our interest.

After all, though tensions are lessened, there still are a lot of question marks out there. But I can say in terms of my discussions with the Prime Minister, I don't think we have differences on this point, but I'll leave it to him.

The Prime Minister. There are absolutely no differences at all. NATO has very successfully kept the peace in Europe since the Second World War. It has been the cornerstone of the peace, and the American presence in NATO and the presence of their troops in Europe has been absolutely fundamental to the security of Europe. So, we certainly would wish to see absolutely nothing that would damage that.

I think what some of the Europeans are concerned about—and I think they're right to be concerned about that—is the fact that Europe will need to make a greater proportionate contribution to the communal defense of Europe. But I think that is a contribution that will have to be channeled through NATO. And there's no difference whatsoever between the United States and

Britain on that point.

Situation in Iraq

Q. Both of you said you don't want to see any more fighting in Iraq. I'm wondering, how do you intend to enforce the terms of the tent agreement? Would that be just another thing under the umbrella of lifting economic sanctions, or do you have something else in mind?

The Prime Minister. I don't think we want to go into detail about that. We've made it fairly clear to the Iraqis what we expect them to do. I think we must wait for them to do it. It's our expectation that they both would and should.

Q. Are you ruling out military action?

The President. We're not ruling anything in or out. But we're making clear—as General Schwarzkopf did, I think, just yesterday—that they must abide by agreements made, and there are many agreements in the future that we haven't ironed out, many provisions in the future that we expect Iraq will comply with—the Prime Minister having set out a very good litany right here. So, we're not trying to elevate the chance of further military action. When we said cease-fire, we ceased firing, and we want to see that formalized. And that's what we're approaching. And I won't go into any hypothesis on that.

British-U.S. Role in the Middle East

Q. The President spoke about the role for Britain and the United States as catalysts for peace. How do you see the two separate roles? Is there a specific role for Britain and not a specific role for the United States?

The President. No, I don't look at it that way, but we have separate initiatives. For example, the Prime Minister went over and, amongst his talks in the Middle East itself, he began exploring avenues for peace. Secretary Baker is doing that now on a trip that he took, and ending up—now I guess he's on his way to Turkey.

At each step of the way, each of us will be exploring, and then we'll have talks like this. There's going to be probably some United Nations role to play. There's going to be bilateral relations between ourselves—I'm speaking now for the United

States and the State of Israel. We have communications now and contacts with Syria. I happen to think that that can be catalytic for peace. So, we're not talking about an assignment to the United States to do A, B, and C, and for the U.K. to do what follows on—X, Y, and Z—or vice versa. And we had talks with Mr. Mitterrand about this.

So, what we are trying to do is say, look, we now have a renewed Western credibility—certainly coalition force credibility. And let's use that to try to bring peace to Lebanon, try to bring peace to the Israel-Palestine area, the West Bank, et cetera, and try to bring peace and security and stability to the Gulf. And there isn't one formula yet, and I don't think there will be a single formula until a lot more consultation has taken place.

Some have suggested the instant convening of an international conference. The policy of the United States has been, a conference at an appropriate time might be useful. That's been our policy for the last 11 years. But we are not going to urge that at this point until we see that it would be productive.

You don't want to have a conference and some people fail to show up, if presence there at the conference is an absolute sine qua non for success. So, we're going to just keep talking, keep consulting, but not tarry. I do think that we ought to seize the moment. And I know that's the goal of the United States, and I gather after these thorough consultations this morning that that is the view of the U.K.

Soviet Role in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President, you speak of the coalition force credibility. The Soviets are not part of that coalition. Secretary Baker met with the Soviets in the last couple of days. You two have discussed the Soviet role in the new Middle East. What is a valid role for the Soviets now, as not being a member of that coalition? Is it just a member of the United Nations? How far do we go with it?

The President. Remember—you appropriately pointed on the United Nations. The Soviet Union's state remains solidly with the United Kingdom, the United States, and others in the United Nations. Had that not

been the case, obviously the United Nations would not have had the positive role that it had. I gather from just the preliminary report—not talking to him but a preliminary report—that Mr. Zoellick passed along to me and to the Prime Minister that Jim Baker felt that, after talks with Gorbachev and Bessmertnykh, that the Soviets wanted to still play a constructive role.

They have interests in the Middle East. We don't view this as something that's against us. And so, true, they were not in the coalition in the sense of having forces, but they worked very cooperatively with us at the United Nations and inasmuch as there's going to be some—there should probably be some U.N. role, perhaps the blue helmets along some peacekeeping line, we want to continue to work with the Soviets. We want to continue to keep that cooperation.

So, I don't think their failure to have troops on the ground in the Middle East—which we didn't ask them to do, incidentally—is a detriment to their playing a useful role for peace. They know a lot of the cast of characters there. I'd love to see them improve relations with the State of Israel. I think if they did that, that could be a very important point in how this peace is brought about.

So, I see them, after the Baker talks—and again, I'd defer to the Prime Minister who did have his own talks with Mr. Gorbachev on that—but I see them as still wanting to play a constructive—not obstruction but constructive role with whatever follows on.

The Prime Minister. I can certainly confirm that. In the discussions I had with Mr. Gorbachev less than a fortnight ago, he made that perfectly clear in perfectly clear terms that he wished to play a constructive role in an ongoing settlement in the Middle East. And I see no reason to doubt his bona fideness in that respect.

Withdrawal of British Forces From Iraq

Q. Prime Minister, if a formal cease-fire cannot be arranged until Saddam stops deploying his remaining forces, what does that mean for the timetable for the return of British forces back to the U.K.? And if American forces do become involved, would British forces become involved as

well?

The Prime Minister. There are too many premises there that may not come about, to be precise. I don't know precisely when we'll have a cease-fire. We're looking at the moment at what a cease-fire resolution might contain, and it may be quite a substantial resolution; there's quite a lot to get in it. And I don't think we can address those secondary questions until we have that resolution. It may be that we'll have one broadly ready to begin presenting at the end of next week, but I think there can be no certainty about that.

At the moment, the return of British troops continues. We had Security Council resolutions to meet when we sent the troops there. Those Security Council resolutions have been met, and the troops are now returning home. But I think the other premises you raise can't be answered at this stage.

I think that is the last question we can take, I'm afraid. The British element of the press corps may be interested to know that England beat France 21-19. [Laughter]

Thank you very much.

U.S. Hostages in Lebanon

Q. Mr. President, can you take a question on Terry Anderson, sir? Today starts his 7th year in captivity. What message would you send to him?

The President. We're raising it every chance we get, and will continue to.

Note: The President's 75th news conference began at 12:17 p.m. at Government House. The following persons were referred to in the news conference: Secretary of State James A. Baker III; Gov. Desmond Langley and Premier John W.D. Swan of Bermuda; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; President Mikhail Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh of the Soviet Union; President Francois Mitterrand of France; Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf; Robert B. Zoellick, Counselor of the Department of State; and hostage Terry Anderson, who was kidnapped in Beirut, Lebanon, on March 16, 1985.

Remarks at the Community Welcome for Returning Troops in Sumter, South Carolina

March 17, 1991

Thank you all. Thank you all very, very much. Thank you, Governor Campbell, thank you so very much. And thank you all for that warm welcome. Mayor Creech, thank you, sir. The City Council Chairman Gray, I thank you. To Senator Hollings and the distinguished Members of the House of Representatives who are with us today; my thanks to Nancy Thurmond, whose husband is away overseas, but one of the strongest supporters the military ever had—Senator Strom Thurmond, my thanks to him. And, General Olsen, to you, sir, my respects—just back from superb service overseas. I'm delighted to be on this platform with you.

But most of all, thank you, Sumter. What a fantastic welcome. Thank you for your courage. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your example. And thank

you for showing all what a great land this is. And thank you for letting me come and share in this, my first, but this wonderful reunion. I couldn't be happier to be here. Thank you.

What is it, what is it about Sumter and Sumter County that breeds war heroes? In this century alone, you have supplied some of our greatest warrior-citizens. General George Mabrey, who died just last year, was the second most decorated soldier in the history of the United States. And as many of you know, he helped train a young lieutenant colonel in Vietnam, and that colonel was General Norman Schwarzkopf.

And of course, the coalition victory in Kuwait would not have been possible without General Chuck Horner. Mary Jo, we are delighted that you're here with us today.