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Republican member of the House Committee on Armed Services; Dante B. Fascell and William S. Broomfield, chairman and ranking Republican member of the House Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress on Japanese Importation of Sea Turtles

May 17, 1991

To the Congress of the United States:

On March 20, 1991, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan and Secretary of Commerce Robert Mosbacher certified under section 8 of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (Pelly Amendment), 22 U.S.C. 1978(a)(2), that nationals of Japan have engaged in trade in sea turtles that threatens the survival of two endangered species and severely diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international conservation program.

The certification by the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce was made because Japan has allowed its nationals to import large amounts of raw hawksbill sea turtle shell and olive ridley sea turtle skin. All sea turtles were recognized as endangered by CITES on July 1, 1975, and listed on Appendix I of that convention, which prohibits all international trade in the listed products. When Japan joined CITES in 1981, it reserved on hawksbill and olive ridley sea turtles and continued to trade in them.

Since the certification, my Administration has held discussions with the Government of Japan in an effort to end its trade in sea turtles. The Government of Japan has responded by ending its trade in olive ridley sea turtles and announcing publicly its intent to withdraw its reservations to CITES on olive ridleys. It has also announced publicly its commitment to end all trade in hawksbill sea turtles by a date certain and make a decision in the near future on the specific date for ending the trade and for lifting its reservation to CITES for this species. Given these commitments, I have decided not to recommend specific measures to prohibit wildlife imports at this time pending an assessment within 30 days of the adequacy of Japan's actions to lift its reservation and bring to a conclusive end its trade in hawksbill sea turtles. Based on that assessment, an additional report will be made to the Congress.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
May 17, 1991.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Situation in the Persian Gulf

May 17, 1991

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On March 19, 1991, I reported to you, consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102–1), on the successful conduct of military operations aimed at the liberation of Kuwait. Since that time, the United Nations Security Council has adopted Resolution 687, which set forth the preconditions for a formal cease-fire. Iraq has accepted those terms, and the cease-fire and withdrawal of coalition forces from southern Iraq have been concluded. The Iraqi repression of the Kurdish people has, however, necessitated a limited introduction of U.S. forces into northern Iraq for emergency relief purposes. I am reporting these matters to you as part of our continuing effort to keep the Congress fully informed on these developments.