

else that he must comply—that he will comply. But I can't tell you that this Baker meeting moved the process forward an inch unless—the only bright spot I can put on it is that he sees now, the Foreign Minister sees now, and hopefully he will report this directly back to the President, that the United States is more determined than ever to do its part in fulfilling the United States—in complying with all the resolutions of the U.N.

So, that's about where we are now.

Q. Would you welcome a French mission to Baghdad?

Q. Mr. President, would it help or hinder efforts at this point for the French and other partners in the alliance to—

The President. We have had mission after mission for peace. I'd have to think it out. I talked to the Secretary-General up there in Camp David this weekend about possibly another mission, but he knows and I know that he would operate within the confines of the Security Council. So if that could be helpful, we would be supportive.

The EC wanted 'Aziz to come and talk to them. I don't know, Larry [Lawrence O'Rourke, St. Louis Post-Dispatch], where that stands, but I gather that Iraq, once again, rather arrogantly turned that down. But we are going to keep probing for peace because that's what I want. But we are going to stay firm in our resolve to see the United Nations resolutions complied with.

Q. Did he offer you anything in the way—did he offer anything as an alternative to—a phased withdrawal—

The President. No.

Q. —or some future point, or post-

poning the deadline?

The President. No.

Q. Why did they take 6 hours?

Q. Did they negotiate, sir, or did—

The President. You rush out now and listen to the Baker press conference, and you'll get the answer to those questions better than I could give them, because I think he's in a press conference right now. And that will be followed by the Tariq 'Aziz press conference in Geneva.

But I would like to turn this part of this meeting off by saying that I am very grateful to the Members of Congress here from both sides of the aisle, Democrats and Republicans, who have come together to try to help resolve this crisis in a peaceful manner. And in my view, a resolution supporting the United Nations resolutions or encouraging—of giving the President—telling the President to go out and do this is the best way now, given the intransigence of Iraq, to have a shot for peace.

But there was no concession by the Iraqis, no give, and they rejected the letter, to even take that directly to Saddam Hussein. So—

Q. Rejected your letter, sir?

The President. Exactly. And that will be covered now in the press conference.

Note: The exchange began at 2:05 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. President Bush referred to Secretary of State James A. Baker III; Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Javier Perez de Cuellar de la Guerra, Secretary-General of the United Nations. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis January 9, 1991

The President. I have a brief opening statement, and then I will take a few questions.

I have spoken with Secretary of State Jim Baker, who reported to me on his nearly 7 hours of conversation with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz. Secretary Baker made

it clear that he discerned no evidence whatsoever that Iraq was willing to comply with the international community's demand to withdraw from Kuwait and comply with the United Nations resolutions.

Secretary Baker also reported to me that