

papers in this country about a visit by a French delegate that was going over there. The hopes were raised. Nothing happened. So, I just had to argue with the premise because there has been a lot of diplomacy and there may be more.

Now, excuse me for interrupting you.

Q. Sir, you seem to be very skeptical that further diplomacy would work. And yet you've said here today that you haven't given up on a peaceful solution. I wonder where it is you find this hope for a peaceful solution?

*The President.* I'm not sure I have great hope for it. But I think when human life is at stake, you go the extra mile for peace. And that's what we have tried to do. And I will continue to think of reasons—I told President Mitterrand, I said, look, if you think of a new approach, or I do, please, let's one or the other get on the phone and try. But we remain determined that these resolutions are going to be complied with. I am very concerned that sanctions—I know sanctions alone aren't going to get this job done. And so we're pushing here, and that's what the Baker meeting with 'Aziz was about. I'm not going to give up, though.

Karen [Karen Hosler, Baltimore Sun]?

Q. A lot of people, in looking at the situation, on the outside will say, there must be more than this. There must be some back-channel diplomacy. There must be something going on. We can't be rushing headlong into war this way. Can you tell us that there is nothing, that it is what we appear to be getting—that Saddam isn't going to move and we're going to war?

*The President.* I'm not going to use that phrase. I am going to say, if Saddam doesn't move, we are going to fully implement Resolution 678. And it will be fully complied with.

But I wish I could tell you I'm more hopeful. There is no back channel. We've tried it directly. I've had to level, and properly so, with our coalition partners as to what I'm doing, and they've leveled with us, leveled with the United Nations Security Council members who are not involved in the coalition with force—for example, the Soviets. A lot of avenues have been tried. But I can't tell you that there's any hidden agenda out there, secret negotiations—

there is not. And it wouldn't be right for us to be off telling you one thing openly here and then going around behind the corner with some secret channel. So, I would like to say if there's any feeling that that's happening, it isn't happening.

Q. So, the entire hope for peace then rests on Saddam backing off from his—

*The President.* And it has since August 2d—exactly. Because this aggression is not going to stand. And there's an awful lot at stake in terms of the new world order that it doesn't stand. And there's a lot at stake in terms of a lot of human life in Kuwait that it doesn't stand. And there's a lot at stake in terms of how the coalition looks at this that it doesn't stand. So, it won't.

Q. Mr. President, you said that when you first proposed high-level talks between Iraq and the United States that it was because you were convinced the message had not gotten through, had not gotten across. Are you now convinced that the message had gotten across?

*The President.* Well, I did listen carefully to Mr. 'Aziz, who I thought spoke quite well. I didn't agree with what he was trying to do, obviously, to confuse the issue by refusing to discuss the point at hand, which is the invasion of Kuwait, but I thought he did it well. [Laughter] I thought he kind of sent a signal that they do understand what's up against them, but I still don't believe that they think the world coalition will use force against them. I may be wrong, but that's what I think in here. And I also still believe, as I said earlier, that he somehow has this feeling that he will prevail or that he will prolong. This will not be that. I've heard some wild predictions on this horrible human equation that might be involved if force were used, and I would say I don't agree with some who are arguing the loudest because it's putting the worst case out in terms of loss of human life; I must say that. I don't know. I think 'Aziz understands it, but I'm not sure that Saddam Hussein does.

Q. If I could follow, Mr. President—

*The President.* A followup question. I'm sorry, I'm going to have one more, and then Charles [Charles Bierbauer, Cable News Network]—I told him, and then I'm leaving. Thank you very much, though.