

Q. Mr. President, if the crackdown continues—

Q. How does it complicate the Persian Gulf situation?

Q. Mr. President, if the crackdown continues in the Baltics, will you go to Moscow on February 11th?

*The President.* Well, I would simply—that's too hypothetical. What I'm saying is I hope the crackdown will not continue.

Q. Mr. President, did you get any reassurances from leader Gorbachev about whether he will continue or halt the act, consider reassurances about what he will do next?

*The President.* Well, I heard a statement I was just asking our Soviet experts about in here, where he was talking about curtailing the use of force. I hope that's true, but I did not get direct affirmation from them.

#### *Persian Gulf Crisis*

Q. Mr. President, what do you hear, sir, about the results of the de Cuellar mission?

*The President.* We have not had a direct report from Perez de Cuellar, and there is a report—is all I saw, as to what he said at the airport. But I have not had contact with him. He told me he would call me, so I expect to hear from him when he returns.

Q. What effect, sir, do you think the Soviet actions—

*The President.* I can't hear. John [John Cochran, NBC News], what—

Q. —Mr. Gorbachev may now—[*inaudible*—to Baghdad—

*The President.* Well, I don't know.

Q. Is that something Gorbachev had mentioned—

*The President.* I don't know what he'd do, and I know there was some thinking of that, but people are very concerned, obviously—time drawing close. And I just don't know how to answer that. I just don't know what he plans to—

Q. —has read a statement that they will keep Kuwait, will not withdraw.

*The President.* It doesn't surprise me, but they're making a tremendous mistake.

Q. Mr. President, do you think that the Soviet Union is striking out on Lithuania at this moment because they think our attention and the attention of the world has been diverted by the Persian Gulf crisis?

*The President.* No.

Q. Are you concerned that by speaking out now that you may jeopardize your support from Mr. Gorbachev in the Persian Gulf crisis?

*The President.* No, I believe the Soviet support for the United Nations approach is solid and firm. And President Gorbachev told me that not so long ago—just when I had the last conversation.

Q. Are you talking about the Friday phone call? Just to clarify—

*The President.* Yes, yes.

Q. Mr. President, what is your message to the seemingly millions of Americans who have been contacting Congress and apparently contacting you, pleading with you not to go to war in the Gulf?

*The President.* Well, I think that matter was resolved when the Congress acted yesterday, and I'd tell them the same thing I've told the American people over and over again.

Q. But to the American people—what is your response to the Americans who are asking you now not to go to war?

*The President.* Well, I say we've got to do what we have to do. And the Congress has affirmed that position. And I think that is—you know, one of the arguments that some made is, well, please get Congress engaged; why are you not willing to go to Congress? We went to Congress; Congress, both Houses of the Congress, affirmed the policies of this government.

#### *Soviet Military Intervention in Lithuania*

Q. Mr. President, you remonstrated with Gorbachev last week not to use force in the Baltics, and just yesterday Gorbachev said he was sending emissaries from his Federation Council to mediate. A few hours later the tanks were rolling. Are you afraid that he has lost control in the Soviet Union?

*The President.* Well, I am concerned about the internal affairs there—and he, himself, is very much concerned about that. But let's hope that there will be a peaceful—a return to peace, no more use of force, and that they can peacefully negotiate their differences. That's what I hope for. I think that's what President Gorbachev—I know that's what he told me he wanted before, and I hope that still holds, and I