

tary forces have performed bravely, professionally, and effectively. It is important, however, to keep in mind two things: First, this effort will take some time. Saddam Hussein has devoted nearly all of Iraq's resources for a decade to building up this powerful military machine. We can't expect to overcome it overnight—especially as we want to minimize casualties to the U.S. and coalition forces and to minimize any harm done to innocent civilians.

Second, we must be realistic. There will be losses. There will be obstacles along the way. War is never cheap or easy. And I said this only because I am somewhat concerned about the initial euphoria in some of the reports and reactions to the first day's developments. No one should doubt or question the ultimate success, because we will prevail. But I don't want to see us get overly euphoric about all of this.

Our goals have not changed. What we seek is the same as what the international community seeks—namely, Iraq's complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and then full compliance with the Security Council resolutions.

I also want to say how outraged I am by Iraq's latest act of aggression—in this case, against Israel. Once again, we see that no neighbor of Iraq is safe. I want to state here publicly how much I appreciated Israel's restraint from the outset, really from the very beginning of this crisis. Prime Minister Shamir and his government have shown great understanding for the interests of the United States and the interests of others involved in this coalition.

Close consultations with Israel are continuing. So, too, are close consultations with our coalition partners. Just a few minutes ago I spoke to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada. And in that vein, I also had a long and good conversation this morning with Soviet President Gorbachev in which we thoroughly reviewed the situation in the Gulf. And, of course, I took the opportunity from that call to express again my concern, my deep concern, over the Baltics and the need to ensure that there is a peaceful resolution to the situation there.

Let me close here by saying how much we appreciate what our fighting men and

women are doing. This country is united. Yes, there's some protest, but this country is fundamentally united. And I want that message to go out to every kid that is over there serving this country.

I saw in the paper a comment by one who worried—from seeing demonstrations here and there in this country on television—that that expressed the will of the country. So, to those troops over there, let me just take this opportunity to say your country is supporting you—the Congress overwhelmingly endorsed that. Let there be no doubt in the minds of any of you: You have the full and unified support of the United States of America. So, I salute them. They deserve our full support, and they are our finest.

And now I'd be glad to take a few questions.

*Q.* Mr. President, has the United States asked Israel not to retaliate against Iraq for its attack, what commitments has the United States received in these consultations that we've had with Israel, and how long do you think Israel can stay on the sidelines if these attacks continue?

*The President.* These questions, questions of what we're talking to Israel about right now, I'm going to keep confidential. No question that Israel's Scud—the attack on Israel was purely an act of terror. It had absolutely no military significance at all. And it was an attack that is symptomatic of the kind of leader that the world is now confronting in Saddam Hussein and that, again, I repeat, the man that will be defeated here.

But Israel has shown great restraint, and I've said that. I think we can all understand that they have their own problems that come from this. But I don't want to go further into it because we are right in the midst of consultations with Israel. I think they, like us, do not want to see this war widened out, and yet they are determined to protect their own population centers. And I can tell you that our defense people are in touch with our commanders to be sure that we are doing the utmost we can to suppress any of these missile sites that might wreak havoc not just on Israel but on other countries that are not involved in this fighting. So, I'm going to leave it there, and