

forces from all of Kuwait, and the restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait.

And now let me just take a couple of questions, and I'll be on my way. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

*Persian Gulf Crisis*

Q. Mr. President, do you back up Baker's statement that there would be no retaliation against Iraq if it complies with the resolutions?

*The President.* I think it's been made clear to Iraq, not only by Secretary Baker but by others, that if they totally comply they will not be attacked. And as I have said, when they totally withdraw there still remains some problems to be solved, but they will not be under attack.

Q. Mr. President, what is in the letter you are sending to Saddam Hussein? And are you willing to have Secretary Baker go on to Baghdad if that proves an option?

*The President.* Well, the answer to your question is that letter has not been finalized yet. I'm working on it. I have a copy I'm carrying with me now. I want to talk to the Secretary of State some more about it. And the second part of the question is no.

Q. Why not, sir?

Q. Mr. President, you said you wanted Secretary of State Baker to speak eye to eye with Saddam Hussein. And he was willing to meet you on the 12th. You're willing to talk on the 9th. Why not wait 3 days and have that direct meeting?

*The President.* Because we have exhausted that option. We put forward 15 different dates. And I believe that the message that both Secretary Baker and I want to convey can be done in this matter.

Q. You said you wanted him speaking directly and not to his intermediaries so he would know you were serious.

*The President.* That was rejected by the Iraqi President, and so we're going to try it this way. And I hope that it will have the same result.

Q. Does 3 days mean that much, Mr. President?

*The President.* I hope this will have the same result.

Yes?

Q. Mr. President, in diplomacy, as you so well know, it is often the art of give and take. The Iraqis are already saying that they will talk about getting out of Kuwait, but they want to also talk in Geneva about the Palestinian problem, about Israel's occupation of the West Bank. How are you instructing Secretary Baker to handle that portion—

*The President.* I don't need to instruct him because he and I are in total sync on this, and so are the rest of the alliance. There will be no linkage on these two questions.

Q. If I may follow up, Mr. President: Quite apart from linkage—whether it's called linkage or not—the Iraqis want to pursue these discussions. Is there room for some discussion on these other issues?

*The President.* There will be no linkage on these other issues. We can't tell anybody what he can bring up at a discussion, but there will be no linkage.

Q. Mr. President, what do you make of today's French proposal in which, outside of linkage, the French are saying that they think a deal is possible if you tell the Iraqis that sometime down the road you'll discuss the Middle East? How do you react to that?

*The President.* I haven't seen the French proposal, so I wouldn't care to comment on it.

Q. Do you think that undercuts what you're trying to say here?

*The President.* No, I think Francois Mitterrand, if it has anything to do with him, has been a steadfast coalition partner. And I would want to know exactly what his feelings are on this before I commented.

Q. Mr. President, there have been several suggestions, including one by Mr. Mitterrand, that perhaps there's room for one more Security Council meeting before there is any military force used. Will you tell Perez de Cuellar that you would approve of anything like that, or do you think at this point the United Nations sanctions ought to stand with no clarification?

*The President.* I don't think any further U.N. action is required. I would be interested if the Secretary-General feels to the contrary. I again wouldn't comment on what President Mitterrand has suggested. Some-