

fellow man. That was Danny Thomas.
Barbara and I extend our deepest sym-

pathies to Rose Marie, the Thomas family,
and all of Danny's friends.

Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One on the Persian Gulf Conflict

February 6, 1991

Q. Mr. President, King Hussein says that the war is unjust and you've exceeded the limits laid out by the U.N. What do you say to that?

The President. Well, I'm afraid that we have a major disagreement on that. It's not true.

Q. Will America's offer of assistance for refugees still stand—to Jordan?

The President. Well, we tried to make clear to Jordan that we have no argument with Jordan. I think they've made a mistake to align themselves so closely with Saddam Hussein against the rest of the world. But on the other hand, I've tried to understand the pressures that King Hussein is under. So, we will obviously try to keep open lines of communication. That's about as far as I'd want to go.

But you have to listen to the rhetoric and then understand why it's being used out in that part of the world.

Q. Your conversation with Mitterrand today—

The President. We just stay with the course here. There will be no cease-fire; there will be nothing of that nature until this man commences a credible unilateral withdrawal. And then we'll see what happens. But there's no interest in the other. I mean, there's talk about it, but most of the people I've talked to in that part of the world feel that Saddam simply has got it wrong and doesn't have the word on what he ought to do, so—

Q. The notice on the diplomatic break—have you seen that from Iraq, that Iraq has broken diplomatic ties?

The President. I saw a notice about it. I don't think we've had official notice. I saw something in the paper about it. We have no people over there, so I don't know what he's proving by that.

Q. You talked to Presidents Ozal and Mitterrand, and presumably, the Iranian initiative came up in both calls. Is there, in fact, an Iranian initiative for a peace proposal?

The President. Not that we know of.

Q. Any kind of mediation effort underway?

The President. No. I think they've indicated they might be available. But somebody asked me yesterday whether there was some plan, and I said no. And there isn't. But I think they're conducting themselves very well right now—Iran.

Q. The Iranians?

The President. I think so. But there's no peace plan, or I know of no initiative. And we've talked to the French—Mr. Scheer, who is back in Paris now and was supporting—supposedly he was on some peace plan, and apparently that's not correct at all. So, maybe General Scowcroft can fill you in. I have to go back and fix my seatbelt. [Laughter]

Mr. Scowcroft. I don't need one.

Note: The exchange occurred in the evening while President Bush was en route from Washington, DC, to New York, NY. In his remarks, he referred to King Hussein I of Jordan; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; President Francois Mitterrand of France; President Turgut Ozal of Turkey; Francois Scheer, Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry, who had recently visited several countries in the Middle East and Africa; and Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.