

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Statements Made by Ambassador Zalman Shoval of Israel

February 15, 1991

Public statements made yesterday by Israeli Ambassador Zalman Shoval criticizing the United States are outrageous and outside the bounds of acceptable behavior by the ambassador of any friendly country. The Secretary of State made this clear to the Ambassador yesterday, and the President protested to Prime Minister Shamir by cable this morning.

We deserve better from Israel's Ambassador.

Note: The statement referred to Secretary of State James A. Baker III and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel. The Ambassador had criticized the United States for withholding economic assistance to Israel.

Exchange With Reporters in Kennebunkport, Maine

February 17, 1991

The President. Let me say this, that this was an invigorating walk, and it really is good. It makes me think of the—two points out here, unrelated to foreign affairs—fitness, and our country is fit, getting better. And I'm proud of the job that Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Physical Fitness Council are doing—very, very important, actually. And conservation. I looked at these beaches today. We've had some rough storms up here, about a month ago, a big storm. And yet the beaches, I think, just on this quick look are relatively clean. And I think it shows that the American people are aware that recreation and conservation are very important.

So, that's what I learned today as I cleared my mind from concerns that all Americans have halfway around the world for this hour. Now I'll go back and do what I started off doing—stay in touch with our key people and General Scowcroft, who is minding the store down there, Baker, Cheney, General Powell. And I can say having talked, checked in this morning, I think things are going well. I will repeat, they're on schedule, and we are determined to finish this job and do it right, fulfill what I've said are our objectives, with no concession, no pulling back.

The American people are strongly in support not only of the troops but of these

objectives. And, of course, that is a very important point because it is my hope that when this is over we will have kicked, for once and for all, the so-called Vietnam syndrome. And the country's pulling together, unlike any time—in this kind of situation—any time since World War II. And that's a good thing for our country. And that sends a strong signal for the future that we're credible, we're committed to peace, we're committed to justice, and we are determined to fulfill our obligations in trying to bring about a more peaceful world order.

That's what I've been thinking about today.

Persian Gulf Conflict

Q. What, if anything, do you expect to come out of the meetings in Moscow tomorrow?

The President. Well, I don't know. But as I said yesterday, I think President Gorbachev, who's been in touch with me about this, is trying very hard to seek an end to this conflict. But he knows very well that the objectives spelled out by the United Nations—the Soviet Union was an important part of this—must be met in their entirety. And that was reiterated by the Soviet spokesman yesterday, and that's a good thing.

So, as I told you all yesterday when there