

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Soviet President Gorbachev's Meeting With Foreign Minister 'Aziz of Iraq *February 18, 1991*

President Bush appreciates having received a summary account from President Mikhail Gorbachev of his meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz. The So-

viets have asked that we treat the substance of this account as confidential; thus, we will not comment further on it. Our military campaign remains on schedule.

Exchange With Reporters on the Soviet Peace Proposal for the Persian Gulf Conflict *February 19, 1991*

Q. Mr. President, is the Soviet proposal acceptable to you?

The President. Let me just make one comment, and then I won't take any questions about it. But I do appreciate President Gorbachev's providing me a copy of his proposal—of the Iraqi proposal, or his proposal to Iraq actually—concerning the Gulf, the conflict there. And we provided last night comments to the Soviet Union.

Let me just reiterate. As far as I'm concerned, there are no negotiations. The goals have been set out. There will be no concessions—not going to give. And so on his proposal, President Gorbachev asked that I keep the details of it confidential. And I'm going to do that. I will respect that

request in the interest of thoroughly exploring the initiative.

But, very candidly—and I've been frank with him on this while expressing appreciation for his sending it to us—it falls well short of what would be required.

And I would leave it right there for now.

Q. Does that mean we're going to have a ground war?

The President. That means I'm going to leave it right there for now.

Note: The exchange began at 10:05 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. President Bush referred to President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Reports on Highway and Motor Vehicle Safety *February 19, 1991*

To the Congress of the United States:

It is my privilege to provide you with the annual reports on activities under the Highway Safety Act (23 U.S.C. 401 Note) and the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 1408), both enacted in 1966. These reports provide an overview of our activities during calendar year 1989 and an overview of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's priority plan

for the next 3 years. The plan will be an evolving guideline for the agency's safety activities to improve motor vehicle and traffic safety over the next several years.

The plan includes motor vehicle rule-making on the crashworthiness of passenger cars, light trucks, and vans; vehicle rollover stability; and safety improvements in heavy trucks, school buses, and child safety seats.

It also calls for initiatives to promote

Feb. 19 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

State laws and programs to increase safety belt use, motorcycle helmet use, and to discourage drunk and drugged driving.

The report on motor vehicle safety includes the annual reporting requirement in Title I of the Motor Vehicle Information and Cost Savings Act of 1972 (bumper standards).

In the Highway Safety Acts of 1973, 1976, and 1978, the Congress expressed its special interest in certain aspects of traffic safety that are addressed in the volume on highway safety.

I am pleased to inform you that 1989 was a year of significant gains in traffic safety. The traffic fatality rate, the accepted measure of risk on the road, was 2.2 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, the lowest in history and down 33 percent since 1980. Safety belt use is also higher than ever, with 46 percent of Americans buckling up, and drunk driving fatalities have declined significantly.

There is good news for Americans in vir-

tually every critical part of the highway safety picture. The decline in the fatality rate is especially encouraging and means that we are able to drive with less risk, and the dramatic increase in safety belt use and public concern about drunk driving have translated into thousands of lives saved and injuries avoided.

The progress we have made is, of course, no consolation to the relatives and friends of the 45,500 people who, despite the safety advances and greater public awareness, lost their lives in traffic accidents in 1989.

As we continue to pursue highway and motor vehicle safety programs that are most effective in reducing deaths and injuries, we are convinced that significant progress in traffic safety can be achieved through the combined efforts of government, industry, and the public.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
February 19, 1991.

Message to the Senate on the International Labor Organization Convention Concerning the Abolition of Forced Labor

February 19, 1991

To the Senate of the United States:

The Convention (No. 105) Concerning the Abolition of Forced Labor, adopted by the International Labor Conference at Geneva on June 25, 1957, was transmitted to the Senate by President Kennedy on July 22, 1963, with a view to receiving advice and consent to ratification. Although hearings were held in 1967 by the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Senate has not acted further on the Convention.

Now, 23 years later, I urge the Senate to consider anew this important Convention and to grant its advice and consent to ratification. Given the length of time that has elapsed, I enclose a new report from the Secretary of State concerning the Convention.

The report of the Secretary of State also contains the texts of two proposed understandings. As explained more fully in the

accompanying letter from the Secretary of Labor, the law and practice of the United States fully conform to all obligations contained in the Convention (a copy of the Convention is included as an enclosure to this letter). Ratification of this Convention, therefore, would not require the United States to alter in any way its law or practice in this field. However, to remove the possibility that certain ambiguities might arise after ratification, it is proposed that ratification of the Convention be made subject to these understandings.

Ratification by the United States of selected Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO) enhances our ability to take other governments to task for failing to comply with ILO instruments they have ratified. In part for this reason, the Senate has in recent years given its advice and consent to the ratification of ILO Conven-