

Feb. 26 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the Iraqi Statement on Withdrawal From Kuwait

February 26, 1991

Saddam Hussein's radio statement last night contained the same diatribe as previous comments, with no commitment to complying with the 12 United Nations resolutions. His speech changes nothing. It does not annul the annexation of Kuwait or meet

any of the coalition's other terms. The war goes on.

Note: The statement referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Address to the Nation on the Iraqi Statement on Withdrawal From Kuwait

February 26, 1991

I have a brief statement to make today. Saddam's most recent speech is an outrage. He is not withdrawing. His defeated forces are retreating. He is trying to claim victory in the midst of a rout, and he is not voluntarily giving up Kuwait. He is trying to save the remnants of power and control in the Middle East by every means possible. And here, too, Saddam Hussein will fail.

Saddam is not interested in peace but only to regroup and fight another day. And he does not renounce Iraq's claim to Kuwait. To the contrary, he makes clear that Iraq continues to claim Kuwait. Nor is there any evidence of remorse for Iraq's aggression or any indication that Saddam is prepared to accept the responsibility for the awful consequences of that aggression.

He still does not accept U.N. Security Council resolutions or the coalition terms of February 22, including the release of our POW's, all POW's, third-country detainees, and an end to the pathological destruction of Kuwait. The coalition will therefore continue to prosecute the war with undiminished intensity.

As we announced last night, we will not attack unarmed soldiers in retreat. We have no choice but to consider retreating combat

units as a threat and respond accordingly. Anything else would risk additional United States and coalition casualties.

The best way to avoid further casualties on both sides is for the Iraqi soldiers to lay down their arms as nearly 30,000 Iraqis already have. It is time for all Iraqi forces in the theater of operation, those occupying Kuwait, those supporting the occupation of Kuwait, to lay down their arms. And that will stop the bloodshed.

From the beginning of the air operation nearly 6 weeks ago, I have said that our efforts are on course and on schedule. This morning I am very pleased to say that coalition efforts are ahead of schedule. The liberation of Kuwait is close at hand.

And let me just add that I share the pride of all of the American people in the magnificent heroic performance of our Armed Forces. May God bless them and keep them.

Note: President Bush spoke at 9:48 a.m. from the Rose Garden at the White House. In his address, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The address was broadcast live on nationwide radio and television.