

Apr. 6 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

gress about our conduct of the Persian Gulf conflict and will continue to provide the Congress with information to the maximum extent consistent with the discharge of my constitutional responsibilities.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
April 6, 1991.

Note: S. 725, approved April 6, was assigned Public Law No. 102-25.

Remarks Commemorating the National Days of Thanksgiving in Houston, Texas

April 7, 1991

Dr. Payne, thank you, sir. Barbara and I are delighted to be here on this very special day of National Day of Thanksgiving.

Almost as soon as the peace was shattered in the Gulf last August, prayers for peace began at St. Martin's. First were special prayers on Sundays, and then in the mid-week services. And by January, I'm told there were daily prayers. And the Sunday school children sent handmade Christmas cards to our men and women in the Gulf, and the church sent along prayer books and crosses. And Houston, as we saw all across America, was bedecked in flags and yellow ribbons.

This says much about our city and about our nation. But it says much more about our country. For during these anxious months, this story has unfolded a thousand times over. In churches, in synagogues, in temples, in mosques, in communities of every size, in schools and scout troops, and countless times in the quiet, simple acts of individuals who care. We are one nation under God.

On these special Days of Thanksgiving, we do have so very much for which to be thankful. We are grateful for the long-awaited liberation of tiny Kuwait and the end of the terror rendered upon the Kuwaiti people. And for our men and women who performed their mission with such courage and conviction, we are grateful that their losses were mercifully few. And we're extraordinarily proud of our troops now returning home.

It is the time to give thanks to God, not for winning the war but for helping us to do what was right. We mourn for those

who have fallen, and our hearts go out to their families. But we should thank God Almighty for men and women who will risk their lives to save the lives of others. Remember Michener, James Michener's Admiral Tarrant asked, "Where did we get such men?" And the answer is, those men and women came right here, right here at home. That's where they came from.

Well, I believe that two such men are with us here today, recently returned from the Gulf: F-16 pilot Captain John Hunnell and his wingman Lieutenant Scott Long. Maybe you'd stand up, if you all are there. [Applause] Thank you.

I read the letter that John sent to Reverend Di Paola about his second combat mission over Iraq. It was as terrifying as it was majestic. He describes an unnerving silence amidst missile trails and bright flashes of flak; the only sounds, the dull roar of his engine, the radio, and the beeping of his radar alarm. And although he didn't mention it, probably the beating of his heart felt pretty loud at that time. [Laughter]

And it's been said, "The wings of prayer carry high and far." Well, Captain Hunnell mentioned a prayer he repeated often. And it says, "If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." The Lord did not forget him, nor the righteousness of our cause. And so, on this National Day of Thanksgiving, this church being one of many across the country celebrating this National Day of Thanksgiving, let me conclude with a brief prayer:

Dear God, we humbly give you our heartfelt thanks. We thank you for bringing the war to a quick end. We thank you for spar-

ing the lives of so many of our men and women who went to the Gulf. We ask you to bring comfort to the families of those who gave their lives for their country. We ask you to protect the innocents who this very day are suffering in Iraq and elsewhere. We give thanks for the bravery and steadfast support of our coalition partners, and yes, we pray for our enemies, that a just peace may come to their troubled land.

We are not an arrogant nation, a gloating

nation. For we know: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth." On this special day, this grateful nation says, "Thank you, God."

Note: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the main sanctuary of St. Martin's Episcopal Church. The President referred to the Reverend Claude E. Payne, rector of the church, and Joseph Di Paola, associate rector.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico in Houston, Texas

April 7, 1991

President Bush. Welcome, everybody. Are these things turned on? Because I just want to say, if they are, how pleased I am to see President Salinas, see him back here where—I think it's where we first met. He was coming in as President of Mexico, and I was coming in as President of the United States. We've had a strong friendship, and we're on common ground on these major issues. So, it's a special privilege for me to have him back here in Houston, Texas.

Fast Track Authority Extension

Q. Are you hoping to get momentum to get Fast Track through Congress here?

The President. You're darn right. We're going to work; we're going all-out on that. And I'll have a little more to say about that later on. It is priority for the United States, the United States Government. And I'm going to do everything I can with the Congress to get this approved. And I mean all out, 100-percent commitment. So, no holding back at all.

Q. President Salinas, do you think you can help?

President Salinas. We'll do our share, the

share that Mexico has to do within Mexico.

[At this point, another group of journalists entered the room.]

President Bush. As I say to the Mexican media how pleased we are to have President Salinas here in Houston, Texas, where we first met. We had the spirit of Houston then, and the spirit of Houston squared, revisited, and we've got important matters upon which we are working together. And I'm thinking particularly on this Fast Track authority for a free-trade agreement.

And the United States is committed, our Government, and I'm going to work my heart out to have it passed. It's good for the United States, and I happen to believe it's also good for Mexico.

Note: President Bush spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the Crew Ready Room at Ellington Field. President Salinas spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of this exchange could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.