

Note: The Press Secretary read the statement to reporters at 9:02 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. John H. Sununu was Chief of Staff to the President, and Brent Scowcroft was Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the President's Health May 6, 1991

At approximately 10:45 p.m. last night, the President resumed his normal heart rhythm, which was maintained until 4:45 a.m. this morning, at which time atrial fibrillation reoccurred. The attending physicians met at 5:30 a.m. this morning for approximately 2 hours to consider the situation. It was deemed unnecessary to carry out the electrical procedure since the President's response to medication had been encouraging. They decided instead to continue further adjustment of his medication and maintain observation of the President while working here at the White House.

President Bush will be discharged at approximately 9 a.m. this morning and return immediately to the Oval Office. His progress will be monitored here as his medi-

cation levels and dosages are observed. It should be stressed again that there continues to be no evidence of organic heart disease.

Today the President will continue his normal responsibilities and activities. He will meet with former Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze at 1:30 p.m. and will conduct other business during the day.

The President rose at 5:20 a.m. this morning. He's in good spirits and anxious to get back to work. We look forward to having him back in the White House very soon.

Note: The Press Secretary read the statement to reporters at 8:38 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters in Bethesda, Maryland, on the President's Health May 6, 1991

Q. Mr. President, what do you think?

The President. I feel all right. I've just got to get over and get back to work, and keep a little monitor going here.

Q. Have you had to change your lifestyle at all or—

The President. Go ahead and ask the doctors that, but not as far as I'm concerned.

Q. Are you going to lighten up at all for the next few days?

The President. Well, they said to gradually get back into the athletics and not overdo it, so we won't run today.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. No, it's not caused by jogging. But you ask the doctors; they'll tell you all that. I don't want to get a bad rap

on the joggers.

Q. —any particular stress situation?

The President. No. Ask the doctors, because I don't even know that that's the cause.

Q. But is it right now, sir, is your heart beating regularly?

The President. No, it's not in normal rhythm. Ask the doctors what all that means. I've never heard of this stuff before Sunday.

Q. Are you concerned about that at all?

The President. No. If I were concerned I wouldn't be here, I'd be up there.

Note: The exchange began at 9 a.m. on the grounds of Bethesda Naval Hospital, prior

May 6 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

to the President's departure for the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters

May 6, 1991

President's Health

Q. What did the doctors say?

The President. They're going to have a press conference at 9:30 a.m., I think.

Q. Will you cut back on your schedule at all?

The President. Not much. Kind of work back into it. But I think it's okay.

Q. What about jogging?

The President. Well, we can start again—he said today if I want to, but I'm not sure I feel up to it yet.

Vice President

Q. What do you think about all the talk of the competence of Vice President Quayle that's been revived?

The President. Hey, he has my full support, always has, and he's doing a first-class job.

Hey, listen, it's great to be back.

Note: The exchange began at 9:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House, upon the President's return from Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Ethiopian Jewish Emigration

May 6, 1991

The President. I might just make one comment here to say how much we appreciate Senator Boschwitz going to Ethiopia. A concern of the Falashas, the Jews there in Ethiopia that want to go out and go to Israel, is a concern that I share. And Rudy took a good step forward there in talking to the Ethiopian authorities. It's a mission of conscience, a mission of compassion. And we are very grateful to you for undertaking it.

I'm anxious to hear from you, how you feel things will go. But I know you've got some words of encouragement from the Ethiopian Government. And I think it's a mission that many in this country when they understand it will appreciate it. I'm grateful for your doing it.

Mr. Boschwitz. Well, you've been active in that matter before, very active, Mr. President. So, this is a continuation. Of course, Ethiopia's also in great turmoil, so it's im-

portant that we bring peace there.

Q. Is there some reason to believe that the Ethiopians are going to lift the restrictions on emigration?

Mr. Boschwitz. Well, there's some hope that we will. It's a pretty tenuous situation. But I think that they're anxious to meet with some of the rebels, and I think we can bring them together. I think something will happen over there.

Q. Mr. President, can the world deal with three crises at a time—Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and the Kurds? Are they up to that relief effort?

The President. Resources of the United States are stressed, but the compassion is not. And so, I expect we can do what the United States has always done.

Mr. Boschwitz. The United States moved in 170 million dollars' worth of food in this