

Mexican Ambassador to the United States; President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico; President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela; and U.S. Trade Representative Carla A. Hills.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar de la Guerra of the United Nations May 9, 1991

Iraq

The President. Welcome everybody.

Q. —police force in northern Iraq?

The President. We're not taking any questions today. Thank you very much. The Secretary-General might want to, but I——

Q. Are you hoping that all of the American forces will be out of Iraq soon?

The Secretary-General. Well, I think that that is the wish of our American friends, and as well as the wish of the United Nations.

The President. That's for sure.

The Secretary-General. I think the stations in Iraq are properly settled, but I think we have to be patient.

Q. Are you in favor of a police force—a U.N. police force in northern Iraq?

The Secretary-General. That's what we are going to discuss with the President and with his collaborators. But today I have received a very clear rejection from the Iraq Government. They do not want a United Nations police presence in the area. Right now, as we——

Q. They don't want the U.N.?

The Secretary-General. They don't want the U.N.

Q. That's par for the course, isn't it? I mean, so what? [*Laughter*] Does that mean you have to comply?

The President. Well, listen, we've got to get to work here. We've got to get to work. I want to discuss all this with the Secretary-General.

Q. Does that mean you have to comply?

The President. And we will discuss all this and then figure out what to do.

Q. Did it come from Saddam?

The Secretary-General. Well, I think—I have a special envoy there, Mr. Goulding, and he was the one who received from the Minister of Foreign Affairs the negative reaction.

Note: The exchange began at 11:05 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Secretary-General referred to Marrack Goulding, U.N. Under Secretary-General, and Foreign Minister Ahmad Husayn Khudayir al-Samarra'i of Iraq.

Remarks Following Discussions With Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar de la Guerra of the United Nations May 9, 1991

The President. I want to welcome you to the White House today. I discussed with you many of the issues on the world's agenda. In a moment I'll mention some of the challenges, common challenges we face, but before, permit a personal observation.

I think back to the times that we worked

together as Perm Reps up there 20 years ago, and I still wonder how it is that I ended up with the easier job. [*Laughter*] But the problems that arrive at your doorstep often are the product of years of violence and strife. It falls to you to find, through so much hatred and bitterness, the