

Statement on Chemical Weapons May 13, 1991

The Gulf war has once again raised the specter of chemical weapons and demonstrated that unscrupulous regimes can and will threaten innocent populations with these weapons of terror so long as we permit them to exist. These stark events renew and reinforce my conviction, shared by responsible leaders around the world, that chemical weapons must be banned—everywhere in the world.

The world's best hope for this goal is the chemical weapons convention now being negotiated by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The United States is committed to the early, successful completion of this convention, and I am today announcing a number of steps we will take to accelerate the negotiations and achieve an effective chemical weapons ban as soon as possible. I hope this initiative also will spur other nations to commit themselves equally to this critical objective.

I have instructed the United States negotiating team in Geneva to implement my decisions at the next session which begins May 14. To demonstrate the United States commitment to banning chemical weapons, we are formally forswearing the use of chemical weapons for any reason, including retaliation, against any state, effective when the convention enters into force, and will

propose that all states follow suit. Further, the United States unconditionally commits itself to the destruction of all our stocks of chemical weapons within 10 years of entry into force and will propose that all other states do likewise. We will offer technical assistance to others to do this efficiently and safely.

In addition, we will call for setting a target date to conclude the convention and recommend the Conference stay in continuous session if necessary to meet the target. The United States also will propose new and effective verification measures for inspecting sites suspected of producing or storing chemical weapons. To provide tangible benefits for those states that join the convention and significant penalties for those that fail to support it, the United States will propose the convention require parties to refuse to trade in chemical weapon-related materials with states that do not join in the convention. The United States reaffirms that we will impose all appropriate sanctions in response to violations of the convention, especially the use of chemical weapons.

These steps can move the world significantly closer to the goal of a world free of chemical weapons. I call upon all other nations to join us in the serious and cooperative pursuit of this important goal.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Robert M. Gates To Be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and a News Conference May 14, 1991

The President. Well, I'm pleased to nominate Robert Gates to be the Director of Central Intelligence. As most of you know, Bob Gates has served as deputy national security adviser for the last two and a half years. And before that, he dedicated more than 20 years to the service of the CIA and the important task that it performs for our country. It's with this background of

professionalism, dedication, and integrity that I'm asking the Senate to approve his nomination to be the next Director.

He follows in the distinguished footsteps of Bill Webster. And I know that Bob will maintain a strong and responsive Central Intelligence Agency that will provide the kind of intelligence America needs to maintain its role as leader of the free world.

In the last two and a half years, Bob has lent a steady hand to the deliberations of our National Security Council. He's directed, as all of us know, the Deputies Committee—a group of interagency leaders who in times of crisis have met continuously to provide the basic decisions and recommendations that have protected America's security interests. In Panama and in Liberia, and perhaps most importantly, in Operation Desert Storm, Bob Gates has performed with wisdom and precision in laying out the options for Presidential action. He's a good man, and I'm proud to send his name up to the Senate.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

Q. Mr. President, it's pretty clear that there are no qualms in this administration about opening up the Iran-*contra* scandal again, and questions to Mr. Gates as to what he knew and when he knew it, in terms of—

The President. What's your question to me?

Q. My question is, do you have any qualms about—

The President. No.

Q. —this question being opened up?

The President. No qualms at all.

Q. And do you think that he'll be able to—

The President. In fact, we've had consultation with—

Q. Why did he bow out—

The President. May I finish, please? We've had consultation with the people on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and so far I'm very, very pleased with the way they've gone.

Q. Well, why did he bow out before?

The President. Well, all that can—everybody gets a hearing up there. All will be well.

Arms Control in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President, could I ask you a question about the Middle East? Mr. President, are you taking the lead as has been reported in pressing for a Middle East arms control plan that would freeze Israel's nuclear arsenal and require all states in the Middle East to give back chemical weapons?

The President. Well, we're in the process

of working this arms control problem. And I'm not prepared to give any details on it today at all. But there are all kinds of options out there.

Q. May I follow up? Are you consulting now with allies? And when do you think you might have something?

The President. We are consulting with allies, but—and I can't give you—I just don't want to predict on the timeframe. But we are discussing it, and I think there's a lot of sympathy for the idea of trying to get control of weapons. And I'm strongly for it.

Nomination of Robert Gates

Q. The CIA was once a Cabinet position, and under William Casey, the last time that Mr. Gates was there, he was considered fairly much a director who advocated his own policies. Will Mr. Gates become a Cabinet member, or will you keep the CIA in the kind of support role it was—

The President. I will keep it the way it was when I was there. And it will be—he will be at the table when matters of—or we need the intelligence to make critical decisions on foreign affairs. He will not be a political—trying to shape policy. But he will do a superb job as a professional intelligence officer, heading the Intelligence Agency. That's the way it's going to be.

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, would you care to give us your reaction to the clash between British troops and Iraqi troops, first? And do you think it will be necessary for American troops to actually occupy Iraq to prevent any more difficulties between the refugees and the Iraqi troops?

The President. No, I think the way I'd do this is to say that it's surprising there have been so few flareups of this nature. Tempers are high; it's very difficult for these refugees. And so I don't expect any more. And we're working with—we're starting consultations with the United Nations. I think you saw Prince Sadruddin Khan's comments yesterday about getting U.N. flags over some of the convoys. So, we're moving. I want to see this internationalized. But it is to a degree because we have British and French forces there.

Did I leave out a part of that?

Q. Do you think the Iraqi troops should be disarmed—should voluntarily lay down their weapons or at least pull back?

The President. Well, I'd leave that to the people that are trying to separate the forces there. And I don't—what they should do is be careful not to put any of these refugees or any allied troops into harm's way.

Middle East Peace Prospects

Q. Has President Assad of Syria pretty much slammed the door shut on any peace talks in the Middle East? And is the U.S. willing to seek a scaled-down version of that—perhaps talks between the Palestinians, Jordan, and Israel instead of a wider peace conference? And are you growing the least bit discouraged by the failure so far of Secretary Baker to get this thing going?

The President. Well, I wouldn't say it's a failure; but there are ups and downs in this process. There always have been. Anybody that's ever dealt with the Middle East knows that there are ups and downs in the process. But I'm not discouraged. I would like to see President Assad do what the Secretary of State has asked. But we'll just keep working on this. I can't give you a very optimistic report, but I'm about where I was last week or whenever we last talked, to say there's room for optimism. But you go forward and then you get some setbacks in this process. But it's always been that way.

Q. Are you seeking a scaled-down version of talks, perhaps, between Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians?

The President. We will just leave that to the Secretary. And it won't help for me to be advocating from here what I think. One of the reasons is that when you're dealing with a problem of this complexity, you do need to have certain things kept quiet for negotiation. I don't want to duck your question, but I just don't feel that it would be helpful for me at this critical time to go into the details.

Yes, two, and then I've got to go.

Soviet-U.S. Summit

Q. Mr. President, after your conversation with President Gorbachev last Saturday, a Soviet spokesman said there would be a

U.S.-Soviet summit this summer. Can you confirm that, sir? And secondly, would you support inviting Mr. Gorbachev to the economic summit of the G-7 in London in July?

The President. On the first part, I can't confirm it. There's no set time, no agreement. I've made clear that I would like to go to Moscow under certain conditions and I'd like to think I will. On the second part of it—what was the second one on Gorbachev?

Soviet Participation in the Group of Seven Economic Summit

Q. Would you favor having Gorbachev come to the economic summit?

The President. Well, this is a matter that we must discuss with the G-7 allies. I think that they've evidenced an interest in this—the Soviets have—but I think it's important that if he goes there something positive will happen. So, this is a matter that I will be discussing with the various leaders of the other six countries.

Two—one more, and then I've really got to go.

Nomination of Robert Gates

Q. Considering the controversy over Mr. Gates' nomination last time and considering your own ethical standards for your administration, can you tell us on what you base your feeling that there is no problem with what Mr. Gates' role was at the CIA during the Iran-*contra*—your own knowledge, or did you have an investigation done, or what?

The President. I know Bob Gates, and I know him to be a man of honor. These matters have been discussed. And I have absolutely no qualms whatsoever. This matter has been investigated over and over again, this Iran-*contra*. It's been going on for years. If I were worried about opening up Iran-*contra*, you might suggest I wouldn't send that name forward. But this man has my full trust. He's honest. He's a man of total integrity. And that's the way I'd answer the question. And they'll have hearings—they can ask any questions they want.

Bob, do you want to say something?

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Q. Just briefly, sir, can I follow up?

The President. No, Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News], I'm awful sorry, I've got to go meet the Queen—[laughter]—get ready to meet the Queen.

Mr. Gates. Mr. President, I'd just like to thank you. This is a great honor for me. I appreciate the opportunity that it represents. And if confirmed, I look forward to doing my best to more fully develop what is already the best intelligence service in the world. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

Note: The President's 82d news conference began at 9 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In the news conference, the following persons were referred to: William H. Webster, Director of Central Intelligence; William J. Casey, former Director of Central Intelligence; Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, chief United Nations Representative in Iraq; President Hafiz al-Assad of Syria; Secretary of State James A. Baker III; President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union; and Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom.

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony for Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom

May 14, 1991

The President. Your Majesty and Your Royal Highness, ladies and gentlemen, and friends of what is indeed our special relationship. Your Majesty, on behalf of the American people, it is an honor to welcome you to the United States and to the White House.

You have been freedom's friend for as long as we remember—back to World War II when, at 18, you joined the war against fascism. It was then that America first began to know you as one of us, came to love you as standing fast with us for freedom, summoning across the oceans our values and our dreams.

George Bernard Shaw once joked that Britain and America are two countries separated by a common language. In truth, we are joined by a common heritage and culture, civilization and soul.

On the occasion of your first state visit to the United States, Dwight Eisenhower spoke of these bonds of friendship. He said, "Those ties have been tested in the crucible of war when we have fought side by side to defend the values we hold dear." That was true in 1957 and just as true today.

For nearly 400 years, the histories of Britain and America have been inseparable. The first permanent English settlement in America was created at Jamestown, in Vir-

ginia, 384 years ago this week. Thirteen years later, the Pilgrims landed far to the north at a place they called Plymouth Rock, named after your great naval port from which they sailed.

From those events sprang the American nation, believing, as you do, in the sanctity of the individual, and enriched by family ties that make our nations one. Because those ties have never been closer, today our alliance has perhaps never been stronger. For evidence, look to the sands and seas of the Persian Gulf. Our countries have long sought the real peace which means the triumph of freedom, not merely the absence of war. We know that you can't lock people behind walls forever when moral conviction uplifts their souls. So, like Monty and Ike, and Churchill and FDR, we linked hands and hearts in the Gulf to do what was right and good.

Years from now, men will speak of American and British heroism in the Gulf, as they do today of our cooperation in two World Wars and 40 years of peacetime alliance. They will talk of the 1st Infantry Division and the Desert Rats and of the finest sons and daughters any nation could ever have. They will praise those who assured that naked aggression would not stand, and in so doing, salute Britain's help and leadership