

Washington?

The President. We're going to keep on working it, from here, and if there's reason to go back, he will. It might kill him—been traveling all the time—but he's doing a first-class job on it.

Q. Are you going to invite anyone here?

Q. What about a Washington peace conference—are you considering that still?

The President. That's a detail I'm not discussing—along with all the other details I'm not discussing.

Q. Mr. President, is that window of opportunity that was opened after the Iraq war closing? Are you losing some of that advantage?

The President. I don't think so. I think the credibility of the United States is higher in the Middle East than it's ever been. I think it's still there, Jim. I don't think there's an erosion to it.

Q. Are you standing by [United Nations Security Council Resolutions] 338 and 242? Do you continue to support land for peace?

The President. Well, that's—the United States position is there.

Anybody want to ask the Secretary a question before I—before we fire this machine up?

Q. Yes, I would like to ask Mr. Baker—

Secretary Baker. Let me say something about 242 and 338, which is a very good question. The parties with whom we've been talking have agreed that the objective

is a comprehensive settlement based on 242 and 338. And that represents, I think, a pretty important agreement. That doesn't bring you to a peace conference, because you've got to get agreement on everything before—every last thing has to be agreed to before you can have a peace conference. But that first fundamental agreement has to be made. And it has been made.

Q. Well Mr. Secretary, the parties don't even agree on what 242 and 338 require.

Secretary Baker. If there was an agreement on what 242 required you wouldn't have to have a conference. You wouldn't even, indeed, have to have negotiations. That's what the negotiations are for—is to determine exactly what's meant by 242.

Q. You're saying everyone's committed to those?

Secretary Baker. To 242 and 338—

Q. Can a conference be held without—

Q. Mr. President, can you see any benefit at all to a Washington conference?

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to accept some restrictions on MFN for China?

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you all very much, and good day. [Laughter] I'm leaving. We'll see you guys.

Note: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. on the South Lawn of the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Strategic Framework in Asia May 17, 1991

Dear 111111:

Pursuant to section 915 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991 (Public Law 101-189), I am hereby transmitting a follow-on report that updates the status of the implementation of our Strategic Framework in Asia.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

Note: Identical letters were sent to Robert C. Byrd and Mark O. Hatfield, chairman

and ranking Republican member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations; Sam Nunn and John W. Warner, chairman and ranking Republican member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services; Claiborne Pell and Jesse Helms, chairman and ranking Republican member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Jamie L. Whitten and Joseph M. McDade, chairman and ranking Republican member of the House Committee on Appropriations; Les Aspin and William L. Dickinson, chairman and ranking

Republican member of the House Committee on Armed Services; Dante B. Fascell and William S. Broomfield, chairman and rank-

ing Republican member of the House Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress on Japanese Importation of Sea Turtles

May 17, 1991

To the Congress of the United States:

On March 20, 1991, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan and Secretary of Commerce Robert Mosbacher certified under section 8 of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (Pelly Amendment), 22 U.S.C. 1978(a)(2), that nationals of Japan have engaged in trade in sea turtles that threatens the survival of two endangered species and severely diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international conservation program.

The certification by the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce was made because Japan has allowed its nationals to import large amounts of raw hawksbill sea turtle shell and olive ridley sea turtle skin. All sea turtles were recognized as endangered by CITES on July 1, 1975, and listed on Appendix I of that convention, which prohibits all international trade in the listed products. When Japan joined CITES in 1981, it reserved on hawksbill and olive ridley sea turtles and continued to trade in them.

Since the certification, my Administration has held discussions with the Government of Japan in an effort to end its trade in sea turtles. The Government of Japan has responded by ending its trade in olive ridley sea turtles and announcing publicly its intent to withdraw its reservations to CITES on olive ridleys. It has also announced publicly its commitment to end all trade in hawksbill sea turtles by a date certain and make a decision in the near future on the specific date for ending the trade and for lifting its reservation to CITES for this species. Given these commitments, I have decided not to recommend specific measures to prohibit wildlife imports at this time pending an assessment within 30 days of the adequacy of Japan's actions to lift its reservation and bring to a conclusive end its trade in hawksbill sea turtles. Based on that assessment, an additional report will be made to the Congress.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
May 17, 1991.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Situation in the Persian Gulf

May 17, 1991

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On March 19, 1991, I reported to you, consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1), on the successful conduct of military operations aimed at the liberation of Kuwait. Since that time, the United Nations Security Council has adopted Resolution 687, which set forth the preconditions for a formal cease-fire. Iraq has

accepted those terms, and the cease-fire and withdrawal of coalition forces from southern Iraq have been concluded. The Iraqi repression of the Kurdish people has, however, necessitated a limited introduction of U.S. forces into northern Iraq for emergency relief purposes. I am reporting these matters to you as part of our continuing effort to keep the Congress fully informed on these developments.