

Assistant to the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago. Prior to this Mr. Raphaelson served with the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois in several capacities: U.S. Attorney, 1989–1990; Chief of the Special Prosecution Division, 1987–1989; Chief of the Criminal Litigation Division, 1987; and

Deputy Chief for Special Prosecutions, 1986–1987.

Mr. Raphaelson graduated from Northwestern University (B.A., 1974; J.D., 1977). He was born July 3, 1953, in Chicago, IL. Mr. Raphaelson is married, has three children, and resides in Northbrook, IL.

Message on the Observance of National Afro-American (Black) History Month

February 11, 1991

This February, as we observe National Black History Month, we recognize the remarkable achievements of Black Americans and the many contributions they have made to our national heritage.

All of us can learn from the special programs and activities being conducted nationwide because Black history is, in fact, America's history. Our Nation has been shaped by the unique contributions of Black Americans, and, today, we share the pride of those courageous men and women who have triumphed over the bitter legacy of slavery and discrimination. Individuals like Frederick Douglass, Dr. Charles Drew, Rosa Parks, and Dr. Martin Luther King are remembered throughout the world for the strength of their convictions and the wealth of their abilities.

However, history is more than a proudly declared list of past feats. It is an ongoing

process that is created each moment as we go about our daily lives. Inspired by the efforts of those who struggled to open the doors of opportunity, Black Americans today are adding to their rich history by excelling in business, government, science, and education—virtually every field of endeavor. Their achievements, like those of previous generations, can serve as powerful examples for our Nation's youth as we strive to create an environment free of the crime and drug abuse that are taking a toll on far too many young Americans. Black History Month challenges young people, not only to celebrate the great accomplishments of the past, but also to turn hard-won opportunity into a hopeful future.

I encourage all Americans to join me in the celebration of Black History Month.

GEORGE BUSH

Message on the Observance of the Lunar New Year, 4689

February 11, 1991

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Ram, 4689.

This holiday provides a wonderful opportunity for you to join with family and friends in celebrating the past and in looking ahead to the challenges and opportunities that the new year will bring. However, on this special occasion, it is also fitting that all Ameri-

cans pause to recognize the many lasting contributions Chinese Americans have made to our country.

America owes a debt of gratitude to the many ethnic groups that have helped to shape the character of our Nation. Sharing a rich and diverse heritage, Americans of Chinese descent have long been recognized for their many contributions to America's

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social, cultural, and economic development. Today, by striving to uphold virtues celebrated during the Year of the Ram—patience, self-sacrifice, and consideration for others—you continue to enrich our commu-

nities and our country.

Barbara and I send our best wishes for every happiness in the Year of the Ram. God bless you.

GEORGE BUSH

Remarks on the Persian Gulf Conflict

February 11, 1991

The President. Let me just say that we had a very thorough briefing from Secretary Cheney and from Chairman Powell. They had a very good visit out there to the Gulf area, talking to our commanders. I am very satisfied, having heard their briefing, with the progress in the war. The air campaign has been very, very effective, and it will continue for awhile. We're not talking about dates for further adding to the air campaign, put it that way.

But I would simply want to say to the American people that the war is going well. I am very pleased with the people that are running the war; they have my full confidence. We are going to take whatever time is necessary to sort out when a next stage might begin. And I will not be discussing it any further than that. And I can guarantee you that there should be no further discussion of that for a lot of reasons, including the safety of our own troops—and that comes first as far as I'm concerned—and the coalition forces. Their safety is paramount in my mind.

But I would be remiss if I didn't reassure the American people that this war is being fought with high technology. There is no targeting of civilians. It has gone far better in terms of casualties than I'd hoped, though we mourn the loss of every single member of our armed forces and the coalition forces, of course.

My heart still goes out to the families. I might say to the families of those who are over there, the report from General Powell and from Secretary Cheney is very reassuring in terms of the morale of our people over there. They know why they are there. They are gung ho about it. They know its importance. They know that it's

right and just. And so, I have great confidence in them.

And altogether, I feel much better after this briefing. I've always felt confident we were on the right path. I feel even more so now after this briefing from Secretary Cheney and General Powell. So, we will just continue down this road. We're the ones that are going to set the time for how this war—the time for any action that is taken. We are not going to suit somebody else's timetable, whether he lives in Baghdad or anyplace else. And that's exactly the way it should be.

And so, I will rely heavily on the advice of our Secretary of Defense, of our Chairman, of our generals out there—General Schwarzkopf and others. Then if they come to me and say there needs to be another phase, then I will then make that decision because that is a decision for the President of the United States.

Having said that, I have total confidence that we are on the right path. And with no further ado, I want to thank them for this arduous trip, but it was well worth it.

Thank you.

Q. Mr. President are you still skeptical air power will do the job?

The President. They may be taking questions over there and I'll refer the—as I said early on when I started in all of this, the briefings on military and air and all of this are best conducted by the experts. And they are over there across the river in the Pentagon. When it comes to the President's decision, I'll be glad to discuss it at the appropriate time. But this is not the appropriate time, for the reasons that I gave you.

We are on track; it is going smoothly. I've