

Bush

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neva, only to be totally rebuffed. This past weekend, in a last ditch effort, the secretary general of the United Nations went to the Middle East with peace in his heart, his second such mission. And he came back from Baghdad with no progress at all in getting Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait.

Now, the 28 countries with forces in the gulf area have exhausted all reasonable efforts to reach a peaceful resolution, have no choice but to drive Saddam from Kuwait by force. We will not fail.

As I report to you, air attacks are underway against military targets in Iraq. We are determined to knock out Saddam Hussein's nuclear bomb potential. We will also destroy his chemical weapons facilities. Much of Saddam's artillery and tanks will be destroyed.

Our operations are designed to best protect the lives of all the coalition forces, by targeting Saddam's vast military arsenal.

Initial reports from Gen. Schwarzkopf are that our operations are proceeding according to plan. Our objectives are clear: Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait; the legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place; and Kuwait will once again be free.

Iraq will eventually comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions and, then, when peace is restored, it is our hope that Iraq will live as a peaceful and cooperative member of the family of nations, thus enhancing the security and stability of the gulf.

Some may ask: "Why act now? Why not wait?" The answer is clear. The world could wait no longer. Sanctions, though having some effect, showed no signs of accomplishing their objectives.

Sanctions were tried for well over five months, and we and our allies concluded that sanctions alone would not force Saddam from Kuwait.

While the world waited, Saddam Hussein systematically raped, pillaged and plundered a tiny nation, no threat to his own.

He subjected the people of Kuwait to unspeakable atrocities, and among those, maimed and murdered innocent children.

While the world waited, Saddam sought to add to the chemical weapons arsenal he now possesses, and infinitely more dangerous weapon of mass destruction, the nuclear weapon.

And while the world waited, while the world talked peace and withdrawal, Saddam Hussein dug in and moved massive forces into Kuwait.

While the world waited, while Saddam stalled, more damage was being done to the fragile economies of the Third World, emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, to the entire world including to our own economy.

The United States, together with the United Nations, exhausted every means at our disposal to bring this crisis to a peaceful end. However, Saddam clearly felt that by stalling and threatening and defying the United Nations, he could weaken the forces arrayed against him.

While the world waited, Saddam Hussein met every overture of peace with open contempt. While the world prayed for peace, Saddam prepared for war.

I had hoped that when the United States Congress in historic debate took its resolute action, Saddam would realize he could not prevail and would move out of Kuwait in accord with the United Nations resolutions. He did not do that.

Instead, he remained intransigent. Certain that time was on his side. Saddam was warned over and over again to comply with the will of the United Nations.

Leave Kuwait or be driven out.

Saddam has arrogantly rejected all warnings. Instead, he tried to make this a dispute between Iraq and the United States of America. Well, he failed.

Tonight, 28 nations, countries from five continents, Europe and Asia, Africa and the Arab league have forces in the Gulf area, standing shoulder to shoulder against Saddam Hussein.

These countries had hoped the use of force could be avoided. Regrettably, we now believe that only force

will make him leave.

Prior to ordering our forces into battle, I instructed our military commanders to take every necessary step to prevail as quickly as possible. With the greatest degree of protection possible for American and allied service men and women, I have told the American people before that this would not be another Vietnam. And I repeat this here tonight.

Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world, and they will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back. I am hopefully that this fighting will not go on for long, and that casualties will be held to an absolute minimum.

This is an historic moment. We have in this past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and cold war. We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order. A world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations.

When we are successful, and we will be, we have a real chance at this new world order an order in which a credible United Nations can use its peacekeeping role to fulfill the promise and vision of the U.N.'s founders.

We have no argument with the people of Iraq. Indeed, for the innocents caught in this conflict, I pray for their safety.

Our goal is not the conquest of Iraq. It is the liberation of Kuwait. It is my hope that somehow the Iraqi people can that even now convince their dictator that he must lay down his arms, leave Kuwait, and let Iraq itself rejoin the family of peace-loving nations.

Thomas Paine wrote many years ago: "These are the times that try men's souls."

Those well-known words are so very true today. And even as planes of the multi-national forces attack Iraq, I prefer to think of peace, not war.

I am convinced, not only that we will prevail, but that out of the horror of combat will come the recognition that no nation can stand against a world united. No nation will be permitted to brutally assault its neighbor.

No president can easily commit our sons and daughters to war. They are the nation's finest. Our's is an all-volunteer force, magnificently trained and highly motivated.

The troops know why they're there. And listen to what they say. For they have said it better than any president or prime minister ever could.

Listen to Hollywood Huddlestone, Marine Lance Corporal, he says, "Let's free these people so we can go home and be free again."

And he's right. The terrible crimes and tortures committed by Saddam's henchmen against the innocent people of Kuwait are an affront to mankind, and a challenge to the freedom of all.

Listen to one of our great officers out there, Marine Lieutenant Walter Boomer, he said, "There are things worth fighting for. A world in which brutality and lawlessness are allowed to go unchecked isn't the kind of world we're going to want to live in."

Listen to Master Sergeant J.P. Kendall of the 82nd Airborne, "We're here for more than just the price of a gallon of gas. What we're doing is going to chart the future of the world for the next hundred years. It's better to deal with this guy now, than five years from now."

And finally we should all sit up and listen to Jackie Jones, an Army lieutenant, when she says, "If we let him get away with this, who knows what's going to be next."

I have called upon Hollywood and Walter and J.P. and Jackie and all their courageous comrades-in-arms to do what must be done.

Tonight, America and the world are deeply grateful to them and to their families.

And let me say that everyone watching and listening tonight, when the troops we've sent in finish their work, I am determined to bring them home as soon as possible.

Tonight as our forces fight, they and their families are in our prayers and may God bless each and every one of them and the coalition forces at our side in the Gulf. And may He continue to bless our nation, the United States of America.

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Reaction

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earlier. "We should have done this earlier because there was no way Saddam Hussein was going to give up," Dohnalik said.

He said since the United States outnumbered Iraq in planes, the U.S. forces should use it to their advantage.

"You are always going to lose lives in war, but the people enlisted in the reserves and armed forces to defend our country and they realized that when they enrolled," he said.

Fred Pilkington, a senior accounting major, said he likes the way Bush has specific plans to handle the war.

"War is not an immoral action and it's regrettable it had to happen this way, but I'm happy Bush responded quickly and efficiently," Pilkington said.

"It is better to take short-term losses," he said. "In general, I support what the president is doing."

Matt Mars, a senior architecture major, said Bush would not have sent troops to Saudi Arabia to do nothing.

"We can no longer hope war is not going to happen, so now we can only hope it is short," Mars said.

Mars said after watching the news, he thought there was an overwhelming attitude that the soldiers were tired of waiting and seemed ready to start.

"The apprehension was almost getting as bad as the conflict itself," Mars added.

Since the war with Iraq is the first major war this generation has experienced, Mars said it has hit home hard.

A support group for A&M faculty and staff members and students with relatives or friends in the Middle East is meeting at 7:45 tonight in 145 MSC.

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