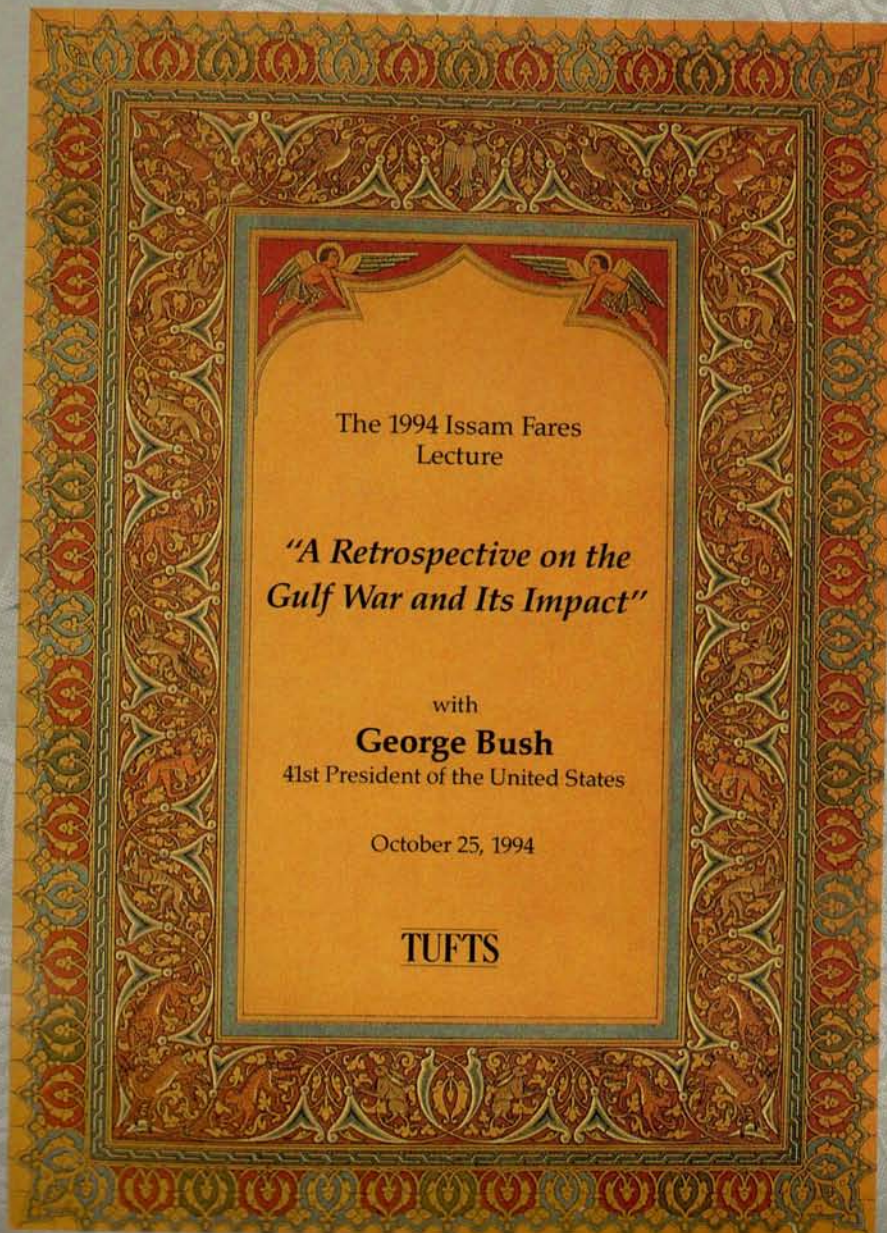


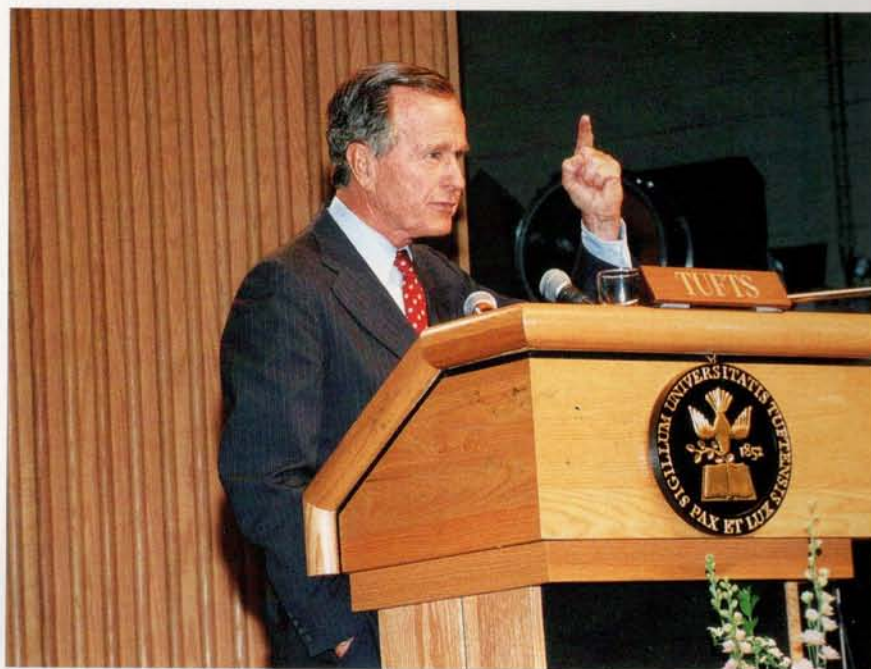
# A RETROSPECTIVE ON THE GULF WAR AND ITS IMPACT

GEORGE H.W. BUSH, 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States

October 25, 1994







## GEORGE BUSH

George Bush's election in 1988 to succeed Ronald Reagan as the forty-first President of the United States was the pinnacle of a long life of public service.

Three years as a Navy Pilot during World War II, four years as a congressman from Texas, two years as US Ambassador to the United Nations, two years as director of the Central Intelligence Agency and eight years as Reagan's Vice-President give Bush an unrivaled perspective on the events that shaped the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Bush presidency was a time of unprecedented world change. The Cold War ended, the Berlin Wall fell, democracy flowered across Eastern Europe, and the United States launched new partnerships with former adversaries around the globe.

In 1991, Bush led a 30 nation-coalition to war in the Persian Gulf to oppose Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The Gulf War was a watershed event in Middle East history and a defining moment in American foreign policy after the Cold War.





## Issam Fares

Thank you Dr. Di Biaggio for your kind words. This is indeed a privileged occasion for me to speak at Tufts University, an institution my whole family and I are proud to be involved with and to be part of. I am particularly happy to meet the students of this excellent institution of learning. I welcome President Bush, not only as a great American President, but also as a speaker in the Lecture Series that carries my name at Tufts University. There are few leaders on the world stage today who can speak with greater clarity and vision on international issues than President Bush. From the day he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery in the Second World War, he was destined for a career of greatness, serving as: a congressman, United Nations ambassador, chairman of the Republican National Committee, ambassador to China, director of the CIA, then twelve years in the White House; eight as Ronald Regan's vice President and four as the forty-first President of the United States. It was during his presidency that we witnessed the collapse of the Berlin wall, the growth of democracy in eastern Europe, the rise of a new world order, and the launching of the peace process in the Middle East. These are all events of historic proportions. They did not come about by chance. As you know, no President can hope to implement all of his agenda during his term of office. Although you achieved much, Mr. President, your agenda was so ambitious that we will be reaping its fruits for years to come. As a Lebanese with strong friendships in the United States, I am reassured that the Middle East peace process is moving forward. For centuries, the Holy Land has been a theater of violence and conflict. An opportunity to reverse this state of affairs now exists. Let's seize it. My country, Lebanon, is now rapidly recovering from the ravages of war. It is working closely with Syria to grasp the opportunity and to ensure that a just, comprehensive, and stable peace is achieved. With peace, Lebanon will regain its natural role as the conveyor of the ideals of freedom, democracy, and coexistence in the Arab world. We need your help in this process. The President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hraoui, asked me to convey to you the greetings of the Lebanese people and his own best wishes; he also asked me to officially invite you and Mrs. Bush to visit Lebanon. Tufts University, which has always been concerned with public affairs, the public interest, and world order, welcomes you today. Lebanon, which seeks for peace, hopes to welcome you soon and to honor you as the man who made the prospect of peace in our region a real possibility. Mr. President, I thank you for being with us. I thank you for addressing a subject of world importance and I thank all of you at Tufts for making this great occasion possible.





## George Bush

Tufts University

May I, at the outset of my remarks, salute not just the officials of this great school and the students - several of whom I had the opportunity to meet - but also the past, and present ambassadors and ministers from Lebanon, whose presence here on the Tufts campus honors me today. We are delighted to have them here, outstanding leaders who devoted their lives to service to that wonderful country in the Middle East, and I salute you all. I am glad to renew the friendship with some of the Middle East people that goes back to 1971 when I was the ambassador of the United States to the United Nations.

On his way to the auditorium tonight, my aide told me that he overheard a mother telling her son: «Tonight you are going to hear someone who was the most powerful man in the world.» The kid said: «Wow! You mean Mo Brown is going to be here?!»

Speaking of the most powerful man in the world and powerful politician, I am talking serious business here about Middle East peace. It is a joy to see some representatives from the Massachusetts legislators, particularly - speaking of power and a friend - Billy Bolger, who is the head of the State Senate here. He is a legend, and I would say to my friends from Lebanon, we were opposite parties, this guy and I. He is still elected and I am not. But, I would also say that, where he could give his support to his President, he did, and I am grateful.

I have great respect to the Fares family, and thanks also to the many people from Tufts who have given me this warm welcome, and especially to another old friend, John Di Biaggio, and of course, Nancy, his charming wife who made me feel so at home here. I want to thank the Fares Lecture Committee and Leila Fawaz, whose reputation has preceded her, and everyone tells me how lucky this University to have her in its midst as an arranger-extraordinaire. I am proud to be here, I am delighted to see her in person, I am glad to be here on the hill. I have always had a lot of respect for any organization that has an elephant as its mascot.

As you know, we have often relied for advice and appointment on Tufts individuals when I was in the White House. One of your engineering professors was the Chief of Staff, my dear friend John Sununu. When I heard that he had taken a little flack over his car and airplane problems, Tufts sent him a skateboard as an alternative, suggesting that he call it «Skateboard One.» But let me just say a word about that, John Sununu is my friend. Andy Card, who was here, and served with him as the former Secretary of Transportation in my Administration, was one of the brightest, ablest men that I have ever met in my entire life, and Barbara and I treasure our friendship with him.



*«40,000 students have received assistance from his foundation, and over 50,000 patients have received medical assistance because of his love and care. This is individual initiative; this is private enterprise, and it is most generous. This is how nations are built, and I particularly want to salute him as a man with a powerful insight, and the need for reasoned debate.»*

#### Issam Fares and Lebanon

I think this campus probably could use - even though it is excellent now - the scale, the experience, and the brilliance of that man. So, I salute him, I know he has difficulties, but he is a true and a loyal friend. I also have the pleasure of knowing Joe Mayer, your President and chancellor, a warm and brilliant man, and I admire his work. I was proud to give him two presidential awards for his work on the environment, and then his battle against hunger.

John told me about the spirit and tradition of Tufts, even about putting pennies in Jumbo's trunk before exams, but I want to pay tribute first, before making my comment, to the extraordinary man whose vision brought this product together here, and I am talking about Issam Fares, someone I respect; an international philanthropist who we heard has reached out with his generous hand to people in need across the globe. He has invested in major development programs, employing thousands of Americans; contributed generously in universities, in their think tanks, in volunteer organizations, with a view for building bridges between Lebanon, that marvelous country in the Middle East, and the United States of America. He believed in strengthening the linkages between our two lands. Lebanon, he believes, needs us to support a just peace in the Middle East, and we need Lebanon, I can tell you that, in the promotion of freedom, democracy, and pluralism around the world. In Europe, he has invested a major interest; he has invested in development, in organizations to promote culture and understanding among people. Issam has emerged as a leading figure in the Middle East, playing an important role in the development of Lebanon, his homeland, which needs and deserves extensive help after so many years of being fractured by war.

For what Issam Fares has done for his country, I can be selective but I want to be a bit specific. He helped fund the University of Balamand; he funded the Issam Fares Medical Auditorium at the American University of Beirut; he helped fund a hospital in Tripoli; he built clinics, schools, and community centers in Akkar and other rural areas; he founded agricultural programs; small industries; communication facilities; and he continues to support generously all of these activities. Some 40,000 students have received assistance from his foundation, and over 50,000 patients have received medical assistance because of his love and care. This is individual initiative; this is private enterprise, and it is most generous. This is how nations are built, and I particularly want to salute him as a man with a powerful insight, and a supporter of reasoned debate.

His son Fares, as was mentioned earlier, has graduated at this great school. He is with us tonight, and he came up with the idea of this Lecture Series to better understand the Middle East. He spoke to his dad, and his dad listened, and this is a lesson to all of us parents, so, tonight we thank them.



*«When I first learned that Iraq invaded Kuwait in the evening of August 1, 1990, and very quickly I determined, what a wonderful advice the strong foreign policy team, that aggression could not stand and made clear that Saddam Hussein would get out of Kuwait. The only question in my mind of this was how?»*

### **The decision regarding Iraq**

In too many parts of this world, debate is silenced. Mr. Fares has seen first-hand that attack, a statement opposing opinion. And so, we appreciate what we have, right here in the United States; the Constitution protected the right of sincere and open discussion. He has endowed this remarkable Lecture Series, because he cherishes the freedom, and this passion that comes with a healthy democratic society. I know that during the Gulf War, the University presented a diverse viewpoint, a diverse viewpoint represented all over the United States. Barbara and I just had to sit in our second floor dining room, in our private quarters in the White House, and hear a few diverse points being presented outside. I do not know if five protestors were beating drums all the time, it is a little annoying, but it did get my attention and did not change my mind on anything, but it got my attention.

We understood the diverse viewpoints, very political viewpoints, and cultural perspectives, and so, what I want to do tonight is talk to you about how I made the decision I did regarding Iraq. Nothing in this world is black and white, and so, I will tell you how I dealt with the shades of gray, and then you could ask me questions about whatever is on your mind. For the ground rules I said to President John Di Biaggio what I should talk about, and he said talk about 30 minutes, and then we will ask you some questions, and I am glad to do that.

I am being asked to look back several years to the time of the Gulf War, to look at why we did what we did, and to assess what came of it, and I am very happy to do that, to travel timely, given what Saddam Hussein has recently done, given the fact that our President is now on track in the Middle East. All this taking place may be history, but it is not at all historic, and the Gulf crisis, however, is one of those events that deserve a distinction. The stakes could not have been greater, both for the United States and the entire world.

I am particularly pleased that Issam Fares addressed this topic now, given the current situation in the Gulf, and all the information and misinformation that have come out. Incidentally, though, we should not expect miracles. I do believe it is proper in that our President is going to the Middle East, and I assume that he is going to Syria. He cannot look at the Middle East without recognizing the importance of the differences with Syria and without recognizing the importance of having to dialogue with Syria.

I remember when I met Hafez Assad in Geneva, I was criticized madly by some quarters in the United States, but I felt it was the right thing to do, and I think history will suggest that it is the right thing for our President to do. Things move so fast these days that the revisionists had their work before the





participants and historians have had their say. I was the first one to say that. Like you, when I first learned that Iraq invaded Kuwait on the evening of August 1, 1990, and very quickly I determined, what wonderful advice from the strong foreign policy team, that aggression could not stand and made clear that Saddam Hussein would get out of Kuwait. The only question in my mind of this was how? In making this decision, I did not first go to some pollster and ask if the people were voters. I did not ask the Congress for a formal authorization, because I believed then, and I believe now, that the President has the authority under our system to move forces, even though two members of Congress filed impeachment papers the minute I moved to effect the transfer of 250,000 US soldiers to the Middle East. I did not ask the Congress, as I said, for formal authorization, and I sure did not scan the editorial pages to see if some columnist or other thought what we were doing was correct. I made this decision to reverse Iraq aggression because, first it was clear to me that to do so was right and necessary and in the vital interest of the United States of America. Second, because we had the means, we had the strength to do what we set out to do. And third, we left the Cold War behind in order to bring forth a new world.

#### **Facing economic and political blackmail**

We left the Cold War behind I say, when Gorbachev, now criticized in his home in Russia, came forth with Perestroika and decided, when it came to Iraq, that it was no longer an ally: this former client, former strategic ally in the Middle East. But, he opted for a broader principle, and the principle was, aggression would not stand. And how he dealt with this act of aggression within, determined that its post-Cold War role would be a frequent ruling of a lasting peace.

First, it is about time to start building a new world order. Our government, set at home in a democratic, tolerant, economically free country, will usher a blueprint committed to settling differences peacefully. Second, if Iraq controlled Kuwait and dominated the Arabian Peninsula, it would have had influence over these countries of course, over much of the world's resources, much of the world's oil.

And we do not have to live in a world, we in the westernized nations, where we would have to pay whatever economic and political blackmail price Saddam Hussein thought was reasonable. And besides that, today Hussein's legion is unopposed in a massive city like Kuwait, and it could be in Saudi Arabia, and perhaps in Riyadh. Third, the people of Kuwait were suffering, suffering enormously. Amnesty International recorded that the violence against innocent men and women, and particularly young girls and children





was overwhelming; it was horrendous. Something had to be done. The bishop of my church, I am an Episcopalian, and the bishop of my church is a pacifist, calm individual, kind person. He came to me, with Jim Baker at my side and said: «You cannot use force. Using force is immoral.» He is the leader of my own church. I said to him: «Let me ask you something: Have you read the report of Amnesty International about the killing of babies? Can you reread the terror wreaked on 14-year-old girls whose lives are ruined in that part of the world, and who are terrorized by the Iraqi soldiers?» He said: «No, I have not.» Then, I said, please read it. He read it, and he came back, and he said: «I do not believe the use of force even under these tremendous circumstances would be moral.» The debate was on. It was an honest debate. The debate was all across the country. More than that, I knew that if we did not stand up to Saddam right then, we would have to do so at some point in time. Next time, he will most probably use the missiles, the weapons that are at his disposal, and the price of defending our interest, the interest of the free world would have grown much higher.

Yes, I made the decision to stand up against a pine bulldog, a junkyard dog bully, and seek that his aggression would not stand.

The next six months was a time of diplomatic and military preparation that allowed the formation of a large force. I then dispatched 250,000 troops to the region, to ensure that Saddam Hussein went no further. In order to increase the pressure, there followed economic sanctions, approved by the United Nations' Security Council, preventing Iraq from exporting oil, and from importing anything but food and medicine. The United Nations' resolution provided for the sale of one and a \$1.5 billion worth of oil, provided its goal was to help the children and feed the hungry in Iraq. I hope none of these countries falls against this proposition which we, the United States, and what is left of the Coalition are trying to implement, for we are in no way attempting to starve or injure the people of Iraq.

We tried every diplomatic channel possible and we had a strong string of diplomats.

Soon, it became clear that sanctions alone would not force Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait. The man was prepared to sacrifice the Iraqi people for his own aggressive agenda; he was seizing the day, and the month to increase his military strength. Meanwhile, the people of Kuwait, families in Kuwait were suffering terribly, and our own coalition was experiencing the inevitable stress that comes from bringing together so many diverse members. We were fully prepared for an intensive military operation, still hoping that the threat





## Historically unprecedented coalition

of that would be enough to bring Saddam Hussein to his senses. I think it was that summer in the late 80s, in his assessment of us, and I also think that he hypothetically said he might not use that force, but he thought he could have some kind of a stand-up with the power of the US and the coalition. At the same time, we understood that we would have to follow through if Saddam did not reconsider. And to do so, we could not just stand up to his threat; threats that would undermine, not only the issues at hand, but also lose us credibility in the eyes of friend and foe alike. We have to do what we have to do. I consulted regularly with our allies, our coalition partners, and I did have good, strong relations with many of the leaders during the coalition. I had that ahead of time, for further crises, and I would like to say to students from Fletcher School, and other political kinds of school, that diplomacy can be exchanged by personal relations, personal contact with other world leaders. It is good, it is better to have a good relationship, a good personal relationship in hand, rather than trying to establish it just on the flip of your finger.

We built a successful and historically unprecedented coalition. We used the United Nations. We went and galvanized the United Nations' Security Council to pass resolution after resolution, increasing the pressure on Iraq to comply. And I think it is a very important point to look at, to consider that the sanctions of the United Nations Security Council gave international legitimacy to what we were doing, and to what we had to do. I would say that the key for US leadership at the United Nations was important, but our own leadership of a coalition team was absolutely essential. Then, finally, when the last chance of negotiations failed, when every effort to persuade Saddam to leave Kuwait completely and without conditions came to naught, «Desert Shield» became «Desert Storm.»

I will never forget the tension when I sent Jim Baker over to Geneva to talk to Tarek Aziz in that meeting. I sent with Jim Baker a letter that he had handed to Tarek Aziz, and said: «My President wants you to give this to your President.» He looked at it, and said he refused to give it to Saddam Hussein.

This man operated without a brain for not wanting to give my letter to Saddam Hussein but he did not do it. The letter was strong, and showed him exactly what would happen to him if he did not comply with the resolutions of the United Nations.

The decision I had to make in January 1991, to send young men and women into battle, someone else's sons and daughters, was the most anguishing one that any human being could be called upon to make.





But, we had a strong team of advisors, and I dealt with excellent intelligence. I hear talk today that we might not need the intelligence community anymore. My line is, we better help our President understand, as best we can, what is happening around this world, because there is no longer an enemy of a common superpower, that there is unpredictability, there is a need for stability and we better stay strong. I was blessed, because I had to assess this decision about war and peace with a strong intelligence community. I also remembered, as a young person, my own combat experience with World War II. I think it was about 50 years ago. I know it, it was 50 years ago to this very week that I was going to rejoin the Pacific fleet under Admiral Holding, and being shot down in a Japanese island on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1944. And that experience, that combat experience, I think, dramatically saved my life. I knew what it is like to be scared to death as a little kid out there, in the middle of the ocean, injured, disoriented, anguished by the death of my friend, and thoughts of human capture.

But when I became President, I knew that I was not going to rush, to send somebody else into that hell.

This is a decision no commander could take lightly. The way to lead is to give our military profession clear and achievable objectives, define the mission, give the commanders whatever it will take to accomplish the mission, and know not only how to get in, but how to get out; how we finish and come home. I also learned a lesson from Vietnam: Let the politicians handle the politics, and I think history will be kinder in how we handle the diplomacy in politics. But then, get out of the way and let the military fight the war. There is no other way to do it, from my point of view, and I was blessed by outstanding leaders like General Colin Powell, General Schwarzkopf and some other fantastic commanders who were supported in what they will tell you today was the best army that stood up wearing the military uniforms of the United States of America.

**Iraq defeated after a hundred hours**

I believe that military forces may succeed to implement a policy under five conditions:

- When the state finds that it is not an anachronism.
- When winning could be affected.
- When no other policies are likely to work.
- When complications can be limited in time and in scope.
- And when the potential benefits justify the potential costs and sacrifices.

I do not know how many of you remember the body bag argument that was used against me in the United States Senate and the House: «You wore on



*«I knew what it is like to be scared to death as a little kid out there, in the middle of the ocean, injured, disoriented, anguished by the death of my friend, and thoughts of human capture.»*

your hands the blood of all these young men, 50,000 body bags that have been shipped to Saudi Arabia.» This was the argument, and I did not take it lightly, but I had confidence in our military, and what they were telling me. Desert Storm met each and every one of those five criteria that I set out, and the results speak for themselves. For just six weeks of air attacks, and after a hundred hours of ground warfare, Iraq had been soundly defeated, their armor in Kuwait destroyed, the remnants of the army ran away hands in the air, and Kuwait was liberated. Iraq's war machine was significantly diminished. The coalition that stood together to fight the war, sat together then to win the peace. Since then, people said to me and I can understand this: «We did all we can to fight against this war. This should have never happened in the first place, and once it did, you stopped too soon.» Well, I can understand people saying that, so, let me address myself to that question.

#### Pre-War relations with Iraq

When I became President in January of 1989, we decided that it was worth exploring the possibility that we might build better relations through diplomacy, through economic incentives with Iraq. It was then the most powerful state in the Gulf area, the fourth most powerful army in the entire world, and we had known limited cooperation with Iraq during its war with Iran. We did not know if the Middle East could be stabilized by Iran fighting Iraq at that time, and many of our Arab friends in the region were urging us to work with Iraq and encourage responsible behavior. We tried. We used limited political and economic incentives to affect the Iraqi government. Before we all knew, it became clear that Saddam Hussein was simply not prepared to work with stability. So, we curtailed most of the commerce, the little commerce that did exist. The Iraqi military built up along its border with Kuwait, again in mid-July 1990. We could see it, from our intelligence, this buildup, this movement of forces, and we monitored it closely, and we were concerned over its size.

#### Saddam pays for his surprise invasion

You know in intelligence, you can see what they call bean counting. They can tell me the number of tanks that are moving, but they cannot tell me the intent of the ruler; they could not tell me the intent of Saddam Hussein. We monitored this movement closely, in order to assess its size and purpose. We offered military exercises to remind Iraq that the United States, and our friends, stood together in protecting their interest. All the local states out there, except for one, the United Arab Emirates, at that time, had turned us down. They felt that those exercises would be kind of an invitation to Saddam Hussein to flex his muscles. They did not think Saddam would invade. They believed that these exercises would be provocative and they were confident



### Did the war stop too soon?

that Arab diplomacy would settle matters before anybody got hurt. They, and we were wrong. But to paraphrase an old saying: «It is possible for you to achieve surprise, if you are prepared to do something that is entirely inconsistent with your own self-interest.»

Saddam achieved surprise, but he paid for it in the end. And it would have been hard to do more to disserve Saddam, a man who did not think the United States was serious, even six months later, when the coalition had more than half a million soldiers in the area. The fact is that we tried to build a decent relationship with him, along with the fact that it was he who decided to invade Kuwait, without provocation, made it much easier to build the coalition that defeated him.

Remember all those CNN experts saying that the Arab World would rise up against us? It did not happen, in large part because everyone knew that this war was a war Saddam brought on himself. What about the fact of the war? Did we stop too soon? No, we did not. But even several more days of fighting would have left Saddam with enough force; many of his forces, remember, were not even in combat. This huge army was not fully committed to the invasion of Kuwait that was moving forward. Several more days would have left him with enough force to put down the Kurdish and the Shiite rebellions in 1991, or challenge Kuwait as he did earlier this month. So, why did we stop with Saddam in power? Here are the reasons:

- The United Nations' resolution. It gave us the imprint of international law. The resolution said - and I'm paraphrasing - use whatever needs necessary to kick Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait. That was the mandate. That was what the United Nations' resolution said, and that is what our mission was: to end the aggression and to kick him out of Kuwait.
- I saw rural guerrilla work in Vietnam from afar and I was a politician then. I knew the horrors of it.

It would have been very easy to go in. We could have rolled into downtown Baghdad in 24 hours or 36 hours with that magnificent force that we had assembled in the Gulf. There is no question about that. Very easy to go in, but how do we get out? We went into Somalia, and I would say we were there to save lives, end the starvation. But visibly, that mission turned into a peace-keeping and a peace-making mission, instead of looking around to beat up Mogadishu. We could not find an indicted, narcotic trafficker in Panama, and we had a superb force down there. And Noriega, not yet ready to give himself up, walked into the Vatican's embassy in Panama city. How in God's name would I have sent our kids, our men and women into downtown





Baghdad, searching for this man who had the strictest security of any leader in the history of the world perhaps? Easy to go in, but how do we get out?

- The minute I would have ordered our forces to cross the border, our coalition would have died. Mubarak of Egypt could not possibly have stayed with us, the Saudis and Kuwaitis maybe. Hafez Assad of Syria could not have stayed with us. I do not think King Hassan of Morocco could have even stayed aligned with the US if we had invaded. If we had become an occupying power in an Arab country, the shattering of that coalition would have happened inevitably.
- Out of the magnificent victory came the Madrid Conference. Gorbachev and I walked into that Madrid Conference, and I turned to him, to his interpreter, and said: «I cannot believe what I am seeing here, Arabs talking to Jews for the first time in a long, long time in the history of this world; each enemy sitting across the table. That would not have happened; that could not have happened, if we had turned the Arab world against us by going into Baghdad contrary to the United Nations' resolution.»

There was another point; remember what I said about letting politicians get over here, and if you are in a battle, let the military fight the war. Well, I remember that last day when Colin Powell came to see me about eight hours or six hours before the war ended, and he and Dick Cheney, that wonderful Secretary of Defense, Jimmy Baker and Dan Quayle, all assembled in the Oval Office, and I said I was so lucky to have this team in here. Colin Powell said to me: «Sir, the time has come to end the war.» I asked: «Is General Schwarzkopf on board?» He replied: «Yes, do you want to hear it from him?» I said: «Well, maybe we should.» He walked around the desk, grabbed briefly from an old drawer in a part of my desk where there is the secured telephone and in less than 30 seconds, miracles of communication, we had Schwarzkopf on the secured call out there in Saudi Arabia.

Colin told him what was happening and he said: «Tell the President that I made that recommendation, and I agreed that time has come to stop the fighting.» Let the military win the war, and let the politicians do the diplomacy.

That was the fifth reason, and there was a sixth real political reason. We did not want to create a vacuum; our objective was not to create a vacuum in that troubled corner in the Middle East.

The world would not have benefited by a shattered Iraq. It would benefit by a peaceful Iraq, because we will have peace in this country, and with the rest of the Arab world, and with us, and the rest of the West.





*«I cannot believe what I am seeing here, Arabs talking to Jews for the first time in a long, long time in the history of this world; each enemy sitting across the table. That would not have happened; that could not have happened, if we had turned the Arab world against us by going into Baghdad contrary to the United Nations' resolution.»*

The world would not have benefited from an Iraq that was totally fractured and falling apart. Furthermore, there was that danger of imbalance in the Middle East that had to be a part of this consideration, not the overriding part, but a part. So, a hundred hours after the war started, the war had ended. And because of it, these mentioned enemies did sit down across that table that I have described, to talk peace for the first time in a century, and history will remember those Madrid meetings as a major turning point toward world peace.

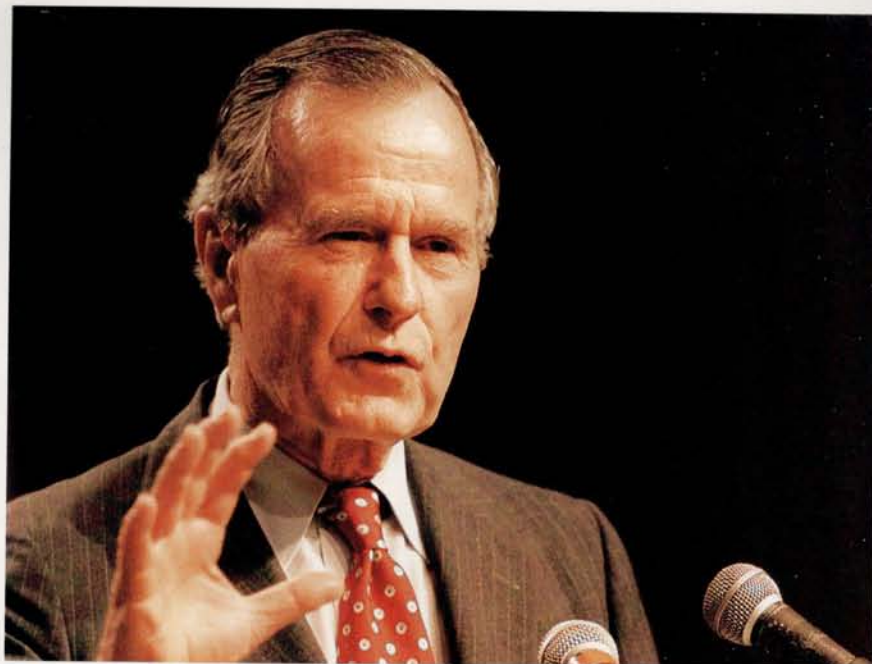
Also, the historic handshake that took place in Washington would never have been possible without Desert Storm, without the courage of our troops, without the steadfast loyalty of our coalition partners and without the Madrid Conference that just followed in at the end of that war.

Why did we not take sides that spring and invade Iraq? I feared the American soldiers would get trapped, as I said, in Iraq's civil war. I also thought the US had a strategic interest in this united Iraq that I had mentioned, one that would not become a new battleground, subject to Iranian influence, or causing instability in nearby Turkey. These were difficult choices, ones the historians are sure to debate for years, even decades to come. But, look at some of the evidence now, evidence that convinced me that we were right. Take for example the recent crisis in the Gulf, where the US enjoyed good working relationships with many of these Arab states. The US forces could fly to the region, and take advantage of equipment that we had already left there. I had ordered this equipment to be pre-positioned, and left there in case Saddam Hussein, or anybody else, ventured to disturb the peace in that very important corner of the world. I considered throwing strong sanctions at this regime that continued to limit Iraq after four years, and help ensure that Saddam would have no choice but to back down. He even tried to bluff it, and he even tried to blackmail when he used those forces, and I am proud that our President responded as promptly, and as forcefully as he did. Or consider for a moment the stronger United Nations, one that is now able to play a useful role in a range of crises around the world. We could not expect too much from the United Nations. We could not send over to the United Nations our obligation to lead; this is a more useful role now, and it seemed the way it worked in a run-up too, in the institutions of the war against Iraq. Perhaps, most important, stop for a second and think about the Middle East, for Israel now talks directly with its former adversaries where peace is not only a possibility, but in my view, is an increasing reality.

Quite frankly, none of this would have happened without the way the Desert



*«The world would not have benefited by a shattered Iraq. It would benefit by a peaceful Iraq, because we will have peace in this country, and with the rest of the Arab world, and with us, and the rest of the West. The world would not have benefited from an Iraq that was totally fractured and falling apart.»*



**Cutting defense is a loss of credibility**

Storm was pursued and without what we did. Desert Storm showed that this country can accomplish when we lead, and when our people have the tools to do this job. I would caution, I know it is popular for this peace dividend: Cut the defense more, give the money to somebody with social programs. But, I am telling you, we must not cut the muscle out of our defense so that we lose credibility as a great power. We can do great things abroad, and great things here at home.

When Dick Cheney came up to Camp David and told me he stood up for all my team, our top civilian team, I said to Brent, my trusted advisor, my dear friend Brent Scowcroft, upon whom I rely so much, after he left, and Brent was a three-star at the Air Force, before we do all this and I said: «Does this man know what he is talking about? I remember that smart minds in Vietnam were not that smart. Does he know what he is talking about?» And Brent Scowcroft said: «Yes sir, he does.»

A military commander went to Saudi Arabia and came back two days, 48 hours before the air war started, and I asked to talk to him again. So, he came over the White House with Dick Cheney and Colin Powell was there, and I said: «I want to ask you one more time, you are back from Saudi Arabia now, do you believe that the Air Force can do what you told me it could do to limit the amount of damage on the helpless civilian population in Iraq, but punish this man in terms of his power in war-making potential?» He said: «Yes sir, we can do even better than I told you in Camp David.» And he was right, and I thanked God at that moment that we had the courage to keep this country strong and to stay ahead, stay out on the technological edge. Some of it happened right down the road in the defensive sense from the Patriot batteries that are now being denigrated by somebody's quarterback you hear on television. I am telling you, I was very glad we had, not only that kind of defense, but also the offensive weapons that we saw dramatically work the way this gentleman told me that they would work. In summary then, in the Gulf war my concern was only peace.

How do you protect small states against strong neighbors? How do you remove obstacles between one nation and another? How do you bring together Arabs and Israelis after years of fear, violence and war? In addition, I was concerned with the future of democracy in the region, because peace, democracy, and development go together, and I was also concerned about the Lebanon, which has suffered terribly as the result of an entrenched conflict rocking the Middle East, and Lebanon must not suffer again. Even now, Lebanon is resuming its historical leading role in education and commerce.

**Lebanon**



*«Tell your people that Lebanon has a special place in the hearts and minds of the American people, and certainly of this former President of the United States.»*



I went there as a young businessman, back in 1958, and saw the wonders of this crossroads, different religious sects working together in peace, fostering the benefits of mankind by the glory and wonders of trade, and it then became the cultural and economic capital of the region.

And so, Mr. Fares, and Mr. Ambassador, tell your people that Lebanon has a special place in the hearts and minds of the American people, and certainly of this former President of the United States. I love that land; I have told American-Lebanese when they used to come and help me in the White House that I had a sense of frustration that I was not able to do more about the agonies that Lebanon had been going through. I am absolutely convinced that the way we conducted ourselves, the way you and your sons, and cousins, and brothers, and whoever here in this room had a loved one in Desert Storm, the way they conducted themselves has a lot to do with a peaceful and challenging future of Lebanon, and that is not just a fallout from the Desert Storm war, that is totally important to a peaceful Middle East. Lebanon was a world meeting place for commerce and a peaceful, lovely land: its great people detesting war, living a peaceful life, and it went through absolute sheer hell, and now it is coming back, and I am very happy to hear about this dramatic recovery. And would you please tell your President how honored I am by his invitation. Barbara Bush is always seeing David Letterman, or Larry King or some of these people, but I can speak to her on this one, we will accept with pleasure, in principle, the marvelous invitation to visit the land that I love so much. I should not personalize anything, but Barbara and I went to Kuwait; Issam told me how many kids were named Bush over there. One kid said to me: «If it had not been for the United States, we would have no country.» It made me think what that means: No country at all. We did the right thing. Let me simply say that I am delighted. I am delighted to be with you, and may I suggest that God bless Lebanon and the United States, and may we be friends forever. Thank you very much.