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THE WHITE HOUSE
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

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INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: APRIL 17, 1991

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: COLONEL JAMES A. DONOVAN

SUBJECT: SUPPORTS THE ADMINISTRATION'S CURRENT POLICY
REGARDING THE IRAQI-KURD SITUATION

| ROUTE TO: OFFICE/AGENCY | (STAFF NAME) | ACTION | | DISPOSITION | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|--------|-----------------------|
| | | ACT CODE | DATE YY/MM/DD | TYPE RESP | C D | COMPLETED YY/MM/DD |
| JOHN SUNUNU | | ORG | 91/04/17 | | | <u>091/04/17</u> |
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COMMENTS:

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES:

CS MAIL USER CODES: (A) (B) (C)

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*ACTION CODES:          *DISPOSITION          *OUTGOING          *
*                        *                        *CORRESPONDENCE:  *
*A-APPROPRIATE ACTION  *A-ANSWERED          *TYPE RESP=INITIALS *
*C-COMMENT/RECOM       *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL *           OF SIGNER *
*D-DRAFT RESPONSE      *C-COMPLETED        *           CODE = A   *
*F-FURNISH FACT SHEET  *S-SUSPENDED        *COMPLETED = DATE OF *
*I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC*                        *           OUTGOING *
*R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY *                        *                        *
*S-FOR-SIGNATURE       *                        *                        *
*X-INTERIM REPLY       *                        *                        *
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230265

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*Mr John Samuani
C/S The White House Staff
The White House*

Apr 15, 1991

Dear Mr Samuani.

The President is right to stay clear of the Iraqi-Kurd problem. Our priority should be to bring all U.S. forces home from Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Further intervention and international police work should not be our policies. We have accomplished our national missions in the Gulf. Now it's time for the UN and Red Cross to do their jobs.

Stick to your guns, The Pres policies are correct.

*Sincerely
J A Donovan
COL USMC RET*

Essay

WILLIAM SAFIRE

Duty to Intervene

WASHINGTON

George Bush's answer to genocide is to insist angrily that "our kids" — his new term of juvenile vulnerability for what he used to call America's armed forces — will not be "sucked" or "shoved" by some sinister outside pressure into anybody else's civil war.

That's the old straw man trick. Three weeks ago, when urged to order Saddam Hussein to freeze all movement of aircraft and armor — which could have saved thousands of innocent lives without a single U.S. casualty — Mr. Bush chose instead to go fishing.

Now the bloody consequences of his moral failure are on view: Americans watch in dismay as helpless and terrified millions are driven into exile, babies dying on the way. Perhaps to assuage his guilt, the U.S. President now creates a straw man: he accuses those who urged a freeze three weeks ago of having wanted to send our ground troops into an endless, millennium-old battle to end Arab tyranny.

Fortunately, his CYA rhetoric is accompanied by a tacit admission of terrible error. He has finally ordered Baghdad to cease killing refugees on pain of U.S. air retaliation. He has begrudgingly followed the lead of the British and French into a "duty to intervene," designating a portion of Iraqi Kurdistan off-limits to Saddam's vengeance; mass murder is no longer "an external affair."

Equally important, the President has directed our armed forces to take over the logistics of the refugee salvation from overwhelmed humanitarians.

That rescue assignment to our military is fitting, as a Washington Post "tick-tock" story now confirms that the fatal decision to allow Iraqi helicopter gunships to slaughter anti-Saddam rebels and terrorize Kurdish civilians was urged on Mr. Bush by Joint Chiefs Chairman Colin Powell, with only Vice President Quayle in dissent.

If Mr. Bush finds political cover in castigating those who urged him to do three weeks ago what he is doing belatedly, fine — so long as he now moves resolutely to protect the persecuted Kurdish people. But if he blames the victims for "spoiling the victory" by inconveniently striving for freedom, that will compound his blunder.

The Kurds are not being unreasonably fearful in their exodus. They risk freezing and starvation not out of panic but to flee from certain extermination. Don't tell Massoud Barzani about amnesty: two of his brothers accented

be executed — burial alive — by Saddam Hussein's sadistic thugs.

What's to be done with more than a million refugees? First, intervene without apology to provide emergency food and shelter. Next, set a global example by taking 25,000 Kurds into the U.S. as political refugees. Then give other Kurds and Christian Iraqis who fled an incentive of security — guaranteed by the coalition — to return to their villages in Iraq.

Ah, say the White House victim-blammers, but that would create a new Gaza Strip, where resentment would

The new suzerainty.

fester and warriors would breed; better to let Saddam Hussein succeed in his final solution to the Iraqi Kurdish problem, and let us humanely drop sandwiches forever on homeless Kurds in camps in Turkey and Iran. (I can build a straw man, too.)

The way to give the Kurdish people the freedom they deserve is the same way to give Palestinian Arabs, including those driven from Kuwait, the freedom they deserve: create a new category of sovereignty.

The Kurds seek what Palestinian terrorcrats scorn: self-government, with cultural dignity respected, within the borders of an existing state. The anti-imperial Nineties cry out for a form of apprentice nationhood or subsovereignty in enclave havens or in territories without clear title.

Not every dispute can be settled once and for all; not every aspiration for independence can be achieved or should be dashed with finality. Where political realities are fluid, diplomacy should be able to find a flexible arrangement that reflects the situation on the ground — that encourages peaceful devolution rather than bloody revolution.

The word bandied about is "suzerainty," which allows the encompassing state a sovereignty limited to defense and central banking, while providing the inhabitants of a region with real autonomy and ethnic identity short of total independence.

Accommodationists, arise! Are diplomats so frozen, uprisers so blindered and international lawyers so hidebound that they cannot create new forms of national association to

Politics and Decency

Something is missing in George Bush. An empathy gene, if there were such a thing. An instinctive response to the pain of other human beings. An internal monitor that tells him when political calculation has to stop, yielding to concern for decency.

Two examples make the point. One is glaring: Mr. Bush's failure to respond to the slaughter of the Iraqi Kurds until his inaction became politically embarrassing. The other, going on right now, is a White House effort to sabotage negotiations that could produce agreement on new civil rights legislation.

The civil rights issue arises from recent Supreme Court decisions reversing previous interpretations of the law and making it harder for women and minorities to prove discrimination in lawsuits. A bill to correct those decisions passed Congress last year but was vetoed by Mr. Bush. The Senate failed by one vote to override.

In vetoing the bill, the President said it would lead to quotas. Lawyers who deal with civil rights laws said there was nothing to that charge, since companies had operated for years under the earlier Supreme Court decisions without quotas.

But the charge was highly effective politically. It fit Republican tactics of

A lack of empathy in the White House.

painting the Democrats as the party of minorities. In North Carolina, an emotional television advertisement about quotas helped Senator Jesse Helms win re-election over a black Democrat, Harvey Gantt.

Early this year executives in the Business Roundtable, an organization of about 200 leading corporations, decided to try to negotiate a compromise on the civil rights bill. They met a number of times over a period of months with civil rights leaders.

The meetings made progress. Quotas turned out not to be an issue. The difficult problem, still being negotiated, was the companies' demand for a ceiling on damages that women could collect in suits for gender discrimination.

Then, last week, the White House

stepped in to try to break up the talks. John Sununu, the President's chief of staff, and C. Boyden Gray, his counsel, telephoned the executives and demanded in Mr. Bush's name that they end the negotiations. Nina Totenberg of National Public Radio first reported the story.

The strategy is plain. Mr. Bush and his advisers want an issue, not a bill. They want the Democrats in Congress to pass the legislation again, so the President can veto it and Republicans can run as protectors of the white working man.

Business support for a compromise bill would spoil that strategy. The legislation has to be made to look like a radical measure. That would be hard if it had the endorsement of the chief executive officers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and other major corporations.

Politics is part of life in Washington, and we should not be shocked to see a President playing it. But the effort to prevent a civil rights compromise goes far beyond the ordinary in cynicism.

Race is the most divisive issue in this country. No responsible President would try to block moves to ameliorate the tension. To do so exceeds even the crudities of campaigning on the invented issue of Willie Horton.

The case of the Kurds hardly needs elaboration. Mr. Bush says now that he urged no one to rebel against Saddam Hussein. But on Feb. 15 he said "the Iraqi people" should "take matters in their own hands" and force their dictator out. He repeated that advice on March 1, two days after the war ended.

Then, when the Kurds rebelled and were crushed, Mr. Bush did nothing and said nothing. Kurds, after all, have no votes here. Only when the world was crying out and he began to hurt politically did the President slowly begin to order relief measures for the refugees.

The justification offered was that political stability in the Persian Gulf mattered more than the fate of the Kurds. But there can be no stability in flagrant disregard of human decencies. That is a fundamental truth of international life today.

Abroad, as at home, doing right can be more helpful to a President than focusing on politics. Mr. Bush is a highly intelligent man, and he surely should be able to see that. A friend should tell him: George, you've made it. You're President. Act like it. □