



The Holy See

**MESSAGES OF JOHN PAUL II
TO HIS EXCELLENCY SADDAM HUSSEIN,
PRESIDENT OF IRAQ,
AND TO HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE BUSH,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

*To his Excellency Saddam Hussein
President of Iraq*

I am deeply concerned by the tragic consequences which the situation in the Gulf region could have, and I feel the pressing duty to address you and, echoing the feelings of millions of people, to repeat what I have already had occasion to say in recent days and months.

No international problem can be adequately and worthily solved by recourse to arms, and experience teaches all humanity that war, besides causing many victims, creates situations of grave injustice which, in their turn, constitute a powerful temptation to further recourse to violence. We can all imagine the tragic consequences which an armed conflict in the Gulf region would have for thousands of your fellow-citizens, for your Country and for the entire area, if not for the whole world. I truly hope and earnestly implore the Merciful God that all the parties involved will yet succeed in discovering, in frank and fruitful dialogue, the path for avoiding such a catastrophe. This path can be taken only if each individual is moved by a true desire for peace and justice. I am confident that you too, Mr President, will make the most appropriate decisions and will take courageous steps which can be the beginning of a true journey towards peace. As I said publicly last Sunday, a demonstration of readiness on your part cannot fail to bring you honour before your beloved Country, the region and the whole world. In these dramatic hours, I pray that God will enlighten you and grant you the strength to make a generous gesture which will avoid war: it will be a great step before history, for it will mark a victory of international justice and the triumph of that peace to which all people of good will aspire.

From the Vatican, January 15, 1991.

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*To the Honorable George Bush
President of the United States of America*

I feel the pressing duty to turn to you as the leader of the Nation which is most involved, from the standpoint of personnel and equipment, in the military operation now taking place in the Gulf Region.

In recent days, voicing the thoughts and concerns of millions of people, I have stressed the tragic consequences which a war in that area could have. I wish now to restate my firm belief that war is not likely to bring an adequate solution to international problems and that, even though an unjust situation might be momentarily met, the consequences that would possibly derive from war would be devastating and tragic. We cannot pretend that the use of arms, and especially of today's highly sophisticated weaponry, would not give rise, in addition to suffering and destruction, to new and perhaps worse injustices. Mr President, I am certain that, together with your advisers, you too have clearly weighed all these factors, and will not spare further efforts to avoid decisions which would be irreversible and bring suffering to thousands of families among your fellow citizens and to so many peoples in the Middle East. In these last hours before the deadline laid down by the United Nations Security Council, I truly hope, and I appeal with lively faith to the Lord, that peace can still be saved. I hope that, through a last minute effort at dialogue, sovereignty may be restored to the people of Kuwait and that international order which is the basis for a coexistence between peoples truly worthy of mankind may be re-established in the Gulf area and in the entire Middle East. I invoke upon you God's abundant blessings and, at this moment of grave responsibility before your Country and before history, I especially pray that you be granted the wisdom to make decisions which will truly serve the good of your fellow-citizens and of the entire international community.

From the Vatican, January 15, 1991.

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