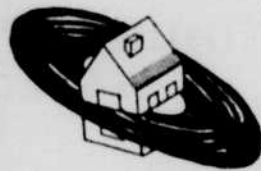


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# Allied air attack severely damages Iraq



WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S.-led attacks against Iraq since last week have crippled Iraqi air defense facilities in the south, destroyed

an alleged nuclear fabrication plant near Baghdad and downed at least one Iraqi warplane, Pentagon officials said Monday.

The attacks, precipitated by Saddam Hussein's many violations of U.N. resolutions, including his blocking of U.N. weapons inspections, began last Wednesday. More than 100 U.S., British and French aircraft targeted Iraqi missile and radar sites in the no-fly zone of southern Iraq.

The allies managed to disable only one of four mobile missile batteries because of Iraqi evasion tactics. They had better success against four fixed command and control sites.

Pentagon officials said there was heavy damage at Talill, the largest of the sites, and at Amarah. Moderate damage was inflicted at Najaf while the damage at the fourth site,

Samawah, was declared light.

Baghdad said 19 people were killed in the nighttime attack.

On Sunday, the second anniversary of the start of the Gulf War, Iraqi warplanes began making incursions into the northern no-fly zone and an F-16 fighter downed an Iraqi MiG-29.

Shortly after noon EST on Sunday, or 8 p.m. Iraq time, 45 U.S. Navy Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched from ships in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, targeting a factory eight miles southeast of Baghdad believed to be key to Iraq's nuclear weapons program. Thirty-seven of the computer-operated missiles hit the Zaafaraniyeh facility, damaging all seven of the targeted buildings in the compound.

"We severely damaged, and frankly it's somewhere between severe damage and destruction, the main production building," said a senior Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The coil production facilities were destroyed totally, as was the chemical fabrication area and the spe-

cialized welding area."

The Pentagon said one of the cruise missiles was downed by Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery in Baghdad and crashed outside the al-Rashid Hotel, causing considerable damage to the hotel that is home to many foreign journalists. Iraq said two Iraqi civilians were killed.

Around 4 a.m. EST Monday, or noon in Iraq, 69 allied warplanes, including 18 strike planes, launched a return attack against Iraqi military command and control facilities and surface-to-air missiles in the south.

The Najaf air defense operations facility was left in "somewhere between severe damage and total destruction," the Pentagon said. Two radar sites at Samawah were destroyed and damaged while the assessment at the Talill air defense sector headquarters was "between moderate and severe" damage.

"We can say categorically that the Iraqi air defense capability in southern Iraq is neutralized," the senior official said.

## Arab League criticizes attack policy

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Arab states, appearing to back away from their wartime alliance with Western nations, on Monday criticized the allied attacks on Iraq but stopped short of lining up behind Saddam Hussein.

They questioned why American resolve to enforce U.N. resolutions regarding Iraq has not extended to those concerning Israel or Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The fear of Saddam's aggression that built the Persian Gulf War alliance between Arabs and the West was offset by the feeling that President Bush was overstepping his U.N. mandate with the renewed raids.

The Cairo-based Arab League said it "regrets the policy of military escalation against Iraq ... which extended to the bombing of Iraqi civilian targets inside Baghdad and led to the killing and wounding of civilians among the brotherly Iraqi people."

It affirmed its support for Iraqi sovereignty and territorial unity, but also called on Baghdad to withdraw its police from Kuwaiti territory — which Iraq did on Sunday — and respect Kuwait's independence.

It also urged the United Nations "not to use double standards" in implementing its resolutions so as to avoid a "loss of confidence" and negative reactions in the Arab world.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, who put his country's bases at the disposal of the allied jets carrying out the raids, said U.N. Security Council resolutions must "be respected and implemented ... whether they pertain to the situation in the Gulf or the Palestinian case and that of the deportees, or that of the nation of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

He referred to resolutions demanding Israel take back more than 400 Palestinians it deported to Lebanon and urging protection for Bosnian Muslims from attacks by rebel Serbs.

## Russians question bombings

PARIS (AP) — Western European governments stood behind the United States as allied pressure on Saddam Hussein increased on Monday, but Russia expressed misgivings to Washington about the raids.

Some European political outsiders warned of pitfalls if the showdown with Iraq got worse.

Two days before Bush bows out and the Clinton administration begins, Russia delivered a note to the State Department saying America should have explicit approval of the U.N. Security Council before bombing Iraqi military facilities.

It called civilian casualties from U.S. raids "especially regrettable" and registered concern for the Russians in the Iraqi capital.

But the Russian Foreign Ministry also blamed Iraq for the latest fighting and said "the key to normalization of the situation lies in Baghdad, which has not heeded repeated warnings."

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