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RAID ON IRAQ; BUSH LAUNCHES MISSILE ATTACK ON A BAGHDAD INDUSTRIAL PARK AS WASHINGTON GREETES CLINTON

By **MICHAEL R. GORDON**,

Navy ships in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea launched about 40 cruise missiles at what officials say was an Iraqi military complex in a Baghdad suburb today, as the United States brought battle to the Iraqi capital for the first time since the end of the Persian Gulf war.

Bush Administration officials said that today's strike, the second in five days, was a response to Iraq's decision to restrict United Nations weapons inspectors and to challenge the no-flight zones imposed by the United States and its allies. A senior Pentagon official left open the possibility that additional air strikes could be carried out soon, if Iraq did not comply with United Nations demands.

Bush Administration officials said that the Zaafaraniya complex, 8 miles southeast of downtown Baghdad, was a large industrial park, equipped with advanced computer-controlled machinery that the Iraqis had used in their nuclear weapons program. No Assessment of Damage

The Pentagon declined to provide any battle damage assessment. Asked today if the strike on the complex was successful, a senior Pentagon official said, "We do not know yet."

But Pentagon officials said tonight that it was possible that one of the cruise missiles had slammed into the Rashid Hotel, a favorite of foreign journalists in Baghdad and the site of an Islamic conference. A Pentagon official said that some missiles had been routed near or over the hotel.

Another official said that a couple of the cruise missiles may have been shot down and that one of them may have crashed into the hotel.

The Defense Department said it did not know how many casualties had resulted from the attack. The Associated Press in Baghdad said that there were reports that 3 people had been killed and up to 30 wounded in several parts of the city. It was not immediately clear whether the casualties were caused by falling antiaircraft shells or by American missiles.

In announcing the attack, the White House spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said it "demonstrates the United States' and the coalition's determination to demand Iraq's compliance with all U.N resolutions." Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Fitzwater added that the attack was intended "to insure that Iraq never again acquires weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical and biological."

President-elect Bill Clinton, whose bus cavalcade arrived in Washington today, said he fully backed the attack. "Saddam Hussein's continuing provocation has been met by appropriate and forceful response," Clinton said in a statement. "I fully support President Bush's action."

Today's attack, which came on the second anniversary of the Persian Gulf war, followed a series of words and

acts of defiance by Iraq. This morning, Saddam Hussein gave a fiery speech in which he proclaimed a "moral victory" in the 1991 Persian Gulf war

"This is the new chapter in the 'mother of all battles,' " the Iraqi leader said. "If the enemy continues its military aggression, or even if it stops, it is the final and decisive chapter which will be the end of all chapters."

After the attack, President Hussein addressed Iraqis again, this time on the radio, calling on them to "strike back" at the enemy. Iraqis Challenge Allies

As Iraq said it was prepared to use force to defy some of the restrictions imposed after the Gulf war, Iraqi military forces were challenging the allied enforcement of the no-flight zones.

Early this morning, an American F-4G Wild Weasel plane blew up an Iraqi SA-6 surface-to-air missile battery with a HARM antiradiation missile after the missile battery menaced allied warplanes patrolling the no-flight zone in northern Iraq. Pentagon officials said the SA-6 battery was attacked after it activated its targeting radar, directing it at five coalition fighters: two F-16's, two British Jaguars and a French Mirage F-1.

An hour and 40 minutes after the missile battery was destroyed, an Iraqi MIG-23 ventured into the northern no-flight zone and was shot down. A Pentagon officials said that the MIG flew about 10 miles into the northern no-flight zone and was being chased out of the area when it was shot down by an Amraam radar-guided missile fired from an F-16.

An official said the Iraqi MIG was several miles north of the 36th parallel, which marks the southern boundary of the northern no-flight zone, when it was hit. The plane crashed several miles south of the parallel. Iraq-Kuwait Clash

In addition, an Iraqi was killed by Kuwaiti border guards who, fortified by the deployment of an American battalion, have begun to challenge the Iraqi incursions into territory awarded to Kuwait by the United Nations.

After the air strikes, Kuwait said that Iraq had begun to dismantle six Iraqi police posts that marked the old border. But there was still no resolution over the confrontation between Baghdad and the United Nations over the conditions Iraq has imposed on the flights of weapons inspectors. Tonight, the special commission that monitors the demolition of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction rejected Baghdad's latest condition -- that allied air patrols stay out of the no-flight zone in southern Iraq when United Nations aircraft are in the area.

The multi-billion-dollar Zaafaraniya complex, which Pentagon officials said contains about two dozen buildings, covers an area of 2,200 by 900 feet. The complex, just north of the Tigris River and near the highway from Baghdad to Salman Pak, was not a target during the gulf war. Uranium-Enrichment Process

After the war, American intelligence learned that the computer-controlled machine tools at the complex were used to make components of the calutrons Iraq used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. United Nations inspectors destroyed the calutrons, which were discovered after the war.

A calutron is used to separate uranium isotopes and produce enriched uranium. American intelligence officials said they were surprised to learn after the war that Iraq had attempted to use this relatively antiquated method to develop nuclear weapons.

Weapons inspectors have also been concerned that the machines at the Zaafaraniya complex may have been used to make components for Iraq's Scud surface-to-surface missiles, as well as a new ballistic missile that Iraq planned to develop that could carry a nuclear warhead.

Iraq has insisted the plant was merely an engineering complex used for civilian purposes.

Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the United Nations special commission that is overseeing the demolition of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, said in a telephone interview that weapons and ballistic-missile inspectors have visited the complex four times. Seals have been put on some of the machines so that they could not be used without detection. But Mr. Ekeus said that he had no way of knowing if the machines had been used after inspectors visited the site late last year. Concern Over Nuclear Program

Mr. Ekeus said that the United Nations was concerned that Iraq might use the complex to revive its nuclear weapons programs. The machine tools, for example, could be used to manufacture parts of centrifuges for enriching uranium. The United Nations had planned to monitor the complex and was considering ordering the destruction of some of the equipment when today's strike was carried out.

Gary Milhollin, the director of the Wisconsin Project on Arms Control, said that today's attack was of more political than military significance.

"By knocking it out we are telling Saddam Hussein that his military infrastructure is on the target list," said Mr. Milhollin, who added the installation had advanced equipment that could be used for military or civilian purposes. Little Effect Is Seen

He asserted that the attack would probably not have much effect on the Iraqi nuclear program since Baghdad's efforts to use calutrons to enrich uranium have already been stopped and because the complex had been inspected.

But some American officials said that the complex gave Iraq the means to try to revive its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. The Central Intelligence Agency recently warned that Iraq had not abandoned its efforts to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, for his part, appeared to undercut the military rationale for the attack when he said on the ABC News program "This Week" that Iraq's military infrastructure had been badly damaged in the gulf war and that the economic sanctions imposed after the war had denied Saddam Hussein the opportunity "to develop weapons of mass destruction."

But one Administration expert said that, along with economic sanctions, the destruction of the complex could deal an important setback to Iraq's nuclear ambitions. The machine tools would be useful for a variety of weapons purposes. If they were destroyed in the raid, the Administration specialists said, it is likely to be difficult, if not impossible, for Iraq to acquire replacements in the face of economic sanctions. 3 of 4 Targets Missed

In Wednesday's strike on the southern no-flight zone, allied patrols damaged command posts and radar stations but missed three of four missile batteries that were among their targets.

Today's attack, though limited in scope like Wednesday's raid, brought the war to the outskirts of Baghdad.

With Mr. Clinton's inauguration 72 hours away, the decision to use cruise missiles, instead of manned aircraft, reflected the political imperative that no Americans pilots be shot down and captured in a raid over Iraq. The firing of more than 40 cruise missiles, however, entailed some risk of civilian casualties since it was possible that some of the unpiloted weapons might be shot down and others might stray off course.

The attack had been planned for last Friday, but was put on hold so that the allies could better assess whether Iraq intended to comply with the United Nations demands.

Several Administration officials said today that the decision to put the attack on hold followed a conversation between Prime Minister John Major and President Bush in which Mr. Major expressed concern over acting too precipitiously. Advice From Major

British spokesman declined today to say what advice Mr. Major had provided. Mr. Fitzwater acknowledged that the attack had been delayed but denied that Mr. Major's advice was the reason.

Declaring that Saddam Hussein has been "courting trouble" and now "has had trouble," Mr. Major said tonight that the United States cruise missile attack was undertaken with the full consultation and approval of Britain and its gulf war allies.

"If they will not comply, then there will be a response," the Prime Minister said, referring to the Iraqi Government's repeated refusal to adhere to Security Council resolutions.