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U.S. TOMAHAWKS SMASH INTO IRAQ;NON-NUCLEAR MISSILES DELIVER 'POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC POINT'

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The United States yesterday unleashed a punishing shower of Tomahawk **missiles** against an Iraqi military complex eight miles from downtown Baghdad, forcefully delivering "the political and diplomatic point" that **Iraq** must comply with United Nations resolutions.

In a dramatic crescendo for President Bush's final weekend in office, U.S. forces shot down a MiG-23 warplane and struck an Iraqi air defense installation. Hours later, U.S. warships launched about 40 Tomahawks into the night skies near **Iraq's** capital.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said the United States had targeted the non-**nuclear cruise missiles** at a **nuclear** fabrications plant in response to a series of weekend military provocations by **Iraq**.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein "is determined to create a confrontation in the closing days of the Bush administration," and emphasized that Bush would not flinch.

Bush was at Camp David, Md., and made no statement.

In New York, the United Nations rejected **Iraq's** latest conditions for weapons inspection, raising the possibility of further U.S.-led raids. U.N. officials want **Iraq** to allow unconditional travel into **Iraq** by U.N. weapons inspectors and guarantee their safety.

The **attack** put Saddam on notice that the United States was willing to hit him close to home. Like last Wednesday's hostilities, it was a limited action unlikely to expose U.S. forces to much risk.

The operation did not involve any allied warplanes and lasted about two hours.

The **nuclear** -weapons site in the suburb of Zaafraniyeh was attacked with **missiles** fired from U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. Each **missile** was armed with a 984-pound non-**nuclear** warhead.

The plant has been dormant, according to International Atomic Energy Agency spokesman David Kyd, who said it was visited by inspectors in June 1991 and subsequently. He said it was "absolutely out of action."

Iraq's Information Ministry, however, said the facility produced molds and dies and wasn't involved in making **nuclear** weapons.

However, a senior Pentagon official insisted that the site was "key" to the Iraqi **nuclear** weapons program. Not all the buildings at the site were targeted, he added. He described it as a "multibillion-dollar facility," that used high-tech computers to manufacture components used in the uranium enrichment process for **nuclear** weapons.

Baghdad was lit by bright blasts of anti-aircraft fire from Iraqi gunners. An explosion wrecked the lobby of the al-Rashid hotel in Baghdad. Many of the guests yesterday were delegates to a conference of Islamic groups sympathetic to **Iraq**.

A senior Iraqi official said two receptionists were killed and 31 people wounded during the **missile** strike.

The al-Rashid, Baghdad's leading hotel, is government-owned. Most foreign journalists stay there when they visit the capital.

A crater 10 feet deep and 20 feet across lay in a garden outside the al-Rashid. Twisted furniture and debris littered the marbled lobby as hotel chefs and other workers swept out water and broken glass. Guests scurried to pack bags and leave.

Queried about damage to the al-Rashid, a U.S. official said military planners "absolutely" had not targeted the hotel. Although the official said the damage appeared to have come from **missiles** in the Iraqi arsenal, he said he could not totally rule out that some damage may have been caused by U.S. weaponry.

An Iraqi army photographer outside the hotel showed reporters a piece of metal he said he found at the site, which bore the marking "Williams International, Jacksonville, Florida. Series 9039. N00019-89-c-0204."

Williams International Corp. makes the turbofan engine for the U.S. Navy's Tomahawk **cruise missile**, according to Jane's Weapons Systems.

Fitzwater said the U.S. **attacks** were intended to deliver "the political and diplomatic point" that **Iraq** must comply with U.N. resolutions. He left open the possibility of further military action if **Iraq** chooses to defy United Nations resolutions.

President-elect Bill **Clinton** gave full backing yesterday to the U.S. air **attacks** on **Iraq**.

In an interview with NBC while riding to Washington on a bus for his inaugural Wednesday, **Clinton** said Bush was doing the right thing.

"Absolutely," **Clinton** said. "Based on everything we now know, I still have no difference of opinion with what's been done."

Late last night, Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with **Clinton** and Vice President-elect Al Gore at Blair House, across the street from the White House. **Clinton's** nominee for secretary of state, Warren Christopher, and Defense Secretary-designate Les Aspin also attended the meeting, transition sources said.

In Baghdad, a defiant Saddam told his people that "the aggressors will fail in their evil purposes." His nationally televised address marked the second anniversary of the Jan. 17, 1991, start of the 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."

Later, in a radio address several hours after the **attack**, Hussein called for retaliation against the United States, saying: "Strike, oh brave ones

Yesterday's initial incident was the shutdown of an Iraqi MiG-23 warplane and an **attack** on an air defense installation. That was followed hours later by the Tomahawk **missile** strike.

Pentagon officials said the **missiles** were fired from the USS Cowpens, an Aegis-class cruiser, and two destroyers: the USS Hewitt and the USS Stump. A third destroyer, the USS Caron, fired its **missiles** from the Red Sea.

The U.S. jet fired a HARM **missile** at the air defense installation after the Iraqi radar "locked on" the U.S. aircraft. The official said it wasn't immediately clear whether the Iraqi air defense site was destroyed in the **attack** by a U.S. F-4G Wild Weasel plane.

Bush spoke by telephone with British Prime Minister John Major, French President Francois Mitterrand and Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, as well as Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, said Fitzwater.

Washington also informed Tokyo in advance of yesterday's **attack** on **Iraq**, the Kyodo news agency reported today.

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The Tomahawk: Search and Destroy -- DIMENSIONS:

The **missile** is 21 feet long with a diameter of 8.6 feet. Its wings flip out to a span of 8.6 feet. -- POWER:

A 7,000-pound thrust rocket booster motor attached to the tail cone launches the **missile** and accelerates it to a speed and altitude where the 600-pound thrust turbofan engine can be switched on to continue the flight. -- TARGETS:

The sea-launched version can be aimed at targets on land 1,500 miles away or, using a different different guidance system, at ships 280 miles away. In either case, the **missile** carries high explosive conventional warheads. In addition, the land-**attack missile** can carry **nuclear** warheads. -- ATTACKING LAND TARGETS:

The location of the launch and the target are programmed into the **missile's** guidance system just before launch. The **missiles** follows a pre-programmed flight path to the target, adjusting along the way by comparing the terrain it encounters with terrain data in its computer. -- BACKGROUND:

The **cruise missile** was developed under separate Navy and Air Force programs and later coordinated under the Defense Department. There is also a version of the **cruise missile** that can be launched in the air from B-52 bombers. A ground-launched version of the **cruise missile** was banned in a 1987 treaty. Source: Jane's Weapons Systems

Color Map & Diagram(1) AP -- **Attack on Iraq** (2) AP -- The Tomahawk: Search and Destroy

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