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UN inspections continue in spite of attacks in Iraqi no-fly zone

Last Updated Mon, 16 Dec 2002 22:26:08 EST

CBC News

WASHINGTON - The U.S. military says American and British warplanes attacked air defences in southern Iraq on Monday for the third consecutive day.

The Iraqis apparently tried to shoot down the planes as they patrolled the no-fly zone.



No-fly zones

The U.S. Central Command says the planes dropped precision bombs on a military communication centre about 160 kilometres southeast of Baghdad.

Iraqi officials say the planes attacked civilian installations.

While the exchange of fire was happening in the no-fly zone, UN weapons inspectors were continuing their mission near Baghdad.

On Monday, they reported having examined 12 sites. So far they have not reported finding anything untoward in their inspections.



Colin Powell

The chief of the UN team, Hans Blix, is scheduled to give a presentation to the Security Council on Thursday, but it appears unlikely to satisfy the Bush administration.

Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Monday the U.S. "will withhold making a final

judgment or final statement until we have completed our analysis, completed our discussions with UNMOVIC (the UN weapons inspectors) the IAEA (the International Atomic Energy Agency) and our colleagues on the permanent membership of the Security Council."

Powell appears to be setting the stage for some kind of definitive statement on Iraq later in the week.

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