INSIDE: 8 PAGES OF THE LATEST NEWS

AMERICA AT WAR

TARGET IRAQ: 8-PAGE SPECIAL SECTION

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March 20,
2003
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CHANCE OF RAIN

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OUT OF TIME

- WAR STARTS LESS THAN TWO HOURS AFTER BUSH'S DEADLINE EXPIRES
- PRESIDENT SAYS ACTION IS OPENING SALVO IN CAMPAIGN TO DISARM IRAQ
- TOMAHAWK MISSILES, STEALTH FIGHTERS STRIKE TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PHOTO

Opening salvo: Three Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles launched from the USS Donald Cook rocket through the sky Wednesday evening headed for targets in Iraq.

Saddam counters with threats

BY DAVID ESPO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The United States launched the opening salvo Wednesday night of a war to topple Saddam Hussein, firing cruise missiles and precision-guided bombs against targets in Baghdad.

"This will not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory," President Bush said in an Oval Office address shortly after explosions ricocheted through the pre-dawn light of the Iraqi capital.

Defiant to the end, Saddam's state-run television broadcast this message to the Americans after the bombs struck: "It's an inferno that awaits them. Let them try their faltering luck and they shall meet what awaits them."

Anti-aircraft tracer fire made arcs across the Baghdad sky as the American munitions bore in on their targets. A ball of fire shot skyward after one explosion.

Bush described the targets as being of "military importance."

A U.S. military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said about three dozen cruise missiles were fired from a small number of ships — perhaps as few as two — in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The official said they were fired at "leadership targets," but he was not certain whether Saddam was a target.

Another official said the strikes were not part of the opening of the main air campaign but rather an attempt to take advantage of "time-sensitive" targets, meaning fresh intelligence on the whereabouts of Iraqi leaders.

Even so, it was clear from Bush's words that the war to topple the Iraqi dictator and eliminate his weapons of mass destruction had begun.

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Residents pray for a quick war

FROM STAFF REPORTS

News that U.S. forces had begun military strikes in Iraq Wednesday night came as no surprise to Iredell County residents.

Families huddled around television sets during the evening, watching news of the attacks unfold, after attending prayer services in churches across the county.

Veterans gathered at VFW Post 2031 and relatives of local servicemen and women stationed in the Persian Gulf region paid special attention to network coverage.

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WAR REPORT

Learn about the people, weapons and tactics that will be used to topple Saddam Hussein.

SPECIAL SECTION

WHERE IS IRAQ?

A look at the Middle East and where U.S bases are in the region.

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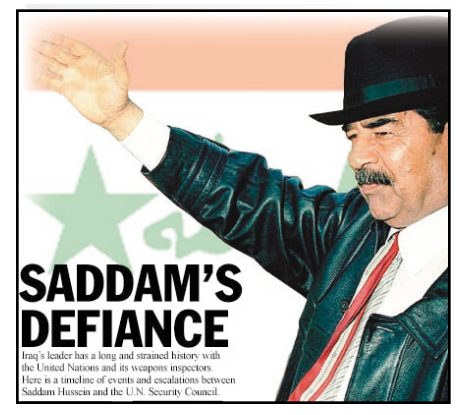

STRAINED HISTORY

A timeline of the events and escalations between Iraq and the U.N.

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