

# U.S. Patriots destroy 9 Scuds in Saudi Arabia

Saddam claims in radio speech  
he hasn't used much of arsenal

By JOHN MECKLIN  
OF THE HOUSTON POST STAFF

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EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA — Iraq fired at least 10 Scud missiles into Saudi Arabia late Sunday and early today, but Patriot rockets destroyed nine of them and one fell harmlessly into the Persian Gulf in the missile duel, U.S. officials said.

The assault also amounted to psychological warfare against the Saudis as the attack was followed by a speech by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in which he said his country had yet to use much of its arsenal and continued his call for a worldwide Arab holy war.

The attacks, which came in two volleys aimed at Riyadh and Dhahran, were the most concentrated offensive assault Iraq has mounted in the 4-day-old gulf war. They demonstrated Iraq's ability to maintain some of its offensive capability despite massive air attacks by U.S. and allied forces.

One missile hit Riyadh, the Saudi capital, damaging a building in a residential neighborhood. However, it was unclear whether it was a Scud that was not counted in the military's tally, a Patriot that went awry or some other rocket.

In Dhahran, four distinct explosions were heard during the 10 p.m. Sunday (Saudi time) attack.

Tim Clark, a civilian working under contract with the U.S. Army, said he was eating dinner at a rooftop hotel restaurant when the attack began.

"I was sitting there eating my steak when these three (Patriot) missiles went streaking by. And then there were explosions and I got out of there," Clark said.

Air Force Lt. Michael Coubrough said he saw four Patriots spiral upward, followed by two explosions. The blasts were loud enough to rattle doors and windows and shake floors.

Coming after two nights without air raid alerts in eastern Saudi Arabia, the missile attacks late Sunday and early today had an obvious psychological effect. At one hotel near Dhahran, families were huddled in the conference room being used as a bomb shelter. Although none of the previous

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chemical or biological weapons.

The U.S. command has said its planes have been tracking down mobile Scud launchers and knocking them out one by one. But French military officials have suggested as many as 30 survive.

Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, chief commander of American forces in the region, was asked

In Riyadh, at least a dozen explosions could be heard within seconds. One particularly powerful explosion was felt at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Riyadh, a few blocks from the Saudi Defense Ministry.

The missile that struck landed in a vacant lot and cratered about 5 feet deep and

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Scud attacks involved chemical weapons, gas masks were widely used. Children were crying as their parents attempted to comfort them.

At another hotel, home to many journalists covering the gulf war, a Spanish television reporter said, "Honestly, I didn't feel scared (by the first attack) because I was outside and saw the location of it, while the people inside in the bomb shelter were really scared because they couldn't."

The newest missile attacks occurred after 181 U.S. citizens took advantage Sunday evening of a State Department offer of transportation out of eastern Saudi Arabia. An official with the U.S. consulate said the offer was not an evacuation and did not represent any change in State Department assessments of risk in Saudi Arabia.

About 600 people signed up for flights on military transports out of the war area, the official said. But he also said some of those people changed their minds before the flights could be arranged.

Also, the official noted, many were using the government transport because the war had shut down civilian air traffic and stranded them in transit through Saudi Arabia.

The official said the threat to civilians from Scuds is slight. "The odds are so low that if I ran my life on them, I would never leave my house," he said.

The possibility that Iraq will use chemical weapons in an attack, however, obviously has influenced some of the 6,000 to 7,000 American expatriots in Saudi Arabia to leave, he said.

"Chemical weapons are mind-altering, and they tend to alter minds before they are used," the official said.

The attacks in Riyadh caused loud blasts, and bright flashes could be seen in the clouds where Patriot missiles apparently were intercepting Scuds. Riyadh is 270 miles from southern Iraq.

In the first barrage, three Scuds were launched toward Dhahran and were intercepted by five Patriot missiles, Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Gallagher said at a briefing in Riyadh.

In the second, at about 12:45 a.m. today, four Scuds were launched at Riyadh and two at Dhahran, and all were destroyed by Patriots, Gallagher said. Another Scud fell into the Persian Gulf near Dhahran with an explosion that could be heard from the island of Bahrain, off Saudi Arabia.

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"That's very much open to question," he said. "... There's never a 100 percent guarantee that one of them isn't going to somehow get through and hit someplace where they do more damage than they've done to date."

Both rocket attacks occurred at night and set off air raid sirens in the two Saudi cities, forcing residents to scramble for shelters and put on gas masks and, in some

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The missile that struck Riyadh landed in a vacant lot and left a crater about 5 feet deep and 15 feet across. An adjacent building was damaged, and there was debris scattered around the area.

Part of the allied attack Sunday night stemmed from an air base in southern Turkey on what was believed to be the fourth raid against Iraq in 24 hours, witnesses said.

Aircraft also roared off from bases in the gulf. Eight-engined B-52 bombers struck at Saddam's elite Republican Guard, dug in with tanks in south Iraq.

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