

I.H.T.

18-2-1991

Iraq Targets Israeli A-Plant

But Scuds Reportedly Caused No Damage or Casualties

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

BAGHDAD — Iraq said Sunday that it fired three Scuds overnight at Israel's Dimona nuclear reactor.

An Iraqi statement said all its missile launchers had returned safely to base after "the heroic missile force launched three destructive missile strikes on the Israeli Dimona nuclear reactor dedicated to war purposes."

Another Scud, the communiqué said, was fired at Haifa.

Israel said two Scuds hit the Jewish state on Saturday night with one landing in the south of the country for the first time.

The chief Israeli army spokesman, Brigadier General Nachman Shai, said there were no reports of casualties or damage.

Asked if Iraq was aiming at the Dimona reactor, in the southern Negev desert, General Shai replied: "I cannot go beyond that point, which is that one of the missiles landed in the southern part of the country."

General Shai said two Scuds, armed with conventional warheads, were fired simultaneously from western Iraq and landed in "open areas." Israel refuses to specify where Scuds land, saying the information would help Iraq improve its aim.

Baghdad experienced its quietest night since the war began Jan. 17, with no air raids late Saturday or early Sunday. The capital was buffeted by heavy rain and a sand storm, impairing visibility to such an extent that air raids may have been postponed.

The military communiqué, Iraq's 52d since the start of the war, said three allied planes were shot down during raids on Iraq and Kuwait.

It said the U.S.-led allies staged 242 air raids on Iraq and Kuwait in the past 24 hours, including 32 on civilian targets. It said there were heavy civilian losses but did not elaborate.

Iraq's Defense Ministry newspaper, Al Qadissiya, said in a front-page editorial that the allies would bear the consequences of their un-

favorable response to Iraq's conditional offer to withdraw from Kuwait.

"The lack of response from the criminals and traitors to the peace initiative offered by the great Iraq will make the battlefield in the Arab desert a monument to the defeat of evil," the editorial said.

"The heroic armed forces will prove for the first time that the desert sands will be irrigated with American blood, that half of Israel will burn, and the heads of the traitors will be cut off," it said.

The editorial was alluding to Iraq's announcement Friday that it would agree to withdraw from Kuwait if this could be linked with an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories, withdrawal of Western forces from the region and reparations for all the war damage inflicted on Iraq. Allied leaders rejected the proposal.

Soldiers on leave arriving in the capital from the war zone reported allied air strikes on the highway linking Kuwait with Basra.

(Reuters, AP)