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Records Management, White House Office of
Subject Files - FG006-03A (Chief of Staff, Office Files)

Stack:	Row:	Sect.:	Shelf:	Pos.:	FRC ID:	Location or Hollinger ID:	NARA Number:	OA Number:
W	11	1	8	3	10922	23785	11094	11094

Folder Title:

555003 [1] - [2]

Withdrawn/Redacted Material

The George W. Bush Library

DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Email	Message from Senator Dole Re: Senator Moynihan - To: Melissa Bennett - From: Michael Marshall	1	03/21/2003	PRM;
002	Letter	[Letter] - To: Bill Frist - From: Michael Thawley	2	03/20/2003	P1/b1; P5;
003	Email	Fw: Discretion & Valor - To: Melissa Bennett - From: Keith Hennessey	1	03/20/2003	P5;
004	Letter	[Letter] - To: Andrew Card - From: Joseph Lawless, et al.	1	03/19/2003	P6/b6;

COLLECTION TITLE:

Records Management, White House Office of

SERIES:

Subject Files - FG006-03A (Chief of Staff, Office Files)

FOLDER TITLE:

555003 [1]

FRC ID:

10922

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advise between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

Deed of Gift Restrictions

- A. Closed by Executive Order 13526 governing access to national security information.
- B. Closed by statute or by the agency which originated the document.
- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Records Not Subject to FOIA

Court Sealed - The document is withheld under a court seal and is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

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Records Management, White House Office of

SERIES:

Subject Files - FG006-03A (Chief of Staff, Office Files)

FOLDER TITLE:

555003 [1]

FRC ID:

10922

OA Num.:

11094

NARA Num.:

11094

FOIA ID and Segment:

2014-0157-F

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Letter	[Letter] - To: Bill Frist - From: Michael Thawley	2	03/20/2003	P1/b1; P5;

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The Mirror

March 21, 2003, Friday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 14,15

LENGTH: 1082 words

HEADLINE: GULF WAR 2: US SURPRISE ATTACK FAILS TO KILL THE IRAQI LEADER: I FEEL GOOD;
BUSH REACTION AFTER SENDING IN BOMBERS

BYLINE: RICHARD WALLACE US EDITOR IN WASHINGTON

HIGHLIGHT:

OPEN FIRE: First cruise missile is launched from USS Bunker Hill situated in Persian Gulf to begin yesterday's raid on Baghdad; TARGET: US tried to kill Saddam; BATTLE STATIONS: Mr Bush announces war has begun in a TV address from the Oval Office; ATTACK: Flashes of light over Baghdad, left, signal war. Stealth fighters patrol skies. Right, smoke billows above road after raid

BODY:

THE call came just after 8pm. George Bush apologised to his wife Laura and left the table where they were having their chicken pie dinner.

He picked up the phone extension in the living room next door and heard Chief of Staff **Andy Card** make it official. Card said: "Mr President, there is no evidence that Saddam Hussein has left the country." The Iraqi tyrant had made his final act of defiance. Zero hour had arrived. Mr Bush thanked his trusted aide, returned to the table and finished his meal.

Later, just seconds before he went on TV to tell the world war had started, he vigorously pumped his fist and declared: "I feel good." The extraordinary gesture was in stark contrast to the furrowed brow and look of concern he adopted for the subsequent broadcast.

Bush had already set the wheels of war in motion hours earlier when he ripped up long-standing battle plans.

He decided to bring forward Operation Iraqi Freedom by nearly two days after spy chiefs told him agents had a firm fix on Saddam Hussein's location.

The president saw a chance to end the war with one shot when CIA chief George Tenet said they had the tyrant and five of his key generals in their sights in a bunker below a house in southern Baghdad.

The decision to make a "decapitation strike" came after a four-hour meeting where aides argued fiercely over whether to stick to the original strategy.

Saddam and others in "the most senior levels of the Iraqi leadership", ordinarily among the most elusive of men, had unexpectedly fallen under US surveillance at an underground government complex.

Defence chief Donald Rumsfeld said yesterday: "We had very good intelligence it was senior

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3/21/03
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Iraqi leadership compound.

"A war plan is something that's developed before things start. The minute things start you have to take account of the realities that you find in the world. That was what was done last evening.

"The days of the Saddam regime are numbered. There is no need for a broader conflict if Iraq's leaders act to save themselves and to prevent further conflict."

Bush grabbed "the target of opportunity" to hit Saddam after he was advised by Tenet they may not get a second one.

Surveillance satellites were said to have picked up mobile phone signals linked straight to the dictator.

There were also reports the CIA had deliberately planted a rumour that deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz had fled or been killed hours before the attack in order to flush him out into the open.

Aziz is a key aide to Saddam and it is believed spy chiefs were able to track him after he called a press conference to reassure people he was alive.

Bush gave the go-ahead at 6.30pm (11.30pm GMT) - 50 minutes before the meeting broke up.

At 7.20pm (12.20am GMT) he went to see his chief speechwriter Michael Gerson to tell him there would be an announcement later.

At 9.33pm (2.33am GMT) - 5.33am in Iraq - the first shots hit a Baghdad house. More than 40 satellite-guided Tomahawk Cruise missiles were launched at Iraq leadership targets from six ships including the USS Donald Cook in the Red Sea and the USS Bunker Hill. A submarine also joined the attack.

Two F-117A Nighthawk stealth fighters dropped two 2,000lb bunker buster bombs on targets.

At 10.15pm (3.15am GMT) Bush addressed the nation. He said: "On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war."

His earlier "I feel good" statement, a phrase hijacked from soul legend James Brown, angered some US officials.

The president, clutching a copy of his speech, uttered the words to an aide standing outside the Oval Office 60 seconds before he was due on air. TV pictures were already showing flashes of explosions in the Baghdad dawn.

One senior opposition US lawmaker called the statement "hideously inappropriate".

He added: "The president is taking us to war and I'm afraid his true boorish colours came through yet again."

Despite his sombre mood on air, Mr Bush was privately upbeat.

An aide admitted: "He was excited about getting on with the job. There's been months of

delays and now the hour is at hand. The president wants Saddam gone, and now we're going to do it."

The backdrop for the speech had been carefully prepared. The presidential flag over Bush's shoulder was folded in such a way that the quiver of arrows could be seen in the eagle's clenched talon.

There was a picture of Laura with one of their dogs and a portrait of twin daughters Jenna and Barbara - to stress concern for the families of servicemen in the Gulf.

His words were deliberately ponderous - aides are touchy over the his international reputation as a gun-toting cowboy.

He spoke of "the early stages of military operations" as if delivering a weather forecast.

No historic phrases or instant aphorisms, but clearly his dull monotone disguised a certain glee that the time for battle was at hand.

In Baghdad intelligence suggested Saddam had survived the attack on his life.

But there was evidence he had lost communications with his battle commanders. One official said: "We are seeing no co-ordinated response to our first attack.

"It's little things here and there. Some commanders are hunkering down while others are launching small attacks and setting fires.

"It is significant there is a lack of co-ordination and significant resistance."

The Iraqi government said the assault hit empty media and customs buildings and civilian suburbs.

Three hours later Saddam - or someone purporting to be him - made a TV appearance to denounce "little Bush". Spy chiefs said it could have been video taped earlier or filmed using a body double of the leader.

Beyond mentioning the date, the rambling speech made no specific reference to the military strike. Saddam said: "To the great Iraqi people, the brave strugglers, to the heroic armed forces. We pledge to you we will fight the invaders. They will be defeated."

Information minister Mohammed Saeed Sahaf introduced the dictator's TV speech and declared a jihad (holy war) had begun.

He said: "This is a good proof that the US are criminals and believing in assassination. I think they should be condemned. We will crush this aggression."

Iraq last night insisted Saddam was still alive and screened pictures of him sitting around a table with four senior ministers discussing their response to the US assault.

LOAD-DATE: March 21, 2003

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FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
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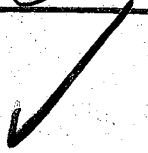
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Bennett, Melissa S.

7 From: Jay Lefkowitz

From: Lefkowitz, Jay P.
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2003 8:10 AM
To: Bennett, Melissa S.
Subject: AHC question this am

555003
F6006 237A



Per Andy's question this am, the fair labor standards act modifications will be put out for comment now and we expect to issue the final rules at the beginning of 04, but the date on which they will become effective, which will be some time after the rules become final, is still an open matter and it is one of the issues to be addressed in the comment period.

3/21/03
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HAS SEEN

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USA TODAY

March 21, 2003, Friday through Sunday, FIRST EDITION ✓

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 6A**LENGTH:** 858 words**HEADLINE:** Bush dives into details of Iraq conflict President stays thoroughly briefed as allies open assault against Baghdad**BYLINE:** Judy Keen and Laurence McQuillan**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON**BODY:**

WASHINGTON -- President Bush, who generally sticks to the big picture and delegates details, will be a hands-on commander in chief during the war with Iraq, if his management in the first hours of the conflict is any indication.

At 6 a.m. Thursday, he was on the phone with national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, getting an update on overnight action. He had launched the first assault on Baghdad after three meetings Wednesday with his war team. The final meeting lasted more than three hours -- an exceptional occasion for the president, who prefers cut-to-the-chase sessions.

By 6:55 a.m. Thursday, his usual time, he was at work in the Oval Office.

Before lunch with Vice President Cheney and an afternoon meeting with his Cabinet, Bush got a report on intelligence findings from CIA Director George Tenet, an FBI briefing and a meeting with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. He got another update from Rumsfeld later.

The Cabinet meeting was ostensibly about domestic priorities, but in fact, Bush's conversations Thursday were mostly about the topic that has preoccupied him for months, now consumes most of his working hours and will define his place in history: war with Saddam Hussein.

Commerce Secretary Don Evans, one of the president's closest friends, says Bush didn't seem tired or preoccupied at the Cabinet meeting. "He's very confident, very comfortable, very steady," Evans says, echoing other Bush aides. "When he's focused on a goal . . . he's very disciplined."

Reporters were briefly allowed into the Cabinet Room.

"There's no question we've sent the finest of our citizens into harm's way," Bush said. "They perform with great skill and great bravery. We thank them, we thank their loved ones, we appreciate their sacrifice."

There were indications that Bush and his team were pleased with the first hours of the war. Reporters outside the Cabinet Room could hear laughter. When they were escorted in, Cheney was beaming. They were quickly ushered out after Bush's remarks and not allowed to ask questions.

Bush is getting frequent updates from Rice, Rumsfeld and chief of staff **Andy Card**. "He

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considers this a critical phase and wants to know everything," a senior White House official says. Even so, the aide says, Bush isn't watching TV coverage.

He'll spend the weekend at Camp David.

Bush placed courtesy calls to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak; Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the emir of Qatar; and the king of Bahrain, Sheik Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, to discuss the military action. War also was the main topic at Bush's dinner with Paul Biya, the president of Cameroon.

During the Vietnam War, Bush was a pilot for the Texas Air National Guard but did not serve overseas. In his 1999 autobiography, *A Charge to Keep*, he wrote that his military service taught him that "if diplomacy fails, if no other option will accomplish the objective, the commander in chief must define the mission and allow the military to achieve it."

For weeks before he gave the order to attack, Bush demanded detailed briefings on war plans and quizzed military advisers about weaponry, troop movements and the positioning of warships. Aides say he is immersed in the details of war planning but will leave battlefield decisions to military commanders. "He will not micromanage" the war, Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer says. "He will empower the military to accomplish it. And that means he is not going to, every day, every way, comment on every different development."

Bush did not stay up late Wednesday to watch TV reports of the bombing in Baghdad. After his speech to the nation at 10:16 p.m., he got a phone call from Rice at 10:40 p.m. telling him the pilots who dropped the first bombs on Baghdad had safely cleared enemy airspace. Then he went to bed.

The president's father, who was a Navy fighter pilot in World War II, let the Pentagon run the first war with Iraq. He watched the first night of bombing in 1991 on CNN with his wife, Barbara, and evangelist Billy Graham. He worried about casualties and stayed up until Cheney, his Defense secretary, called him to report that all the Navy and Air Force planes had made it back safely.

During the Vietnam War, President Johnson was obsessed. He stayed involved in day-to-day planning of airstrikes and second-guessed military logistics. He kept news service teletypes and three TVs in the Oval Office, so he could monitor coverage. During the Cuban missile standoff, President Kennedy closeted himself with close aides and fixated on the crisis.

Bush "relies on the strategy when he's comfortable that it's been thought through," a senior White House aide says.

Bush has been thinking about this particular strategy for a long time. On Feb. 16, 2000, when he was still governor of Texas and campaigning for the presidency, he said on PBS' *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* that he was "just as frustrated as many Americans are that Saddam Hussein still lives."

Bush added, "I will tell you this: If we catch him developing weapons of mass destruction in any way, shape or form, I'll deal with that in a way that he won't like."

GRAPHIC: Updates: The president speaks with Vice President Cheney, back to camera, CIA chief George Tenet, left, and chief of staff **Andy Card**.

LOAD-DATE: March 21, 2003

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555003
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Bennett, Melissa S.

From: Gottesman, Blake

Sent: Friday, March 21, 2003 10:55 AM

To: Bennett, Melissa S.

Subject: pls tell ahc thanks re: plan for draper at camp - i agree 100%

(i am constantly reminded of how lucky we are to have him as our chief!)

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HAS SEEN
3/21/03

The Associated Press

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March 21, 2003, Friday, BC cycle

7:46 AM Eastern Time

SECTION: Washington Dateline**LENGTH:** 280 words**HEADLINE:** Bush summons lawmakers to Oval Office briefing**BYLINE:** By RON FOURNIER, AP White House Correspondent**DATETIME:** WASHINGTON**BODY:**

As U.S. troops raced toward Baghdad, President Bush summoned congressional leaders to the White House on Friday for an Oval Office briefing on the war in Iraq.

Bush prepared for the meeting shortly after being informed that a U.S. Marine had been killed in Iraq, the first reported combat death of the war to disarm Saddam Hussein.

A senior administration official, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity, said the president expressed regret for the death and called it a reminder to Americans that war comes with great sacrifice.

Bush began his work day at the Oval Office, arriving as usual at 7 a.m. EST. He talked by telephone with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and met with Chief of Staff **Andrew Card**.

He intended to discuss the war with legislative leaders but at least one domestic issue was on the agenda. Bush wanted to discuss the federal budget one day after the House passed a \$2.2 trillion budget that endorses his plan to cut taxes by \$726 billion over the coming decade.

Bush hoped for another victory Friday in the Republican-led Senate, where Democrats and moderate GOP lawmakers were waging an increasingly desperate bid to cut the package in half. Democrats say the tax-cut plan is too expensive in a time of war and spiraling deficits.

Bush planned to spend the first weekend of war at Camp David, the presidential retreat in the mountains of Maryland, the official said.

The president will be in contact with foreign policy advisers, some of whom plan to make the trip with him. The Marine-run facility is equipped with advanced communications allowing Bush to keep tabs on the war, the official said.

LOAD-DATE: March 21, 2003

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Los Angeles Times

March 21, 2003 Friday Home Edition

SECTION: Main News; Part 1; Page 1; Foreign Desk**LENGTH:** 1016 words**HEADLINE:** WAR WITH IRAQ /;
A Hands-Off President Jumps In**BYLINE:** Edwin Chen, Times Staff Writer**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON**BODY:**

The stealth bombers were already in the air, bound for Baghdad.

After a debate of more than three hours in the Oval Office with his war council, President Bush had just three more minutes to decide whether to launch the war with Iraq or turn the bombers around.

One more time, he polled each advisor. He reviewed for the last time an unexpected eleventh-hour intelligence bonanza regarding the whereabouts of senior Iraqi leaders, possibly including Saddam Hussein.

Then Bush gave the order.

"Let's go," the president said.

Thus the war against Iraq began.

A senior White House official provided a detailed account late Thursday of the tense hours that led to Bush's decision Wednesday night to launch the first attack of the war, an effort to "decapitate" the Iraqi leadership.

The official's account not only revealed how he made the decision to take the country to war but also illustrated how deeply Bush, who likes to delegate, has been involved in making the decisions.

Bush is immersing himself in details large and small -- some unexpected, many of them urgent -- of the military campaign to disarm Iraq and unseat Hussein.

It was much earlier Wednesday, around 8 a.m. after a video conference with his military commanders in the Middle East, that Bush first gave the go-ahead for war. The timing was left up to Gen. Tommy Franks, commander of the U.S. Central Command.

But a complication arose about 3:30 p.m.

CIA Director George J. Tenet called the White House from the Pentagon, where he was meeting with Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

They said they needed to see the president urgently and present him with fresh military and intelligence information that could influence the timing of the war's start, according to the White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Thus Bush convened what proved to be his final pre-war council. From the Persian Gulf region, where it was already Thursday morning, Franks was connected to the meeting via a secure telephone line.

Franks, armed with the new intelligence information about Hussein's possible location, already had dispatched the bombers toward Baghdad. He told the council he needed a decision on whether to let them continue by 7:15 p.m. Washington time.

Bush's advisors were unanimous: Let the bombers complete their mission.

As zero hour approached, Rumsfeld pulled out a copy of the brief address to the nation that had been prepared for Bush to deliver in the event he launched the war.

Rumsfeld read it to Franks to make sure that a bombing mission aimed at killing the Iraqi leadership would be consistent with the president's words. Everyone was still in agreement.

Bush then reviewed the new information one more time and conducted a final poll of his war council members, who included Vice President Dick Cheney; Rumsfeld; Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; national security advisor Condoleezza Rice; Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; and White House Chief of Staff **Andrew H. Card Jr.**

At 7:12 p.m., Bush issued his order.

The bombs and the Tomahawk cruise missiles launched in coordination with them started landing about two hours later.

On Thursday, as the attack on Iraq began to pick up momentum, Bush called many world leaders to "touch base," White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer said. The president also met with his war advisors and had lunch with Cheney.

Then Bush convened a meeting of his Cabinet, in part to remind agency heads to continue pressing his domestic agenda, Fleischer said.

Throughout his presidency, Bush has shown his annoyance when aides brought him questions that he deemed unworthy of his attention. For instance, the president has been deeply involved in recent White House debates on how to extend prescription drug coverage to seniors. But he snapped at aides when they sought his input on specific legislative tactics to enact the proposed bill.

"That's for you all to work out," Bush said, ending that discussion, according to a senior White House official.

Bush still plans to maintain much of his routine. Today, for instance, he and First Lady Laura Bush are scheduled to leave the White House for the presidential retreat at Camp David, where they will spend the weekend.

But the White House official who briefed reporters Thursday said the president would be deeply involved in the details of the war -- as he was Wednesday.

The aide, who has worked for Bush for a decade, said the president will be briefed throughout the day on the war's progress and is prepared to weigh in at anytime.

Although the general war plan is set, the official added, "There are all types of variables and developments that we cannot predict that require the attention of the president. He's very mindful of them. He's very attentive to them. He's briefed on them. And he will be as involved as much as necessary."

In his briefing, the aide also detailed the Wednesday morning meeting in the White House situation room during which Bush decided to go to war.

That session linked the president and his senior advisors by video to Franks and his commanders scattered in the Persian Gulf region.

Just before the linkup, Bush went around room asking his advisors, including Rice, Rumsfeld, Myers and Powell, for their final thoughts. They were of one mind: War was inevitable, barring a surprise capitulation by Hussein. Then Franks appeared on the screen -- from Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.

The general introduced his eight top commanders to the president and each gave Bush a presentation.

One by one, the president asked them whether "you have everything you need" and whether they agreed with the war plan.

All said yes.

"This force is ready to go," Franks concluded.

"For the peace of the world and the benefit and the freedom of the Iraqi people, I hereby give the order," Bush said, according to the White House official, then added, "God bless our troops."

Franks replied: "May God bless America."

Then the president and his general exchanged salutes.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: MEETING OF THE MINDS: President Bush meets with his Cabinet, including Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, left, and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, right, at the White House PHOTOGRAPHER: Agence France-Presse

LOAD-DATE: March 21, 2003

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The Associated Press

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March 21, 2003, Friday, BC cycle

3:10 AM Eastern Time

SECTION: Washington Dateline**LENGTH:** 875 words**HEADLINE:** House OKs GOP budget; Senate effort to trim Bush tax cut faces**BYLINE:** By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press Writer**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON**BODY:**

The House approved a \$2.2 trillion budget for next year early Friday embracing President Bush's tax-cutting plan for bolstering the economy after top Republicans appealed to GOP lawmakers to show wartime unity.

The near party-line 215-212 roll call came after a long day of arm-twisting by House Republican leaders and top administration officials, who were determined to shield the president from a domestic defeat as war with Iraq commences.

The fiscal blueprint for 2004 would pave the way for a bill later this year bearing Bush's signature initiative for stimulating the economy: \$726 billion in tax reductions through 2013.

Responding to political pressure to eliminate federal deficits, it also calls for billions in cuts in programs like Medicaid and veterans assistance, which made many Republicans nervous.

That prompted telephone calls to wavering lawmakers from the GOP hierarchy, including Vice President Dick Cheney, Treasury Secretary John Snow and White House chief of staff **Andrew Card**. It also sparked repeated references to the war, which the House debated for two hours before the budget vote.

"Just like we commended our troops tonight, it's time we do our job," said House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle, R-Iowa.

Democrats said the tax cuts would only make mounting deficits even worse - passing that debt to the next generation, some of whom are in combat in Iraq.

"You're sticking those 250,000 young Americans and their children with that bill," said Rep. Gene Taylor, D-Miss. "And that's inexcusable."

In the Senate, which debated its own GOP-written blueprint for next year, an attempt by Democrats and moderate Republicans to reduce by one-half Bush's \$726 billion tax-cutting plan appeared in trouble.

With a vote on that proposal likely Friday, two pivotal senators - John McCain, R-Ariz., and Ernest Hollings, D-S.C. - said they would oppose trimming those tax reductions to \$350 billion through 2013.

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"Without either of them, we lose," said Sen. John Breaux, D-La., a sponsor of the drive to reduce Bush's tax plans.

Bush's tax cut would eliminate levies paid by individuals on corporate dividends and accelerate already scheduled income tax cuts, such as immediately increasing the child care tax credit to \$1,000.

The House spent all day debating its spending plan. It rejected three alternatives by Democrats that would have eliminated most of Bush's tax reductions and increased spending, and one budget by conservative Republicans with deeper tax and spending cuts.

In a bid for support from party moderates, top House Republicans removed proposed Medicare savings from their budget. Yet they still had to perform a balancing act between centrists unhappy with the tax reductions and cuts in social programs, and conservatives complaining that spending was too high.

But support for the plan grew after a closed-door meeting at which House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and others argued that the outbreak of war was not the time to hand the president an embarrassing budget defeat.

"This is a very, very serious time, a grave time," Hastert told reporters later. "We have a lot of work to do."

"I'd describe it as patriotic intimidation that's going on," said Rep. Gil Gutknecht, R-Minn., describing the session.

The congressional budget limits overall spending and revenues, paving the way for future bills in which binding revenue and spending decisions are made. It does not need the president's signature.

Yet it always sparks a political firestorm. This year's focused on the GOP's quest for new tax cuts at a time of war and with annual federal deficits expected to set records exceeding \$300 billion.

"The Republican plan allows U.S. troops to go into a war today and then slashes their veterans benefits by billions when they return tomorrow because their budget needs those billions from veterans to fund a \$90,000 tax cut per millionaire," said Steve Israel, D-N.Y.

Democrats also accused the White House of delaying a request to pay for the war - expected to approach \$100 billion - until the budgets were passed, preventing Democrats from arguing that the war's costs make the tax cuts unaffordable. Republicans denied that and said Congress would approve the funds quickly.

Like Bush, the House and Senate budgets set aside \$400 billion over the next 10 years for new Medicare prescription drug coverage. Democrats say that is too low.

While the budget Bush sent Congress in February projected huge, unyielding deficits, the House sees surpluses returning in 2012, the Senate in 2013.

Both, however, rely on future spending cuts that many analysts say will not pass Congress.

The House budget would order lawmakers this year to find \$255 billion in savings over the next decade in benefits such as student loans, Medicaid and civil servants' pensions - all with staunch congressional defenders in both parties. It also plans 0.4 percent more next year for

most nondefense programs - a small fraction of recent years' increases.

The Senate plan proposes more spending than the House in the near term, but extremely small increases later - which will be revisited by future Congresses anyway.

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March 21, 2003, Friday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 5; Foreign Desk

LENGTH: 1105 words

HEADLINE: A NATION AT WAR: BAGHDAD;
Surprise Strike at Outset Leaves Urgent Mystery: Who Was Hit?

BYLINE: By ELISABETH BUMILLER and DAVID JOHNSTON

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 20

BODY:

Intelligence officials had long been frustrated in their attempts to track Saddam Hussein's erratic movements. Then, on Wednesday, according to senior government officials, Iraqi informants produced a lead. The Iraqi leader, and possibly his two sons, were said to be in a private house built over an underground bunker in southern Baghdad.

What happened next, one senior administration official said today, "has created one of the great mysteries of the first day of the war -- did we hit anyone and if so, who did we get?"

Tonight, officials were still holding out hope that one of the American 2,000-pound bombs and nearly 40 Tomahawk cruise missiles, each carrying 1,000 pounds of explosives, might have struck Mr. Hussein or one of his sons, Qusay and Uday. "It may take days," the official said, "to sift through it all."

Today, the mystery deepened as intelligence agencies monitoring Iraqi communications detected a significant drop in intercepted conversations among the nation's top leaders. Some officials speculated that Iraq's leadership had gone underground. Others believed that, as one official put it, "their phones melted."

Either way, it was a surprise start to the war. It began close to 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Wednesday, according to administration officials, when George J. Tenet, the director of central intelligence, received the tip that Mr. Hussein and his top leadership might be in the fortified bunker in Baghdad. Mr. Tenet raced to the Pentagon to discuss the information with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul D. Wolfowitz, then spoke to Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The administration officials said they had been relying on intelligence from Iraqis who had not spoken to them in the past. "People are talking to us now and telling us things now that they would never have dreamed of telling us," one senior official said. "People are sticking their necks out in all kinds of ways in Iraq that they never would do before."

"There was no question about the legality of the target, but there was some discussion about how solid the information was and who might actually be there and when," the official said. "The conclusion was that even though we didn't know for sure, it was an important target in any case."

Gen. Tommy R. Franks, the commander of allied forces in the Persian Gulf, received the same intelligence from C.I.A. officers in the field that Mr. Tenet was giving Mr. Rumsfeld, the official said. Even before Mr. Bush signed the attack order, General Franks, at his command

post near Doha, Qatar, began planning a strike with Tomahawk cruise missiles against the bunker, the official said, and he ordered the F-117 stealth fighter jets aloft in preparation to strike.

Around 3:30 p.m., Mr. Tenet and Mr. Rumsfeld carried the information to a meeting with President Bush and his top national security officials in the Oval Office. For three hours, the group discussed the source of the information, how likely it was to be true, and the risks of the operation. They spoke to General Franks in Qatar and came to the decision, the official said, that Tomahawk cruise missiles alone would not destroy a bunker that intelligence showed was buried under layers of dirt and concrete.

Assembled for the discussion about the attack was Mr. Bush's war council: Mr. Rumsfeld; Vice President Dick Cheney; Secretary of State Colin L. Powell; the national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice; the White House chief of staff, **Andrew H. Card Jr.**, and General Myers.

The group concluded that it was imperative to send the F-117's, which can carry 2,000-pound "bunker buster" bombs, a much heavier payload than a cruise missile.

According to senior government officials, Mr. Bush listened impassively as his top aides debated what might be done, weighing whether to stick with the meticulously scheduled opening of the war given the extraordinary possibility that the United States could land a potentially lethal blow against the Iraqi leadership.

"This was the end of the 48-hour period for Saddam to get out of Iraq," one government official said. "So to have at that very moment when you're considering starting a conflict, to have a fairly good idea of knowing where senior-most leaders are, is a pretty nice confluence."

Throughout the Oval Office meeting, Mr. Bush's advisers maintained open telephone lines to military commanders in the field. As the meeting wore on, military planners ordered the coordinates of the Baghdad house entered into the guidance systems of cruise missiles based on eight ships in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

At 7:12 p.m., senior administration officials said, Mr. Bush gave the order to execute the strike. "Let's go," Mr. Bush said, according to an administration official who provided an account of the meeting.

General Franks had told the group that a decision had to be made no later than 7:15 p.m., which was 3:15 a.m. in Iraq.

Administration officials did not explain the reasons for the deadline, but military commanders were clearly concerned about allowing American warplanes to linger in enemy airspace as dawn approached in Baghdad.

The two planes already en route from Qatar, nearly 700 miles away, flew into the air defenses ringing Baghdad and dropped four 2,000-pound bombs on the bunker. At nearly the same time, 40 Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from ships and submarines in the Red Sea and the northern Persian Gulf hit Iraqi command structures surrounding the bunker.

The aircraft were already returning to their base when Mr. Bush gave his Oval Office speech at 10:15 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. By 10:40, after the president had returned to the residence, Ms. Rice telephoned him to say that the planes had safely cleared Iraqi airspace.

Administration officials said today that even though they were unsure if they had killed Mr. Hussein, they were sure they had hit a bunker of top Iraqi officials.

"To this moment, we don't know who it was," a senior administration official said. "There was some belief it was him. But there was absolute certainty it was leadership."

Bush administration officials were adamant that the last-minute strike had not compromised a meticulous Pentagon battle plan, either by advance warning or by speeding up the attack.

"It seems to me that if you think you can get the top leadership, and it doesn't happen to fit your plan, it would be irresponsible not to take the chance," one senior official said.

"Wouldn't you have backed an effort to get Hitler in 1939?"

<http://www.nytimes.com>

GRAPHIC: Photo: A Tomahawk missile launched yesterday from the Bunker Hill.
(Department of Defense)(pg. B5)

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March 18, 2003

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3/20/03

The Honorable Andrew Card
Chief of Staff
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500
Attn: Melissa Bennett

Dear Secretary Card:

On behalf of The New England Council, I would like to thank you for speaking to our members at our Annual White House Briefing on March 5, 2003. Our members enjoyed the opportunity to hear your insights on issues and concerns you share with them and specifically your thoughts on the crisis with Iraq and the difficult decisions facing President Bush and our country.

Each year, The New England Council hosts a series of events in Washington for our membership. This year's events, including the White House Briefing, were a great success. We were pleased that you were able to join us for the White House Briefing and hope that you enjoyed the opportunity to speak to members of the New England Business community.

As always, we appreciated the efforts of your diligent staff, including Melissa Bennett and Jose Mallea, who are always a pleasure to work with. We also enjoyed working with Julie Thomas in the Office of Public Liaison to help coordinate this event on what proved to be a very hectic day at the White House.

Again, thank you for your participation in our events and your commitment to issues of important to the New England region. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

James T. Brett
President & CEO

My prayers are
with you and
President
during this time

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March 20, 2003 Thursday, CHICAGO FINAL EDITION

SECTION: News; Pg. 1; ZONE: C

LENGTH: 993 words

HEADLINE: 'We will accept no outcome but victory'

BYLINE: By Bob Kemper and Jeff Zeleny, Washington Bureau.

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Overriding global protests and the concerns of longtime allies, President Bush ordered the first pre-emptive war in modern American history, sending U.S. forces into Iraq and warning the American people Wednesday night that his drive to topple Saddam Hussein could be long and difficult.

Promising to "disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger," Bush, for the second time in his two-year tenure, took America to war against a Muslim nation he accuses of harboring terrorists and presenting a direct threat to the American people.

As U.S. Tomahawk missiles and bombs from Stealth bombers struck the Baghdad area, Bush spoke from the Oval Office to a nation divided about the necessity of war, anxious about the threat of terrorist attacks and worried for the safety of a U.S. fighting force now numbering more than 250,000 in the Persian Gulf region.

"Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force," Bush said in his 4 1/2-minute address delivered about two hours after the 8 p.m. EST deadline he had set for Hussein to leave the country. "This will not be a campaign of half-measures, and we will accept no outcome but victory."

The first attack in what Bush vowed would be "a broad and concerted campaign" appeared to be limited to Iraqi leadership targets around Baghdad.

After a failed monthslong effort to win the backing of the United Nations Security Council, Bush sought to counter charges that the U.S. was acting alone. He said 35 countries supported the U.S. invasion, although White House aides had earlier acknowledged that "very, very few" would provide combat troops.

The president characterized the military campaign as an attempt to prevent future terrorist attacks on the United States and its allies, as well as a mission to free the long-suffering Iraqi people from decades of authoritarian rule. But it is a war that will be watched warily in Europe and the Arab world, where distrust of U.S. motives is high and fears of a rising Islamic militancy are deep.

The decision to launch military strikes Wednesday followed a late-afternoon meeting in the Oval Office among Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and top national security and military advisers. The meeting, the third of the day, lasted nearly four hours, a senior administration official said.

"They went over defense plans and received the final recommendations from the military planners to begin the operation tonight," the official said. "Using the plans from these officials, he gave the go-ahead."

Bush pledged an all-out fight in what is essentially a follow-up war to the one Bush's father, former President George H.W. Bush, waged in 1991. The elder Bush expelled Iraqi troops from Kuwait but stopped short of moving on Baghdad to remove Hussein from power.

Bush cautioned Americans not to expect a short conflict -- the 1991 ground war lasted only 100 hours -- and pledged to retain a military presence in a post-Hussein Iraq until the nation has been rebuilt and stabilized.

"A campaign on the harsh terrain, on a nation as large as California, could be longer and more difficult than some predict, and helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment," Bush said. Until last night, administration officials had spoken little of the potential difficulties involved in the conflict.

Without ever saying the word "war," Bush characterized the campaign as a means of preventing a second terrorist attack on America.

"We will meet that threat now with our Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and Marines, so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of firefighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities," Bush said.

The president also made no direct mention of the campaign's central mission: Removing Hussein from power. And he omitted any mention of the United Nations.

Bush assured the American public that U.S. and British forces would take steps to limit civilian deaths. But he said Hussein was moving military equipment and units into civilian areas, adding that this was the Iraqi leader's "final atrocity against his people."

In an attempt to assuage international concerns that the removal of Hussein by force would do more to destabilize an already volatile region, Bush recommitted his administration to the long-term reconstitution of Iraq.

"We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people," he said. "Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly. Yet our purpose is sure."

Bush's speech, his second national address on the Iraqi situation this week, came at the end of a drawn-out, tense day at the White House.

Bush on Monday had given Hussein 48 hours to leave the country or face a military strike. As the deadline drew near, the question was not what Bush would do next, but when he would do it.

There were moments in the White House when even some of Bush's aides seemed unsure of what the president was planning.

Bush spent most of the day in meetings with his national security team, including Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The decision was so closely held that some senior White House officials were taken by surprise. It was unclear late Wednesday whether any new information was disclosed at the meeting that triggered the decision.

After 7:30 p.m., the president adjourned to the private White House residence and ate dinner with First Lady Laura Bush. At 8 p.m.--the official deadline set two days earlier--the president was in the living room of the private quarters when chief of staff **Andrew Card** called to say there was no evidence Saddam Hussein had left the country.

Before giving the speech in the Oval Office, the president was seen by reporters pumping his fist into the air saying, "I feel good."

WAR ON IRAQ. AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

GRAPHIC: PHOTOS 2PHOTO (color): President Bush delivers an address to the nation Wednesday from the Oval Office. Tribune photo by Pete Souza.; PHOTO: Soldiers from the Army's 3rd Infantry Division assemble in the Kuwaiti desert Wednesday in advance of the U.S. attack on Iraq that began early Thursday. Tribune photo by Nuccio Dinuzzo.

LOAD-DATE: March 20, 2003

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The Dallas Morning News

March 20, 2003, Thursday

SECTION: WASHINGTON DATELINE

KR-ACC-NO: K0674

LENGTH: 1639 words

HEADLINE: War begins in Iraq

BYLINE: By G. Robert Hillman

BODY:

WASHINGTON _ President Bush took the nation to war in the Persian Gulf again Wednesday night, launching a campaign to crush the regime of Saddam Hussein and root out the weapons of mass destruction that the president has warned threaten the entire world.

Addressing the nation little more than two hours after the deadline he gave the Iraqi leader to flee, Bush said he had ordered air strikes at "selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war."

The president offered no details, but he promised a "broad and concerted" drive to "disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger."

"I assure you, this will not be a campaign of half measures, and we will accept no outcome but victory," he said.

The strikes, a combination of cruise missiles and bombs launched by a stealth fighter-bomber, appeared limited.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, would say only that the targets were "very senior" leaders. As to whether the strikes were successful, the official said, "It's too early to tell."

Four hours later, though, Saddam, in a full military uniform with a black beret, appeared on Iraqi television to denounce Bush as the "criminal Junior Bush."

"You are victorious with the will of God," Saddam told his fellow Iraqis, "and your enemies will be in humiliation and defeat, God willing."

Poised for combat in the gulf were nearly 250,000 U.S. military personnel and another 40,000 British troops, backed by 1,000 warplanes and a fleets of aircraft carriers and other ships.

Army and Marine divisions rolled into new formations in northeastern Kuwait, waiting orders to invade.

But there were no indications that the punishing "shock and awe" air strikes that the Pentagon had planned were near, or that large number of troops had entered Iraq from Kuwait and other points.

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In his four-minute, nationally televised address, Bush said that more than 35 countries were supporting the United States in the war that followed weeks of failed diplomacy in the United Nations.

Only Britain and a few other countries, though, were providing combat troops. At least 15 other countries were offering bases, airspace or other assistance.

In Baghdad, air raid sirens wailed and anti-aircraft traces flashed in the pre-dawn skies less than two hours after Bush's deadline.

In a radio broadcast, an Iraqi announcer for the regime had declared: "God protects us from foreign aggressors. God gives us patience. God protects our leader."

Earlier, Saddam and the top echelon of his regime had remained defiant, having ignored Bush's Monday night ultimatum that Saddam and his sons must leave the country within two days.

Bush had given Saddam 48-hours' notice, demanding he flee Iraq by 8 p.m. EST Wednesday to avert war. But the Iraqi leader and his top lieutenants quickly and repeatedly dismissed the ultimatum out of hand.

"That's impossible," Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said in Baghdad after reports that he had defected.

The Bush administration, he charged, has "power but no brains" and "knows nothing" about the determination of people to live in "sovereignty and dignity."

Bush has been determined to disarm Iraq since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

While he has offered no direct link between Saddam and the attacks, the president has repeatedly warned that Iraq is a direct threat to the nation's security and that of the rest of the world.

He has charged that Saddam has trained, financed and harbored terrorists who would be eager to use any of Iraq's most deadly weapons to attack the United States, or any other nation.

"We are determined to confront threats wherever they arise," Bush vowed as he prepared the nation for war. "I will not leave the American people at the mercy of the Iraqi dictator and his weapons."

Still, as he has relentlessly made his case against Saddam, Bush has seldom talked of the risks of war, or the sacrifices that come with it.

On Wednesday, though, he assured the nation that "our purpose is sure."

"The people of the United States and their friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder," the president said.

"For your sacrifice," he told the nation's military families, "you have the gratitude and respect of the American people, and you can know that our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done."

Still, he warned of difficult battles ahead.

"A campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict," Bush said, "and helping Iraqis achieve a united stable and free country will require our sustained effort."

Now that war had come, he promised "decisive force."

"I assure you," he vowed, "this will not be a campaign of half measures, and we will accept no outcome but victory."

Bush addressed the nation from the same desk used by his father to announce the massive air strikes that launched the first Persian Gulf War a dozen years ago. Iraq had invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990. And after building an unprecedented international coalition, Bush's father declared war to drive the Iraqis out.

That war ended six weeks later, after only a 100-hour ground campaign. But the allied forces stopped far short of Baghdad, leaving Saddam with a devastated military but still in power.

In this war, Bush, the son, has left no doubt that the U.S.-led invasion force will take Baghdad in search of Saddam, his two sons and other leaders of his regime. And the troops will destroy whatever weapons of mass destruction they can find.

"The danger is clear," Bush said Monday night when he gave Saddam 48 hours to leave the country to avert war. "Using chemical, biological or one day nuclear weapons, obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country, or any other."

"Before the day of horror can come, before it is too late to act," he vowed, "this danger will be removed."

Bush ordered the invasion of Iraq after weeks of diplomatic wrangling in the United Nations failed to secure renewed authority to use military force against Iraq.

But he said on Monday when he declared diplomacy dead that he had full authority to act under his constitutional obligation to defend the nation and under the Nov. 8 resolution from the U.N. Security Council to disarm Iraq.

Congress also gave him authority last fall to move militarily against Iraq, should diplomacy fail.

And on Wednesday, the White House said the president had officially notified Congress that "diplomatic and other peaceful means alone" could not protect the United States from the "continuing threat posed by Iraq."

Pressed at mid-day on whether Bush had at least made the "conceptual decision" to go to war, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer cited the president's Monday night speech.

"There's no question about that," Fleischer said. "The president made that clear to the American people the other night."

At 9:46 p.m. EST, Fleischer returned to the press briefing room to announce the president would be addressing the nation in half an hour.

"The early stages of the disarmament of the Iraqi regime have begun," Fleischer said.

Again on Wednesday, Bush remained secluded at the White House, conferring with his national security advisers, as final preparations were made for war at home and abroad.

Bush telephoned his staunchest ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has been under relentless public and political pressure to avert war without further U.N. support. And he met in the Oval Office with Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg to discuss the increasing likelihood of terrorist attacks.

"The president's made his decision. He said that clearly the other night that Saddam Hussein had 48 hours to leave, or we were going to take military action," Bloomberg told reporters afterward. "I think, at this point, the debate's over."

And the mayor foresaw no turning back, reiterating that the president had set the nation on a course of war and was determined to press ahead.

"He's not going to be cowed or dissuaded," Bloomberg said. "He's going to go out there and do what we all pray is right. And I happen to have great hopes, like everybody else does, that any military action will be quick and decisive and successful."

Bush authorized the airstrikes after what aides called an unusual three-and-a-half hour meeting of his war council, officials said. The meeting began at 3:40 p.m. EST and ended at 7:20 p.m., and Bush formally issued the order before 7 p.m.

"The president's state of mind is very much focused on the mission and the country _ he believes the mission will protect the country," a senior administration official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

After the meeting, Bush conferred briefly with his chief speechwriter, Michael Gerson.

The president had dinner with first lady Laura Bush in the residence of the White House. Shortly after the exile deadline passed, Chief of Staff **Andrew Card** telephoned Bush to tell him that, based on reports from CIA and national security officials, that Hussein had decided not to leave the country.

Bush worked on his speech before returning to the Oval Office near 9:45 p.m. EST, right before his speech.

Less than a minute before going on the air, while seated at his desk, Bush looked around the room, pumped his fist and said, "Feel good."

(Dallas Morning News correspondents David Jackson and Michelle Mittelstadt contributed to this report.)

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LOAD-DATE: March 20, 2003

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March 20, 2003, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 5; Foreign Desk**LENGTH:** 743 words**HEADLINE:** THREATS AND RESPONSES: THE DECISION;
Day of Waiting and Wondering Ends With Word From President**BYLINE:** By RICHARD W. STEVENSON**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON, March 19**BODY:**

As he sat behind his desk in the Oval Office just before he addressed the nation tonight at 10:15, President Bush picked up a copy of the speech in which he would tell the world that he had launched military strikes to topple Saddam Hussein. He gave a little shake of his fist, according to a person who saw the scene on a television monitor, turned to someone in the room and said, "Feel good."

Seconds later, Mr. Bush ended what had become an anxious guessing game in Iraq, in Washington, throughout the Middle East and in capitals around the world. With television screens already showing pictures of flashing lights through the haze of the Baghdad dawn, the president told the country that it was at war for the second time since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

His decision to begin what he suggested would be an all-out assault on Mr. Hussein and his regime came between 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., a senior administration official said.

Mr. Bush met with his war council starting at 3:40 this afternoon to discuss what Pentagon officials said was intelligence that Iraq's leadership, perhaps including Mr. Hussein or his sons, had gathered in a single spot.

In the Oval Office with Mr. Bush were the members of the team that had also been at his side through the war in Afghanistan: Vice President Dick Cheney; Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld; Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser; and George J. Tenet, the director of central intelligence.

After deciding that the intelligence was good enough to strike at what Pentagon officials called "targets of opportunity," Mr. Bush wrapped up the meeting around 7 p.m. He spent some time going over his speech with Michael Gerson, his head speechwriter, and then walked to the White House residence, where he had dinner with the first lady, Laura Bush.

A senior administration official said that at a little after 8 p.m., Mr. Bush was informed by **Andrew H. Card Jr.**, the White House chief of staff, that Saddam Hussein had not met the deadline to leave Iraq.

Two hours later, Mr. Bush sat down in the Oval office behind what is known as the "Resolute" desk, which was donated to the United States by Queen Victoria and is made from the wood of a British naval vessel of that name. It was the same desk used by his father -- as well as by Presidents Kennedy and Clinton -- and it was from behind it that Mr. Bush gave formal notice to the world of his decision.

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His speech came at the end of a day in which White House and Pentagon officials had given conflicting signals about whether the president would begin the military action today, as soon as his 48-hour ultimatum to Mr. Hussein ran out, or wait another day or two for further military preparations, better weather or other factors.

Security outside the White House was tight all day, and inside, the mood was expectant. Given that no one had expected Mr. Hussein to leave his country voluntarily, and given that Mr. Bush had put a specific timetable in place, officials said there was little surprise as word filtered out from the Oval Office this evening that the president had given the military the signal to go.

"This has been anticipated," a senior administration official told reporters late tonight. "Everyone was waiting for the predicted events to take place."

Mr. Bush's aides had been signaling for days that he would speak to the nation once the fighting had begun, and his speechwriters had been working on his remarks all week. Although ground troops had apparently not yet gone into action tonight, White House officials said they knew Mr. Bush would have to go public immediately because pictures of the cruise missile attacks would be on live television.

But it was by no means clear during the day that Mr. Bush would take the nation to war by tonight. He convened his regular National Security Council meeting this morning, and then held a meeting with Mr. Rumsfeld and other military aides to go over battle plans.

He met later with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York and Tom Ridge, the secretary of homeland security, to discuss domestic security plans and costs.

Late in the day, the White House announced that Mr. Bush planned to meet on Thursday with the president of Cameroon -- one of the nations whose vote he had sought, and failed to get, in the frantic diplomatic rush over the last week to bring the United Nations Security Council behind him.

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March 20, 2003 Thursday Home Edition

**SECTION:** Main News; Part 1; Page 1; Foreign Desk**LENGTH:** 2423 words**HEADLINE:** War with Iraq;
U.S. Attacks Iraq;
War to Oust Hussein Begins With Airstrikes**BYLINE:** John Daniszewski and Edwin Chen, Times Staff Writers**DATELINE:** BAGHDAD**BODY:**

The United States launched a thundering bomb and missile attack on Baghdad at dawn today, targeting senior government leaders in what could become all-out war to drive Saddam Hussein from power and disarm Iraq.

Air raid sirens blared, and yellow-and-white tracers from Iraqi anti-aircraft fire streaked across the city. Several large explosions rocked the capital, and a ball of fire flared in the southern sky. As the sun rose higher, street lights flickered out and the city fell into a ghostly silence.

"The opening stages of the disarmament of the Iraqi regime have begun," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer declared shortly after 9:30 p.m. Wednesday in Washington, or 5:30 a.m. in Baghdad. Forty-five minutes later, President Bush told the American people that he had ordered coalition forces to strike "selected targets of military importance" in Iraq.

A government source in Washington said the air attack was aimed at a "target of opportunity," which was described as "senior elements of Iraqi leadership." The target was on the outskirts of Baghdad, the source added, in a "residential facility." The source declined to say whether the target might have been Hussein or his sons, Uday and Qusai, who hold key positions in the Iraqi government.

Three hours after the attack, Hussein, wearing a military uniform, black beret and glasses, appeared on state television and hurled defiance at Bush. His broadcast began with the country's national anthem and a picture of Hussein with the Iraqi flag. Seconds into his speech, the broadcast went off the air but came back.

"The criminal little Bush," Hussein said, "has committed a crime against humanity."

Hussein began his comments by reading a Koranic verse. Then he switched back and forth between two sets of papers. His remarks, which appeared to be handwritten, were laced with religious terms and military hyperbole.

Bush had given Hussein 48 hours to relinquish power and flee. The explosions began about 90 minutes after the deadline expired. A military official at the U.S. Central Command in Doha, Qatar, suggested the airstrike was limited -- and not a part of what would become a wider assault.

"These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign," Bush said in his televised address to the nation from the Oval Office. "We have no ambitions in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people. Our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done."

Bush decided to launch the preliminary attack during a marathon meeting Wednesday afternoon with Vice President Dick Cheney and his top military and intelligence advisors. After dinner with his wife, he received a call from White House Chief of Staff **Andrew H. Card Jr.**, informing him that there was no indication Hussein was complying with Bush's ultimatum to step down.

The attack, by about three dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles and bombs dropped from F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighters, was likely to be followed by other limited attacks over 24 hours, even before a main air assault begins, a senior defense official said.

By its own account, the United States planned to overwhelm the Iraqis with shocking firepower, using cruise missiles, precision-guided bombs and electronic jamming devices.

The outgunned Hussein hoped to draw U.S. and allied British troops into deadly and difficult urban warfare as he makes a last stand in Baghdad or possibly his home region of Tikrit, to the north.

Even before war began, much of the Middle East -- and the world -- was tight with tension and dread. Aid workers in neighboring Jordan and Kuwait braced for thousands of war refugees.

Seventeen Iraqi soldiers surrendered to U.S. forces along the Kuwaiti border Wednesday, reported the U.S. Central Command, headquartered in Doha, Qatar. Fifteen of the Iraqis entered Kuwait from the west, and two others crossed along Highway 80, which runs north-south from Iraq into Kuwait, military spokesmen said.

U.S. officials were eager to spread the news of the surrender, citing it as evidence that a persistent propaganda program was working. Tons of leaflets -- 2 million on Wednesday alone -- have been dropped over parts of Iraq by American aircraft to persuade Iraqi forces to give up, return to their barracks or at least hold fire.

U.S. Marine and Army mechanized and infantry battalions rolled through a fierce sandstorm Wednesday afternoon and moved into positions along Kuwait's northern border with Iraq, while Hussein's forces were reported to be concealing weaponry and aircraft and mounting defenses around Baghdad.

At the same time, the United States sent warplanes to attack Iraqi missile systems and artillery near the southern port city of Basra, about 40 miles from the Kuwaiti border. Rear Adm. John M. Kelly, commander of a three-carrier battle group in the Persian Gulf, said the strike responded to Iraqi attempts to shoot down U.S. and British aircraft.

A senior military official said the artillery posed a danger to the thousands of American and British soldiers as they moved ever closer to the Iraqi border.

"They were aimed at our troops," the official said. "Obviously, as the potential for hostilities gets closer and closer, you have to get to a point where you can jump off."

During the afternoon and evening Wednesday, armed security guards fanned out throughout Baghdad and took up defensive positions along its southern edge. Some residents headed

for bomb shelters or into the countryside in a desperate attempt to escape. Others assumed defensive posts along sandbag-lined intersections and atop government buildings.

Then a pall seemed to settle on the city, accentuated by hazy skies turned yellow by the desert sandstorm. A city of 6 million people became a place of empty streets and worried silence.

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz appeared before journalists to belie rumors that he had defected or been killed. He predicted a long, bloody battle if the United States invaded. "I am carrying my pistol," he said, "to confirm to you that we are ready to fight the aggressors."

Information Minister Mohammed Said Sahaf warned that American soldiers faced "certain death."

In Israel, the government ordered all citizens to have their government-issued gas masks with them at all times. Many Israelis fear Hussein will launch missiles at their country filled with biological or chemical poisons.

He fired Scud missiles at Israel during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, but they were armed with conventional warheads.

In Germany, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said Germany would allow American military planes to use its airspace on their way to the Persian Gulf, despite widespread opposition among the German people to war with Iraq. But Schroeder reaffirmed that no German soldiers would take part in any fighting.

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, King Fahd vowed that his kingdom, intent on giving diplomacy every opportunity to disarm Iraq, would not participate in war. In an address to his people, Fahd said none of his armed forces would "by any means trespass by one inch into Iraqi territory."

He said Iraq should not be subjected to "military occupation."

Bush had finalized war plans Wednesday afternoon amid an air of expectancy. During those preparations, Fleischer, the White House press secretary, made a point of reminding Americans that war against Iraq would be costly.

"Americans ought to be prepared for a loss of life," he said. But he said the president was at peace with using military force.

"We have not received, unfortunately, any indication from Saddam Hussein that he intends to leave the country," Fleischer said.

"The president would like very much to see the Iraqi people save their lives, the Iraqi military save their lives, by laying down their arms and by not following their orders."

As hundreds of front-line troops, likely to be the first into Baghdad, moved into their final forward positions on the northwestern Kuwaiti desert, the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division formed long convoys, obscured by one of Kuwait's infamous sandstorms, and edged closer to the Iraqi border.

When the dust settled and dusk fell, a vast array of men and equipment was poised within five miles of the border. "There is a series of berms leading up to the border," said Maj. Gen. Buford Blount, the division commander. "We are moving closer to that."

Abrams battle tanks powered by jet-fueled turbine engines, Bradley fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers were joined by fuel tankers, dump trucks, backhoes and front-end loaders.

Blount counted 10,000 vehicles in all.

"We've got trucks here that are brand-new," he said, "and trucks that are older than the drivers in them."

Six tanks in the 4th Battalion of the 64th Regiment broke down in a four-hour trek that covered barely 20 miles.

Mechanics pulled out their engines and transmissions and repaired or replaced them on the desert floor.

Three of 14 tanks in C Company broke down.

"Probably the problem is age," said Lt. David Chen, company executive officer.

"The Abrams was new for the Gulf War, but that's 12 years ago. Most people don't even keep their cars that long.

"And it's not just the model. Some of the actual tanks are 12 years old."

In response to the allied troop movements, Iraqi forces scrambled to hide or relocate targeted weapons, said Adm. Kelly, the battle-group commander, at his headquarters aboard the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln.

"Up in Iraq," Kelly said, "they are continuing to move surface-to-air missile systems and some surface-to-surface missiles in an attempt to make our targeting more challenging and to increase their survivability."

Most of the Iraqi troop movements have been concentrated around Baghdad, Kelly said, and some fortifications around the Iraqi capital, built in recent months, are now occupied.

Kelly said Hussein's troop movements expose his weaponry to detection.

"He has nothing else he can do," Kelly said. "There's a chance he will get lucky and protect something ... and it's something for his people to do other than sit and wait."

Kelly described a furious spree of protective movements by Iraqi troops, clearly aware they were outnumbered.

"In some areas, it's desperation," he said.

In Washington, cots, bottled water and military rations were delivered to the White House Communications Agency, responsible for every aspect of Bush's ability to communicate with the world, including secure telephones.

Security perimeters were expanded around the White House.

Other key agencies went on war footing. Round-the-clock staffing went into effect at the Pentagon, the State Department and for analysts and counter-terrorism specialists at the CIA.

At the busy Pentagon Metro station, subway riders were greeted by the sight of machine-gun-toting guards.

At the Capitol, leaders of both parties tried to present a united front in support of U.S. troops. But some Democrats criticized Bush's decision to abandon diplomacy and go to war.

"Today I weep for my country," Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.) said on the Senate floor. "No more is the image of America one of strong yet benevolent peacekeeper. The image of America has changed. ... Our friends mistrust us, our word is disputed, our intentions questioned."

Byrd's speech was greeted with applause from the Senate gallery, a breach of etiquette that was gavelled down by the presiding officer.

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a strong supporter of Bush's move to war, rose immediately to challenge Byrd with deep and anguished emotion.

"To allege that somehow the United States of America has demeaned itself or tarnished its reputation by being involved in the liberation of Iraq is neither factual nor fair," McCain said.

Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), attacked by Republicans earlier this week for remarks faulting Bush for failing "so miserably at diplomacy," focused his words entirely on U.S. military personnel.

"We are awed by their sacrifice and their bravery, and we want them and their families to know that they have the profound respect and gratitude of every American," Daschle said. "We will make sure that they have every necessary resource so that nothing stands between our troops and victory."

Halfway around the world in Iraq, Abid Ahmad Mohammed, who has lived in Baghdad for 12 years, volunteered to help defend Hussein's government as if it were his own.

He and several other volunteers stood behind sandbags on the roof of a downtown building.

Groups of young men with Kalashnikov rifles walked around the city screaming: "Saddam, we will sacrifice our blood and souls for you."

*

The latest developments

* A coalition headed by the United States launched Tomahawk cruise missiles and dropped bombs from stealth aircraft near Baghdad in a preliminary salvo that a U.S. government source said was aimed at "senior elements of the Iraqi leadership." There was no comment on whether the targets included Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, who was not injured. Shortly afterward, President Bush told the nation that the war had begun.

* At the border with Kuwait, 17 Iraqi soldiers surrendered before the fighting began.

* Under strong U.S. pressure, the Turkish government asked its parliament to open Turkey's airspace to American missiles and warplanes, but it added a request to send two brigades of Turkish troops into Iraq's Kurdish-controlled region. U.S. hopes to deploy ground troops

bound for Iraq and use Turkish bases for bombing raids were dashed.

* In a presentation scheduled before the U.N. withdrew its weapons inspectors, chief inspector Hans Blix gave the Security Council a list of key remaining disarmament tasks for Iraq. But he said the list now "would seem to have only limited practical relevance."

* The U.S. and Britain indicated that they plan to seek up to three new resolutions concerning the political and physical reconstruction of Iraq.

*

Daniszewski reported from Baghdad and Chen from Washington. Contributing to this report were Times staff writers Geoffrey Mohan with the 3rd Infantry Division; Carol J. Williams aboard the Abraham Lincoln; Sam Howe Verhovek in Kuwait City; Maura Reynolds, Janet Hook, John Hendren, Esther Schrader, Nick Anderson, Vicki Kemper, Greg Miller, Johanna Neuman, Esther Schrader, Robin Wright and Ricardo Alonzo-Saldiver in Washington; Tracy Wilkinson in Doha, Qatar; and Henry Chu in Berlin.

GRAPHIC: GRAPHIC: Warplanes, missiles strike Iraq CREDIT: Victor Kotowitz Los Angeles Times GRAPHIC: (no caption) PHOTO: LAUNCH: A Tomahawk missile leaves the deck of the guided missile cruiser Bunker Hill in the Persian Gulf early today on its way toward military targets in Iraq. PHOTOGRAPHER: U.S. Navy PHOTO: EXPLOSION OVER BAGHDAD: A burst of light in the dawn sky over the Iraqi capital signals the start of the American military offensive. The attack, which was answered by antiaircraft fire, lasted only a few minutes. PHOTOGRAPHER: Agence France-Presse PHOTO: INTO THE FRAY: A Navy F/A-18 Hornet launches from the carrier Constellation shortly after President Bush ordered military operations to begin against Iraq. PHOTOGRAPHER: Getty Images

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March 20, 2003, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 5; Foreign Desk**LENGTH:** 2044 words**HEADLINE:** THREATS AND RESPONSES: THE WHITE HOUSE;
BUSH ORDERS START OF WAR ON IRAQ; MISSILES APPARENTLY MISS HUSSEIN**BYLINE:** By DAVID E. SANGER with JOHN F. BURNS**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON, Thursday, March 20**BODY:**

President Bush ordered the start of a war against Iraq on Wednesday night, and American forces poised on the country's southern border and at sea began strikes to disarm the country, including an apparently unsuccessful attempt to kill Saddam Hussein.

Mr. Bush addressed the nation from the Oval Office at 10:15 p.m. Wednesday night, about 45 minutes after the first attacks were reported against an installation in Baghdad where American intelligence believed Mr. Hussein and his top leadership were meeting. "On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war," the president said.

Speaking deliberately, with a picture of his twin daughters visible behind him, he added, "These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign."

Mr. Bush sought to tamp down expectations of a quick victory with few casualties by warning that the battles in the days ahead "could be longer and more difficult than some predict." Transcript, Page A20.

The results of the strike on Baghdad were unclear. However, Iraqi television broadcast a speech by Mr. Hussein, who is believed to have a number of doubles, after the attack. He denounced "Junior Bush" and promised the Iraqi people a victory.

The president's speech came about two hours after the expiration of his 48-hour deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq, an ultimatum dismissed with disdain by the Iraqi leader.

The first signs of the attack in Baghdad, which began just before first light there at 5:35 a.m., were an air raid siren followed by anti-aircraft fire and loud explosions over the city that appeared to be bombs. The anti-aircraft fire appeared to be ineffective.

At least one impact was visible about a half mile from the Rashid Hotel in central Baghdad, throwing a great cloud of dust into the air.

The initial round of explosions took place over a period of about 10 minutes and was followed by a lull. The first traffic of the day racing down the highway appeared to be drivers fleeing the attack.

It appeared that the war started earlier than the White House and top Pentagon officials had intended. During a nearly four-hour meeting at the White House late Wednesday afternoon - participants included Vice President Cheney; George Tenet, the director of central

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intelligence; Donald H. Rumsfeld, the secretary of defense; and Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser -- Mr. Bush decided to act on fresh intelligence indicating an opportunity to decapitate the country's leadership early in the war.

It was a chance Mr. Bush missed, to his regret, early in the war in Afghanistan in 2001, when American forces sought to kill Osama bin Laden and the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar.

According to two senior military officials, American forces launched about three dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles from four cruisers and destroyers and two submarines operating in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf as part of an effort to kill Mr. Hussein, his two sons and other senior members of the leadership. Two F-117A Stealth fighters each dropped two one-ton satellite-guided bombs. But the initial attack was described as limited in scope, and fell short of the far more intense strikes to come.

Military officials said the more limited attack was intended to demonstrate that the United States would act on timely intelligence to strike what one official called "targets of opportunity."

"This is not the start of the air campaign," one senior military official said in Washington.

With his four--minute address to the nation, delivered after he finished a quiet dinner with his wife, Laura, in the White House residence, Mr. Bush embarked on one of the country's most ambitious military ventures since Vietnam, and on a war his administration began planning over a year ago.

Many of the hawks in his administration had talked for years of a war like the one that opened tonight, hoping to rid the world of Mr. Hussein, who survived the first gulf war, attempted to assassinate Mr. Bush's father, and killed untold thousands of his opponents.

The president had to act without the sanction of the United Nations Security Council, where he could not assemble the nine votes necessary for a specific authorization to go to war. Germany, France and Russia have declared that the war is, in essence, illegal.

In his speech, Mr. Bush said 35 nations support the United States. But he acted with significant military support from only a small handful of nations led by Britain. A small force was sent by Australia.

"Now that the conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force," Mr. Bush said. "And I assure you, this will not be a campaign of heal measures and we will accept no outcome but victory."

Mr. Bush argued anew that Mr. Hussein posed a grave threat to the United States, and would attack the country or its interests whenever he gained the weapons and the strength. But he addressed much of his brief speech to the American men and women in the Persian Gulf, telling them that Iraqis "will witness the honorable and decent spirit of the American military." He contended that America had no visions of empire in the Middle East.

"We have no ambition in Iraq," he declared, "except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people."

Earlier Wednesday, Mr. Bush formally informed Congress in writing, and then world leaders in a series of phone calls, that he was ready to depose Mr. Hussein by force. In a seven-page message to Congress, he argued that force was now the only way to "adequately protect the national security of the United States" and that topping the Iraqi government

was "a vital part" of a broader war against terrorism. The message was required under a statute passed last fall explicitly authorizing war against Iraq after the president determined that a diplomatic solution was impossible.

As the deadline passed on Wednesday night, Mr. Bush's dinner was interrupted by a call from **Andrew H. Card**, the White House chief of staff, Ari Fleischer, the White House press secretary, said. The president asked Mr. Card if there was any evidence that Mr. Hussein had left Iraq. There was none, Mr. Card told him -- hardly a surprise after Mr. Hussein's two days of defiant claims that he would stay in place, and defeat the invading army.

Even hours before Mr. Bush addressed the nation, there had been doubt the invasion would start this quickly. As punishing sandstorms swirled around the Army troops massed in Kuwait, the engineering battalions that will be in the vanguard of the invasion force -- breaching berms and clearing minefields -- were already on the move. Special Operations forces were reportedly already deployed inside Iraq, shaping the battlefield for the larger invasion force to come.

American and British warplanes flew bombing missions today against a dozen Iraqi artillery and surface-to-surface missile positions in southern Iraq, wiping out placements that could threaten advancing troops.

Roughly 17 Iraqi border troops surrendered along the border, and were taken into custody by Kuwaiti forces. A few administration officials seized on the defections as an early indicator of the mass defections they hope to see when the fighting begins.

But others in the administration warned against overconfidence, cautioning that toppling Mr. Hussein and the protective apparatus that has kept him in power for more than three decades is a far riskier enterprise than was ousting his forces from Kuwait 12 years ago in the Persian Gulf war.

Mr. Fleischer cautioned that "Americans ought to be prepared for loss of life." He noted that while the White House sought "as precise, short a conflict as possible," the unknowns -- from how American, British and Australian troops would be received to the elements of weather, accident and so-called friendly fire -- were numerous.

The notification to Congressional leaders, sent to Capitol Hill late on Tuesday night, provided the most detailed legal justification yet for military action.

Mr. Bush stayed largely out of sight until his speech, save for a brief meeting Wednesday morning with Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the secretary of homeland security, Tom Ridge, to review New York City's needs to prepare for any new terrorist attacks. The White House later said it would go to Congress for a special appropriation bill to pay for the war and homeland security.

Washington was eerily quiet, and the area around the White House was sealed off by police.

But there were isolated voices of dissent. "Today, I weep for my country," Senator Robert C. Byrd, the West Virginia Democrat and the war's biggest critic in the Senate, said on Wednesday. "No more is the image of America one of strong, yet benevolent, peacekeeper. Around the globe, our friends mistrust us, our word is disputed, our intentions are questioned."

The breach with Europe continued to widen. As Mr. Bush tried to convince Congress that the attack on Iraq would advance the war on terror, France's foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, said the war would spawn more terrorism. The German foreign minister, Joschka

Fischer, said, "Germany emphatically rejects the impending war."

But while Germany allowed American troops to fly over its territory, Turkey was still arguing about opening its airspace. Turkey further said it would not allow United States forces to use its air bases to refuel -- a remarkable slap from a NATO ally. Mr. Fleischer made clear that the \$30 billion in proposed aid and loans to Turkey -- dangled when it seemed as if the country would allow American and British forces to use its territory to invade Iraq from the north -- is "no longer on the table."

Mr. Fleischer disputed the view of Europeans and others who argue that the pending invasion is a violation of the United Nations Charter. He cited three Security Council resolutions that he said provided all of the authorization Mr. Bush needed. But he also likened the current preparations to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, arguing that just as President Kennedy imposed a quarantine around Cuba -- "an act of war," Mr. Fleischer said -- to force it to remove nuclear missiles, Mr. Bush is acting to protect the United States from a threat that it would never see coming.

Several scholars have disputed that view, noting that in the case of the missile crisis, the Soviet missiles could have easily reached the United States, and the weapons clearly put Americans at peril.

Mr. Bush argued on Monday night that waiting for the Iraq threat to develop was tantamount to "suicide." The president's definition seemed to fit what scholars say is the classic war of prevention.

"We choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities," the president said then.

The document submitted to Congress laid out yet another argument -- Iraq's links to terrorists, an area in which the administration's evidence has been scanty, and its potential for greater links in the future.

"Both because Iraq harbors terrorists and because Iraq could share weapons of mass destruction with terrorists who seek them for use against the United States, the use of force to bring Iraq into compliance with its obligations under U.N.S.C. resolutions would be a significant contribution to the war on terrorists of global reach," the report to Congress said.

"A change in the current Iraqi regime would eliminate an important source of support for international terrorist activities," it said. "It would likely also assist efforts to disrupt terrorist networks and capture terrorists around the globe. United States government personnel operating in Iraq may discover information through Iraqi government documents and interviews with detained Iraqi officials that would identify individuals currently in the United States and abroad who are linked to terrorist organizations."

That rationale would seem, on its face, to support military action against many nations, from Pakistan to Indonesia. But Mr. Fleischer insisted that the conditions surrounding Iraq's defiance were "unique."

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GRAPHIC: Photos: An explosion lit up the skies over Baghdad, shortly before President Bush announced from the Oval Office the "opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign" to remove Saddam Hussein from power. (Stephen Crowley/The New York Times); (Patrick Baz/Agence France-Presse)(pg. A1); Three Tomahawk missiles were

launched this morning from the Donald Cook, a Navy guided missile destroyer operating in the Red Sea. (Chief Petty Officer Alan J. Baribeau/U.S. Navy, via Associated Press)(pg. A20)

Chart/Map: "Early Strikes"

Officials reported that dozens of cruise missiles and F-117 stealth fighters were used in attacks in and around Baghdad. Witnesses reported a strike within a half-mile of the Rashid Hotel.

Diagram of Cruise missile shows:

GUIDANCE SYSTEM
HIGH-EXPLOSIVE WARHEAD
JET FUEL
TURBOJET ENGINE

(Source: Janes missile)(pg. A20)

Map of Baghdad highlighting surrounding areas. (pg. A20)

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MARCH 20, 2003, THURSDAY, FINAL EDITION**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. W5**LENGTH:** 1090 words**HEADLINE:** Bush serene amid blur of final preparations;

Air of urgency, anticipation at White House as war approached

SOURCE: Washington Bureau Chief**BYLINE:** Marc Sandalow**DATELINE:** Washington**BODY:**

Even as the missiles approached Baghdad, the White House offered no clue the war against Iraq was about to begin.

White House reporters and many aides had no idea the attack was coming until television reports from Iraq began broadcasting news of explosions and anti-aircraft fire. One hour before the attack began, White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer would only say that "the disarmament of Iraq will begin at an hour of the president's choosing."

What even most of those assembled in the West Wing didn't know was that President Bush had already made up his mind. The decision to launch the attack came at 6:30 EST -- about 90 minutes before his deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave the country -- during a meeting that included Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, aides said.

The president then had dinner in the White House residence with his wife, Laura, and met with chief speechwriter Michael Gerson to finish an address that had been started days before.

At precisely 8 p.m. EST, as the deadline passed, Bush received a call from his chief of staff **Andrew Card**, who informed him that the latest intelligence information showed no signs of Hussein having left the country. At 10:15, Bush told the nation that "on my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war."

Bush's words capped a day of great anticipation at the White House. In the hours leading up to the attack, aides showed few signs of anxiety even as their commander in chief reviewed battle plans and prepared to launch the most comprehensive pre-emptive attack in the nation's history.

Yet for all the professed normalcy, there were unmistakable signs that this overcast Wednesday just two days before spring would be a momentous day.

President Bush met three times with his war council and remained cloistered from public

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view.

Outside the executive mansion, new perimeter fences, dozens of police cars and armed officers kept anyone not possessing a White House pass from walking along the sidewalk in front of the building. Scores of protesters chanting anti-war slogans were arrested after defying orders to vacate Pennsylvania Avenue.

Inside, yellow packets containing protective hoods providing defense against biological, chemical or radiological matter, were neatly piled in easy-to-open cases. Employees at the White House and the adjoining Eisenhower Executive Office Building were given instructions on emergency preparedness in case of a counterattack.

Black security vehicles carrying Cabinet secretaries sped up to the West Wing's side entrance, where the president's bulletproof limousine was parked just feet from the door. News reporters scurried in and out of the security gates in unusually large numbers, as television reporters stood before cameras on the north lawn perpetually beaming the latest scraps of information around the world.

TOURS HALTED

"People are busy," said Noelia Rodriguez, first lady Laura Bush's press secretary. "We're like the rest of America: hoping for the best, but recognizing that this is not what may come to pass."

From her office in the White House's East Wing, Rodriguez is accustomed to the sound of hundreds of tourists who enter for official White House tours. The tours were suspended Monday.

"Yesterday morning, I saw hundreds of school kids, today there was no one," Rodriguez said. "It's very quiet."

Throughout the day, reporters asked Fleischer over and over again when the hostilities might start, and received the same answer each time.

"I'm just not going to get into any speculation about when military operations can begin, for what I imagine you all know are the obvious reasons. Why would anybody want to give that away?" Fleischer said.

For all the focus on war, other business was conducted. The president sent two nominations to the Senate, issued a report on Angola, and announced plans for a visit by the president of Cameroon, who refused to stand behind Bush at the United Nations earlier this week.

Bush began Wednesday, as he has nearly every morning since Sept. 11, 2001, meeting with FBI Director Robert Mueller and CIA Director George Tenet to review security threats. He then met with his war council -- including Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Rice -- for the first of three meetings to discuss military options.

BUSH MEETS BLOOMBERG

Though Bush had all but eliminated public meetings from his schedule, he did see New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who asked for federal money to help his city prevent a terrorist attack.

Emerging from his meeting, Bloomberg left the impression that there was no ambiguity in

the president's mind.

'THE DEBATE IS OVER'

"The president's made his decision," Bloomberg said. "At this point, the debate is over. He is a forceful, strong leader. He's not going to be cowed or dissuaded. He's going to go out there and do what we all pray is right."

Bush also called British Prime Minister Tony Blair to offer congratulations on winning Parliament's support for the war on Iraq, and sent a report to Congress -- as required by law -- to explain his decision to use force to oust Hussein.

"The use of military force to remove the Iraqi regime is . . . not only consistent with, but is a vital part of, the international war on terrorism," Bush said in the report.

With the president out of view for most of the day, it was left to Fleischer to field the difficult and unanswerable questions about the number of casualties and the length of the coming war.

"Americans ought to be prepared for loss of life," Fleischer said.

"On the brink of war with Iraq, Americans should be prepared for what we hope will be as precise, short a conflict as possible, but there are many unknowns and it could be a matter of some duration," he said. "We do not know."

Hours later, after the deadline had passed, impatient reporters asked Fleischer whether he would put a "lid" on, a cue that no more announcements would come from the White House. Fleischer said no, and noted that he wasn't leaving yet.

"It's the White House," he smiled, "we work late."

At 9:35 EST a press aide announced over a loudspeaker that Fleischer would make a statement in two minutes. By the time Fleischer stepped to the podium to announce the president's address to the nation, the war had begun. E-mail Marc Sandalow at msandalow@sfchronicle.com.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, Ari Fleischer, White House press secretary, tells reporters to be flexible and prepared for anything after the deadline passed. / Stephen Crowley/New York Times

LOAD-DATE: March 20, 2003

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March 20, 2003 Thursday FINAL EDITION

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SECTION: A; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 927 words

HEADLINE: Baghdad, Iraq -- Anti-aircraft fire and explosions rocked this city...

BYLINE: From Wire Reports; Copyright The State

BODY:

Baghdad, Iraq -- Anti-aircraft fire and explosions rocked this city at dawn today as President Bush announced the war to disarm Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein was under way.

In Washington, Bush said the military assault was intended to "disarm Iraq and to free its people."

"Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force," Bush said in his 10:15 p.m. address to the nation. "We will accept no outcome but victory."

Early today, at 12:35 a.m. EDT, Saddam took to the airwaves to condemn United States and Britain for "shameful crimes against Iraq and humanity" after the U.S. attack, urging his people to "go draw your sword" against the enemy.

U.S. military officials said forces struck with cruise missiles and precision bombs against a site near Baghdad where senior Iraqi leaders were thought to be.

The strikes used Tomahawk cruise missiles from naval ships in the region and precision-guided bombs dropped from stealth fighter-bombers, the F-117A Nighthawks.

Officials described the attacks as limited to "targets of opportunity," representing the opening stages of a broader campaign. Quoting an unnamed U.S. official, NBC reported the strikes were an attempt to kill Saddam.

In his remarks, Bush only called them "targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war."

U.S. officials did not say whether the attacks succeeded.

Reports also suggested that a sustained air bombardment was under way throughout southern Iraq in an effort to clear the way for ground troops expected to move north from Kuwait.

The first bursts of anti-aircraft fire cracked over Baghdad at 5:33 a.m. local time, 9:33 p.m. Wednesday on the East Coast. Massive explosions were heard south of the city and arcs of tracer fire lighted the sky.

Air-raid sirens wailed and the streets were deserted except for several four-wheel drive

security vehicles speeding through downtown.

The lull after the first burst of explosions was followed by the sound of the morning call to prayer at local mosques. In the distance to the south, plumes of smoke could be seen rising on the horizon and a steady thump of explosions echoed in the distance.

Bush's deadline for Saddam to choose exile or war had passed Wednesday night with the Iraqi dictator defiant as U.S. and British military forces in Kuwait moved into positions to advance on his country.

U.S. war plans reportedly call for a two-day barrage of missiles and bombs across Iraq, coupled with lightning advances by ground troops toward Baghdad.

Pentagon officials had indicated the invasion force could be at the capital's doorstep within hours of war's start.

In Washington, before his address, Bush met with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. As the 8 p.m. deadline for Saddam approached, Fleischer said, White House Chief of Staff **Andy Card** consulted the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency one last time to check for signs that Saddam might be preparing to flee.

Shortly after 8 p.m., Card called Bush, who was at the residence with First Lady Laura Bush, to inform him there were no such signs.

Earlier Wednesday, the president sent a formal notice to Congress of his intent to attack Iraq, notification required under the resolution adopted by Congress last October authorizing force. The notice stated that force against Iraq was necessary "to protect the security of the American people."

But Wednesday on the Senate floor, the oldest voice in Congress rose with warnings that the president is misguided.

"No more is the image of America one of a strong, yet benevolent peacekeeper," said 84-year-old Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va.

In his address, Bush pledged that the war would be short and, "Our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done."

Most of the nearly 300,000 troops within striking distance of Iraq are Americans. There are 45,000 British troops, and 2,000 Australians already on standby in the Mideast. Most of the members of the 31-nation coalition the Bush administration has assembled are providing bases and permission for overflights rather than a fighting force.

Earlier in Baghdad, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said it was "impossible" for Saddam to choose exile, as Bush had urged two days ago.

Aziz also cautioned that a military invasion led by the United States would not be as easy as the Bush administration has suggested. "It won't be a picnic for him," Aziz said. "It is going to be a bloody war, and it will take a long time."

He added: "We are ready to fight."

Earlier in the day, U.S. invasion forces rolled to within 100 yards of Iraq and 17 enemy soldiers surrendered pre-emptively as a fearsome array of troops and weaponry stood ready

to attack.

"Welcome to the front line," Army Maj. Frank McClary , 39, of Andrews, S.C., told officers from the 3rd Infantry Division as they stood at a breach in the fence separating Kuwait and Iraq.

No Iraqis were visible and a U.N. guard post about 500 yards across the flat, featureless border appeared abandoned. Dozens of Bradley fighting vehicles and Humvees idled nearby. Large American flags flapped in the desert wind.

A few miles away, paratroopers of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne, there was a special pre-combat meal of lobster and steak. They also completed a pre-combat ritual: They shaved their heads. "That means they are locked, loaded and ready," said Army spokesman Max Blumenfeld.

"This is their D-Day."

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United Press International

March 20, 2003 Thursday 0:17 AM Eastern Time

LENGTH: 1503 words

HEADLINE: Bush reluctantly orders war

BYLINE: By KATHY A. GAMBRELL AND NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

DATETIME: WASHINGTON, March 20 (UPI)

BODY:

President George W. Bush told Americans that a war to disarm Iraq began Wednesday; a war he said America was reluctant to wage, but one which would not be a "campaign of half measures."

"My fellow citizens, at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger," Bush said about 10:15 p.m. Wednesday -- 6:15 a.m. Thursday Baghdad time.

"On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war. These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign. More than 35 countries are giving crucial support -- from the use of naval and air bases, to help with intelligence and logistics, to the deployment of combat units," Bush said.

Speaking from the Oval Office, as television reports from Baghdad said American cruise missiles and dive bombers had attacked targets at dawn in the Iraq capital, Bush reassured the families of the men and women in the Gulf region that their loved ones would be home as soon as the task was completed.

He said that "millions of Americans are praying with you for the safety of your loved ones and for the protection of the innocent. For your sacrifice, you have the gratitude and respect of the American people. And you can know that our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done."

The United States targeted a residence in Baghdad after "senior Iraqi leadership" arrived there Wednesday, a U.S. government official told United Press International.

The information came "in a fairly timely fashion" sometime Wednesday afternoon, compelling a fast strike before the Iraqi leaders left. The official would not identify the target or targets of the strike.

Bush met with his national security team for almost three hours Wednesday afternoon and ordered the strike, the official said.

The official said the United States "won't know for a while" what the result of the strike was. Saddam was due to address his nation in a rare live television appearance.

"Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly -- yet, our purpose is sure," Bush said in his address. "The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder."

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But he assured the audience that coalition forces would try to spare innocent civilians.

"I want Americans and all the world to know that coalition forces will make every effort to spare innocent civilians from harm," Bush said. "A campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict. And helping Iraqis achieve a united, stable and free country will require our sustained commitment."

As the military campaign got under way, the mood in the White House could best be described as somber exuberance with administrations officials only subtly giving reporters indication that military action would begin before morning. White House staff paused briefly where they stood to listen to the president address the nation.

Fleischer earlier had told reporters to "stay flexible" shortly after the deadline for Saddam to leave Iraq passed unheeded -- a gentle hint that perhaps hostilities could get under way soon. Roughly an hour later Fleischer stepped to the podium in the briefing room and made the short statement that, "The initial phases of the disarmament of Iraq have begun."

Outside the White House -- the site of boisterous protests earlier in the day -- uniformed Secret Service officers maintained a tight security perimeter around the executive mansion as a handful of protestors chanted "No blood for oil" about a block away and out of earshot of the main executive mansion complex.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., Wednesday said his prayers and thoughts were with "our sons and daughters in uniform." Daschle drew the ire of Bush and the GOP earlier this week when he said the war would come as a result of the president's failed diplomatic efforts.

House Speaker J. Denis Hastert, R-Ill., said it was hard to predict the course of any conflict, but that "we know that Saddam Hussein, with his brutal track record, will do his worst and that we will do our best."

Sen. John Edwards, D-N.C., said he was confident that American war fighters and an alliance of more than 35 countries would remove Saddam from power for spurning more than a decade of diplomatic efforts to rid his regime of weapons of mass destruction.

"Tonight our thoughts and prayers are with the men and women of our armed forces who have committed themselves to stand up for the values of our nation and defend the security of our world," Edwards said.

"Make no mistake," he added. "Saddam Hussein alone has chosen war over peace. He has defied international law rather than disarm his weapons of mass destruction. Our world will be safer when he is gone."

Bush received word shortly after 8 p.m. EST that Saddam and his sons had not heeded his warning to leave the country or face military action.

"Disarmament of the Iraqi regime will begin at a time of the president's choosing," White House press secretary Fleischer said about 15 minutes after the deadline expired.

Bush held a late meeting with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Richard Myers before retiring to the White House residence for dinner with first lady Laura Bush.

Fleischer said the president received word from Chief of Staff **Andrew Card**, who had been in contact with the Central Intelligence Agency and the national security team. Card

informed the president in telephone call that Saddam remained in Iraq.

The reality of pending military action was palatable within the West Wing.

"The American people are ready for the disarmament of Saddam Hussein. The nation is ready; the cause is just," said a somber Fleischer told reporters.

It was earlier in the day that Fleischer said, "Americans ought to be prepared for loss of life. Americans ought to be prepared for the importance of disarming Saddam Hussein to protect the peace."

The showdown was the culmination of 12 years of U.N. resolutions ignored by Iraq and months of unsuccessful efforts by the United States and the international community to convince the Arab leader to disclose a cache of chemical and biological weapons they claim he has.

Bush remained out of sight Wednesday, making a 20-minute telephone call early in the day to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who has backed the president at great political risk, including the loss of a Cabinet minister who resigned in protest. Bush congratulated Blair on finally gaining the support of Parliament for the war, in a vote late Tuesday.

The president sent Congress a formal notification of his plans to use military force in Iraq, saying that further diplomatic and other peaceful means would neither adequately protect the national security of the United States nor lead to the enforcement of the U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for Iraq's disarmament.

Later he met with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge. Ridge's agency has discounted reports that the advent of war would prompt officials to move the national threat alert from "high" to "severe" -- the highest level on the agency's five-color terror warning scale.

"There are no plans to raise the alert level beyond where it is today," DHS spokesman Gordon Johndroe said. It would only be heightened should the intelligence community receive "specific, corroborated threats of a specific nature," he said.

Bush and U.S. officials have maintained that Iraq has ties with al-Qaida, the Islamic extremist group that U.S. officials blame for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington that killed some 3,000 people.

The U.S. Secret Service on Tuesday expanded the perimeter around the executive mansion, banning pedestrian traffic and implementing stepped-up identification checks for those entering the White House complex. Earlier in the week, war protesters had perched in Lafayette Park directly across the street from the White House, chanting, praying and playing instruments, but they were pushed back more than a block as the park was cordoned off.

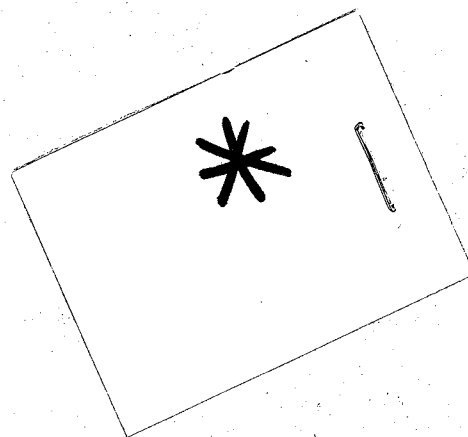
"It is the right of the American people to speak out. The president and I think it's been widely recognized that there is an overwhelming strong majority of the American people who see it differently from the protesters. And that's their right to see it that way," Fleischer said.

On Wednesday afternoon groups of picket-sign wielding demonstrators rimmed the security perimeter and at one point challenged uniformed Secret Service officers, attempting to break through the barricades near the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, part of the White House campus. Police said 29 people were arrested on charges of crossing a police line.

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washingtonpost.com

CIA Had Fix on Hussein

Intelligence Revealed 'Target of Opportunity'

By Barton Gellman and Dana Priest
Washington Post Staff Writers
Thursday, March 20, 2003; Page A01

Around 4 p.m. yesterday, Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet offered President Bush the prospect -- improbable to the point of fantasy, yet somehow at hand -- that the war against Iraq might be transformed with its opening shots. The CIA, Tenet said, believed it had a fix on President Saddam Hussein.

Hussein and others in "the most senior levels of the Iraqi leadership," ordinarily among the most elusive of men, had fallen under U.S. surveillance. The unforeseen glimpse of the enemy was not expected to last, and so presented what one administration official called "a target of opportunity" that might not reappear. Not only did the agency know where Hussein was, according to the official's description of Tenet's briefing, but it believed with "a high probability" that he would remain there for hours to come -- cloistered with his war council in an isolated private residence in southern Baghdad.

Bush listened calmly -- as his aides portrayed the scene -- while Tenet described the sources and limits of his information, the likelihood that it was true and the length of time Hussein could be expected to spend at the site. The Iraqi president, a man of many palaces, avoids them at moments of maximum risk. He is said by analysts to be a kind of refugee in the country he rules, moving constantly and without predictable pattern. There was no guarantee, Tenet said, that Hussein's whereabouts would be pinpointed again.

First reports in wartime seldom stand for long, and there is little reason to suppose that what the president heard yesterday, or what his aides portrayed of his response, will be the final word. What is known of this episode is akin to what the Army calls the "hot wash" -- an immediate after-action report that remains to be verified and placed in context. But initial appearances suggest that Hussein survived, and that the opening salvo foretells an extraordinary war.

Bush ventured little militarily -- expending about 40 cruise missiles and placing two pilots and their aircraft in harm's way. He had much to gain. But as an early portent, and in the political psychology of war, shooting at and missing an oft-missed foe carries other costs that are hard to measure.

In the first hours after hearing Tenet's report, Bush and his senior national security advisers tore up the carefully orchestrated schedule of violence that the U.S. Central Command had honed for months. Those present in the Oval Office, officials said, included Vice President Cheney, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, White House Chief of Staff Andrew H. Card Jr. and Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

When Bush signed the launch order at 6:30 p.m., it included a hasty improvisation. The first shots would strike through the roof and walls of an anonymous Baghdad home, and deep beneath it, in hopes of decapitating the Iraqi government in a single blow.

"If you're going to take a shot like this, you're going to take a shot at the top guy," said a government

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official with knowledge of the sequence of events. "It was a fairly singular strike."

Aboard eight Navy warships in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, operations officers reprogrammed Tomahawk cruise missiles on the fly with digital target data transmitted from CIA headquarters at Langley. From Qatar's Al Udeid air base, a pair of pilots boarded a pair of stealthy F-117A strike fighters, each of them equipped with a pair of 2,000-pound bombs. The pilots pulled back on their flight controls with only snap orders to guide them, in place of the usually exhaustive pre-flight briefing.

The aircraft and missiles each carried satellite-guided warheads. The bombs aboard the F-117s were Joint Direct Attack Munitions, designed to penetrate layers of stone and steel.

Three hours after Bush gave the order, at 5:33 a.m. local time, a series of closely spaced explosions rocked southern Baghdad, witnesses in the city said. Iraqi television, competing for air time with the newly American-flagged frequencies of Iraqi radio, reported swiftly that Hussein was alive and well and would address the nation shortly.

Then another three hours passed, and Hussein made what was billed as a live appearance at 12:30 a.m., Eastern time, today.

In their first urgent review, U.S. analysts were said to be uncertain whether the man on the screen was in fact Hussein, or was speaking live. One official said the case against the broadcast's authenticity included that Hussein has several body doubles and his glasses looked nothing like the ones he normally wears. Though Hussein mentioned yesterday's date in the broadcast, that corresponded to Bush's ultimatum for war and could have been recorded. He said nothing specific about the bomb and missile strike. On the other hand, an official said, "the rhetoric is not unlike rhetoric he has used in other speeches."

U.S. officials cautioned that it would be some time before intelligence could assess with certainty what the U.S. strike had hit, and who had been there. But it was already clear, as it never had been entirely in 1991, that the man in the White House intended to find the Iraqi president and kill him.

The 1991 Persian Gulf War included hundreds of strikes at "leadership targets," but President George H.W. Bush and his advisers did not acknowledge they were aimed at Hussein in particular. After the war, evidence emerged that the U.S.-led air campaign had tried and failed on dozens of occasions to destroy him in his bunker.

But those attacks were not the first of the war, which of necessity targeted Iraqi air defenses and the command and control of Iraqi fighting forces. If the CIA had come across yesterday's intelligence windfall in 1991, the U.S. military could not have struck the Baghdad residence fast enough.

Tomahawk cruise missiles could have spun up their jet engines, and the gyroscopes to guide their flight, but there would have been no way to enter precision-targeting data in minutes or even hours. At the time, the missiles required three-dimensional terrain maps that took days to construct.

In the decade since the Gulf War, the Tomahawk's guidance system has been upgraded to follow Global Positioning System satellites instead. The Navy can download new digital coordinates direct from the intelligence directorate of U.S. Central Command. "Actionable intelligence," the bane of a high-technology military faced with an elusive low-tech foe, requires far less lead time in the present war.

Whatever the result of yesterday's strike, officials said, there will be more rapid re-targetings and more

unexpected opportunities before the war is over.

Staff writers Walter Pincus, Vernon Loeb, Mike Allen and Karen DeYoung contributed to this report.

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March 20, 2003 Thursday Home Edition

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SECTION: News; Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 918 words

HEADLINE: U.S. STRIKES AT SADDAM: 'Opening stages' of war target Iraqi leaders

BYLINE: CRAIG NELSON, LARRY KAPLOW

SOURCE: For the Journal-Constitution

BODY:

Baghdad, Iraq --- The United States launched missile strikes on "selected targets of military importance" in Iraq late Wednesday night, making good on its threat to oust Saddam Hussein.

"These are the opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign," a somber President Bush told the nation from the White House at 10:15 p.m. EST.

U.S. military officials said at least two Navy ships in the Persian Gulf and a submarine in the Red Sea fired three dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles. After that, stealth fighter-bombers, the F-117 Nighthawks, carrying 2,000-pound bombs joined in the attack. The Tomahawk cruise missile carries an explosive half that size.

The strike was aimed at "decapitating" Saddam's regime and specifically targeted him, his two sons and other senior leaders of the Baath Party and Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council, White House officials said.

Saddam's fate was not known, but there were reports he would soon address the nation.

A sustained air bombardment was reported under way throughout southern Iraq in an effort to clear the way for ground troops expected to move north from Kuwait.

The first bursts of anti-aircraft fire cracked over Baghdad at 5:33 a.m. today local time, 9:33 p.m. EST Wednesday. Massive explosions were heard south of the city and arcs of tracer fire lit the sky. Streets were deserted except for several four-wheel-drive security vehicles speeding through downtown.

The lull after the first burst of explosions was followed by the sound of the morning call to prayer at local mosques. In the distance to the south, plumes of smoke could be seen rising on the horizon and a steady thump of explosions echoed in the distance.

Bush called the attack "the early stages of the campaign" and warned of a possibly long and bloody war.

"A campaign in a country the size of California could be longer and more difficult than some predict," Bush said in his four-minute address.

Still, he sought to reassure a wary nation that "we will accept no outcome other than victory."

Minutes before the speech, an internal television monitor showed Bush pumping his fist. "Feels good," he said.

U.S. troops with the 2nd Marine Division at the Kuwait-Iraq border got first word of the attack from a Voice of America radio broadcast just as they began moving out.

News that U.S. missiles and bombs were hitting Baghdad spread rapidly. So did reports that Iraqis were firing anti-aircraft guns at the missiles.

"Can you believe that?" asked Lance Cpl. Boile Sanchez-Frias, 20. "That gets us real motivated. Take me out there."

American forces also launched a raid in Afghanistan at the same time they struck in Iraq. About 1,000 members of the 82nd Airborne Division moved into villages in southeastern Afghanistan, looking for members of the al-Qaida terrorist network.

The long-awaited attack on Iraq followed months of failed diplomatic efforts at the United Nations, where the United States and Britain sought to win approval for war if Saddam did not disarm. When France, Russia, China, Germany and other nations foiled those efforts, Bush vowed to press on alone or with just a handful of allies.

The attack into Iraq came two hours after a deadline had passed for Saddam to choose exile or war. U.S. and British military forces moved into position to oust him.

U.S. war plans reportedly call for a two-day barrage of missiles and bombs across Iraq, coupled with lightning advances by ground troops toward Baghdad. Pentagon officials indicated the invasion force could be at the capital's doorstep within hours of war's start.

In Washington, Bush met with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from 3:40 p.m. to 7:20 p.m. As the 8 p.m. deadline approached, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said, Chief of Staff **Andy Card** consulted the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency one last time to check for signs that Saddam might be preparing to flee. Shortly after 8 p.m., Card called Bush, who was at the residence with First Lady Laura Bush, to inform him there were no such signs.

Earlier Wednesday, the president sent a formal notice to Congress of his intent to attack Iraq, notification required under the resolution adopted by Congress in October authorizing force. The notice stated that force against Iraq was necessary "to protect the security of the American people."

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In his address, Bush pledged that the war would be short. "Our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done," he said.

Most of the nearly 300,000 troops within striking distance of Iraq are Americans. There are 45,000 British soldiers, and 2,000 Australians who were already on standby in the Middle East. Most of the members of the 31-nation coalition the Bush administration assembled are providing bases and permission for overflights rather than a fighting force.

Earlier in Baghdad, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said a military invasion led by the United States would not be as easy as the Bush administration has suggested. "It won't be a picnic for him," Aziz said. "It is going to be a bloody war, and it will take a long time." He added: "We are ready to fight."

GRAPHIC: Photo: Tomahawk missiles are fired from the USS Donald Cook in the Red Sea on their way to Baghdad, targeted to take out Saddam Hussein and other members of the Iraqi military leadership. / CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ALAN J. BARIBEAU / U.S. Navy via the Associated Press; Photo: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was a target of the first strike.; Graphic: U.S. ATTACKS IRAQ

Starting about 5:30 a.m. Iraq time (9:30 p.m. EST), U.S. forces hit a series of targets in Baghdad using precision weapons.

About three dozen cruise missiles were fired from ships in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. U.S. military officials said the missiles were fired at "leadership targets" - perhaps Saddam Hussein or other top leaders. They said the attack was not part of the opening main campaign but rather an attempt to act against "time sensitive" targets.

F-117A NIGHTHAWK

Cost: \$1.2 billion

In service: 21

The Nighthawk, the world's first stealth aircraft, attacked targets in Baghdad. The F-117s are based in Qatar.

This radar-evading bomber carries 16 precision-guided, 2000-pound GBU-27 penetrator bombs.

GBU-27 PENETRATOR BOMB

Cost: \$55,000

The GBU-27 was modified for use on the F-117 stealth fighter. The operator uses a laser to designate a target, and the bomb follows the laser energy radiating from the target. The warhead can penetrate more than 6 feet of reinforced concrete.

POISED TO ATTACK:

ON THE GROUND

U.S. and British ground forces numbering well over 130,000 troops are in Kuwait.

FROM THE AIR

About 1,100 aircraft of all types are positioned in Europe, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar and on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

FROM THE SEA

Five U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups, one British carrier battle group, two U.S. amphibious task forces and two U.S. amphibious groups are in the region.

Sources: Associated Press, Federation of American Scientists, U.S. Air Force

/ Text by WAYNE SNOW, LISA TRANSISKUS, SCHAUNA WRIGHT / Staff

Map of Iraq indicates strikes near Baghdad originating from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. / MICHAEL DABROWA / Staff; Photo: President George W. Bush

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March 20, 2003 Thursday 12:29 AM Eastern Time

SECTION: WASHINGTON DATELINE

LENGTH: 432 words

HEADLINE: Bush Put In Long Day Leading to Iraq War

BYLINE: JENNIFER LOVEN; Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

On the day that President Bush led the nation into another war in the Persian Gulf, discussions of battle plans, weather forecasts in Iraq and troop positions ruled nearly all his hours.

Bush opened one of the most momentous days of his presidency with a call to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, a staunch ally who has suffered at home but narrowly won his parliament's backing for war against Iraq. Next came Bush's usual early-morning homeland security and intelligence briefings - a staple since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks - from FBI Director Robert Mueller and CIA Director George Tenet.

With about 12 hours to go before Bush's deadline for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to flee or be overthrown, the president huddled for the first of three times Wednesday with members of his war council, including Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

Taking a brief break from Iraq, Bush then talked local homeland security issues with New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

"I think the president understands in the end he has an awesome responsibility," Bloomberg said after his half-hour in the Oval Office. "He's not going to be cowed or dissuaded. He's going to go out there and do what we all pray is right."

Bush also delivered to Congress the required formal justification for war, claiming "the authority - indeed, given the dangers involved, the duty" to lead an attack.

Another war council followed and then, starting about 3:40 p.m., came the final - decisive - meeting with Rumsfeld, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen. Richard Myers and others.

It was about two-thirds of the way through that long meeting - or a little over an hour before his ultimatum to Saddam expired - that Bush gave the go-ahead for war on the advice of his military commanders.

The meeting broke up about 7:15 p.m. The president reviewed his address with his chief speechwriter and left his office for the residence and dinner with Laura Bush.

As the 8 p.m. deadline passed, the president and first lady were in their living room when a call came from White House chief of staff **Andrew Card**. He told Bush that intelligence officials had no information that Saddam had left Iraq. Bush polished his remarks and headed back to the Oval Office.

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Moments before his four-minute address - announced by his press secretary a mere half-hour earlier - was beamed worldwide, Bush showed his mood. Clenching his fist, he said, "I feel great."

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March 20, 2003 Thursday 12:30 AM Eastern Time

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 838 words

HEADLINE: Bush Launches Military Strikes On Iraq

BYLINE: RON FOURNIER; AP White House Correspondent

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

Taking the nation to war, President Bush said the conflict in Iraq may be long and difficult but the U.S. troops will succeed at their mission "to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger."

"The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder," the president said in an Oval Office address a little more than two hours after his 8 p.m. EST ultimatum for Saddam Hussein to give up power.

He said U.S. forces launched airstrikes against "targets of military importance." A U.S. military official said about three dozen cruise missiles were fired from a small number of ships at "leadership targets."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he was not certain whether Saddam was a target. Shortly before the attack, Bush was told U.S. intelligence believed Saddam was still in Iraq.

"These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign," the president said.

He spoke in vague but grim terms about the sacrifices ahead.

"A campaign on the harsh terrain of a nation as large as California could be longer and more difficult than some predict," he said.

"America faces an enemy who has no regard for conventions of war or rules of morality."

There was no indication whether the attack was successful.

"Now that the conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force," the president said. "And I assure you, this will not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory."

The strikes used Tomahawk cruise missiles and precision-guided bombs dropped from F-117 Nighthawks, the Air Force's stealth fighter-bombers, military officials said.

Bush gave the attack go-ahead near the end of a hastily arranged three-and-a-half-hour meeting with his war council - including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was the third meeting of the day

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between Bush and the group.

A senior White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that military advisers originally did not intend to begin the assault Wednesday. However, Bush was told in the third meeting that fresh intelligence had prompted military planners to change their recommendation.

The official would not say what the intelligence was but said it prompted Bush to order the strike shortly after 6:30 p.m. EST.

The president then reviewed his address with his chief speechwriter and went to the residence for dinner with Laura Bush. They were in the living room when White House chief of staff **Andrew Card** called to inform the president that intelligence officials had no information that Saddam had left Iraq.

Bush polished his remarks and headed back to the Oval Office to deliver them to a jittery nation.

Moments before his image was beamed to a worldwide audience, Bush was asked by an aide how he was doing. "I feel great," Bush said, clenching his fist.

He spoke as a U.S.-led force of 300,000 troops ringed Iraq, ready to launch a ferocious assault to topple the Iraqi dictator and capture any weapons of mass destruction.

The United States has initiated attacks in such places as Grenada and Panama, but war in Iraq would set a new standard for pre-emptive military action.

"On my order, coalition forces have begun targeting selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war," the president said. "These are the opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign."

As he has many times in the run-up to war, Bush declared that the United States has "no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat. Our forces will be coming home as soon as their work is done."

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer had announced Bush's plans to speak on short notice. Fleischer spoke as anti-aircraft fire and explosions were heard across Baghdad after air raid sirens went off at the capital at dawn.

Bush's speech came at the end of an anxious day of waiting at the White House. Extra security enveloped the executive mansion while aides inside whispered rumors of Iraqi defections and surrenders.

Bush sent Congress formal notice that he had determined "further diplomatic and other peaceful means alone" would not be enough to contain the "threat posed by Iraq." Bush has contended that Saddam possesses chemical and biological weapons that he could use on his enemies or slip to terrorists.

Offering fresh justification for war, the report said one of the spoils of victory may be information about terror cells in the United States.

"United States government personnel operating in Iraq may discover information through Iraqi government documents and interviews with detained Iraqi officials that would identify individuals currently in the United States and abroad who are linked to terrorist organizations," the report said.

White House officials said the assertion was mostly speculative.

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March 20, 2003 Thursday 2:44 AM Eastern Time

SECTION: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LENGTH: 980 words

HEADLINE: U.S. Officials: Saddam a Strike Target

BYLINE: DAVID ESPO; AP Special Correspondent

BODY:

The United States launched the opening salvo Wednesday night of a war to topple Saddam Hussein, firing cruise missiles and precision-guided bombs into Baghdad. U.S. officials said the Iraqi leader himself was among the targets.

"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.

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

Saddam appeared on state-run television a few hours after the attack. He said the United States had committed a "shameful crime" by attacking Iraq, and urged his country to "draw your sword" against the enemy. He appeared unhurt, and wore a military uniform.

The missiles struck less than two hours after the expiration of Bush's deadline for Saddam to surrender power or face war.

Bush described the targets as being of "military importance," and one White House official said the attack was the result of fresh intelligence that prompted an earlier-than-planned opening strike.

Two officials knowledgeable about the operation said the Iraqi dictator was among the "leadership targets" that the strikes were aimed at.

It was clear from Bush's words - he called it the opening stages of a "broad and concerted campaign" - that the war to topple the Iraqi dictator and eliminate his weapons of mass destruction had begun.

Earlier in the day, Bush told Congress the attack was part of a worldwide war against terrorism, and American forces launched a raid in Afghanistan at the same time it struck in Iraq. About 1,000 members of the 82nd Airborne Division moved into villages in southeastern Afghanistan, looking for members of the al-Qaida network.

In Iraq, an American-led invasion force of 300,000 troops awaited the order to strike more broadly. U.S. and British forces massed in the Kuwaiti desert close to the Iraqi border, giant B-52 warplanes were loaded with bombs and Tomahawk missile-carrying ships were in position, all awaiting an attack order from Bush.

Bush had given Saddam 48 hours to leave the country or face war.

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The ultimatum expired at 8 p.m. EST - 4 a.m. Thursday in Baghdad, its population shrunken in recent days by an exodus of thousands of fearful residents.

Not long after, White House chief of staff **Andrew Card** informed the president that intelligence officials had no information that Saddam had left Iraq, and Saddam's regime gave every appearance of digging in.

In the minutes after the deadline, Iraqi TV showed footage of a pro-Saddam march Tuesday in Baghdad, with members of the crowd chanting pro-Saddam slogans, some brandishing rifles and carrying pictures of Saddam.

"We are dedicated to martyrdom in defense of Iraq under your leadership," a loyal Iraqi parliament assured the Iraqi dictator before the U.S. attack, and armed members of the ruling Baath party deployed behind hundreds of sandbagged defensive positions in Baghdad.

Even so, 17 Iraqi soldiers surrendered to American GIs during the day, eager to give up before the shooting started.

Bush met periodically throughout the day with his top aides at the White House and sent formal notice to Congress that reliance on "further diplomatic and other peaceful means alone" would not suffice to counter "the continuing threat posed by Iraq."

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said the nation "ought to be prepared for the loss" of American lives once the military effort begins to depose Saddam and recover weapons of mass destruction.

Along with the U.S.-led force approaching 300,000 troops massed in the Persian Gulf region were 1,000 combat aircraft and five aircraft carrier battle groups. The United States claims the public or private support of 45 other nations in a coalition to topple Saddam. But only Britain, with about 40,000 troops, was making a sizable contribution to the military force.

In a run-up to war, U.S. aircraft also dropped nearly 2 million leaflets over southern Iraq with a variety of messages, including, for the first time, instructions to Iraqi troops on how to capitulate to avoid being killed.

Hundreds of miles away, at an air base in England, crews loaded bombs aboard giant B-52 combat aircraft.

Apart from the desire to capture weapons of mass destruction, Bush's submission to Congress said a military attack could lead to the discovery of information that would allow the apprehension of terrorists living in the United States. An attack, it said, "is a vital part of the international war on terrorism."

Despite deep divisions at the United Nations, Bush also claimed "the authority - indeed, given the dangers involved, the duty - to use force against Iraq to protect the security of the American people and to compel compliance with United Nations resolutions."

The diplomatic wheels still turned at the United Nations, where foreign ministers met in the Security Council at the request of the French and Germans, prominent critics of the American military operation.

"This is a sad day for the United Nations," said the organization's secretary-general, Kofi Annan. "I know that millions of people around the world share this sense of disappointment and are deeply alarmed."

Bush abandoned diplomacy on Monday, and administration officials blamed French intransigence for the lack of consensus on a new Security Council resolution that would have given Saddam an ultimatum.

Another country in the region, Bahrain, publicly offered exile to Saddam "in a dignified manner that should not be seen as undermining Iraq's position and capabilities."

"It's the last-hour chance and we hope that Iraq will accept this offer to avoid war," Information Minister Nabil al-Hamer told The Associated Press.

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Law Office
JOSEPH F. LAWLESS

(b)(6)

March 19, 2003

VIA FAX

Honorable Andrew H. Card, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Andy:

You are all in our thoughts and prayers. Good luck!

Regards,

Joe + Lisa
JOSEPH F. LAWLESS
LISA R. JACOBS

JFL:lr

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Phone: (215) 569-5726
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Email: buchholz@blankrome.com

March 19, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE

The Honorable Andrew H. Card, Jr.
Chief of Staff to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20502

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Dear Andy:

As we enter this challenging time in our Nation's history, I wanted to let you know that the President and his entire team are in the thoughts and prayers of so many, including Karen and me.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

CARL M. BUCHHOLZ
Executive Partner

CMB:mbh