

WAR BEGINS

MISSILES TARGET IRAQI LEADERS

ANALYSIS

Saddam remains the reason

By **CHUCK RAASCH**
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — The first blow was aimed at Saddam Hussein.

The long-awaited, strategized and feared war in Iraq began with high political symbolism and attempted psychological impact. It came in a predawn strike today in Baghdad, reportedly aimed at the Iraqi leadership. In the struggle for world public opinion over the past tumultuous months, President George W. Bush had insisted that Saddam's regime and the alleged weapons of mass destruction he controlled were the reasons the United States was risking war. Not a lust for oil, or regional domination or religious hatred, as Bush's critics have claimed.

By focusing an initial salvo of missiles and bombs on a "target of opportunity" — reportedly a gathering of Iraqi leaders — the United States was putting an opening exclamation mark on Bush's claims.

"We have no ambition in Iraq, except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people," Bush said in a terse prime-time address after the initial attack.

Initial damage assessments were unclear, and reports from the theater were imbued with the usual caution and confusion of war. Iraq's government claimed Saddam himself would appear sometime today on Iraqi television. If true, it would indicate he had survived the initial strike.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the strike was "a no-cost roll of the dice" after intelligence had suggested Saddam's leadership had gathered in a Baghdad location.

Bush also warned that the struggle could be more difficult than the pundits were widely predicting.

After the first bombs fell, Bush clearly tried to define the aims to the Iraqis

See ANALYSIS — A2



Speaking from the Oval Office Wednesday night, President Bush said U.S. forces launched airstrikes against "targets of military importance" in Iraq. He described the action as an operation to "disarm Iraq, to free its people."

Baghdad reacts to airstrikes with message of defiance

By **DAVID ESPO**
Associated Press

COVERAGE INSIDE



Saddam replies

Saddam Hussein accuses the U.S. of committing a "shameful crime" by attacking Iraq.

► Article, A2

War hits home

As Delawareans watch President Bush's speech there are feelings of pride, fear and uncertainty.

► Article, A3

Security tightens

Police prowl the streets of New York City with dogs; FBI gets new powers to detain foreign nationals.

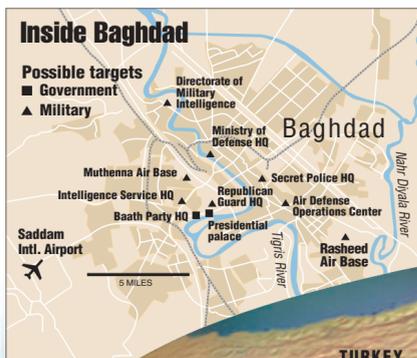
► Articles, A4

Delaware's role

More than 90 percent of the state's reservists have been mobilized to help fight in the war.

► Article, A5

■ For ongoing coverage of the war
delawareonline.com



THE TARGETS

President Bush said the selected targets near Baghdad were of "military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war." A U.S. military official said Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired from a small number of ships at "leadership targets."



TODAY'S FORECAST

HIGH LOW
47 47

Details on A4

INSIDE

Business	B7	Scoreboard	C7
Classified	D1	Sports	C1
Editorial	A20	Home & Garden	
Lotteries	B3	Comics	11-13
Movies	B2	Crossword	15
Obituaries	B4	Dear Abby	15
People	A12	TV listings	14

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A Gannett newspaper 124th year, No. 308



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