

THE OSIRAK ATTACK

Israeli Statement of 8 June:

The Government finds itself obligated to explain to enlighten public opinion why it decided on this special operation. For a long time, we have followed with grave concern the construction of the Osirak nuclear reactor. Sources of unquestioned reliability told us that it was intended, despite statements to the contrary, for the production of atomic bombs.

The goal for these bombs was Israel. This was explicitly stated by the Iraqi ruler. After the Iranians slightly damaged the reactor, Saddam Hussein remarked that it was pointless for the Iranians to attack the reactor because it was being built against Israel alone. ...

Highly reliable sources gave us two dates for the completion of the reactor and its operation: the first, the beginning of July 1981, the second, the beginning of September this year.

Within a short time, the Iraqi reactor would have been in operation and hot. In such conditions, no Israeli Government could have decided to blow it up. This would have caused a huge wave of radioactivity over the city of Baghdad and its innocent citizens would have been harmed.

We were therefore forced to defend ourselves against the construction of an atomic bomb in Iraq, which itself would not have hesitated to use it against Israel and its population centers. ... Therefore, the Israeli Government decided to act without further delay to insure the safety of our people. ... We shall defend the citizens of Israel in good time and with all the means at our disposal.

Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq's Statement of 8 June:

Great Iraqi people, sons of the glorious Arab nation, it has been known to us from the beginning that many parties, local and international, were and still are behind the eagerness of the backward and suspect Iranian regime to stir up the dispute with, conduct aggression against and begin the war against Iraq.

They have been behind the continuation of this war for several months because of their political and military support and backing for Iran, including information, technical consultations and direct and indirect military intelligence, in order to achieve their evil objectives against Iraq. The main party was the Zionist entity, which understands completely that a liberated, developed and capable Iraq is a decisive factor in determining the results of the Arab conflict against it, today and tomorrow. ...

Compatriots, today we declare that the Zionist enemy planes yesterday carried out an air raid on Baghdad. At 1837 a formation of nine planes raided the nuclear installation. As on 27 September 1980, we preferred not to hasten in announcing this raid. ... They will

not shake this giant revolution from its determination to be one with the masses. The men who have been able to bring Iraq's nuclear potential up to the standard which created this amount of rancor and blatant aggression by the Zionist and Persian enemies make us confident that they are also capable of continuing this trend no matter what our enemies try. ...

[6/9/81 NYT A8]

Reactions

United States

State Department and intelligence officials said today they believed that Iraq had acquired enough enriched uranium and sensitive technology to make one nuclear weapon by the end of this year, and several bombs by the mid 1980's. ... Concern about Iraq's nuclear capabilities has grown recently, the officials said, in light of intelligence reports that Baghdad has been negotiating with an Italian company to purchase a small reprocessing plant. ...

One official said that Iraq had also purchased large quantities of uranium ore from Portugal and Niger, and that, in negotiations with Portugal, it had threatened to cut off oil shipments unless uranium ore was supplied. ...

These recent developments have intensified concern about the purpose of three major components of Iraq's nuclear program. These, the officials said, are the nuclear reactor supplied by the French; three "hot cell" facilities from Italy in which plutonium could be processed, and Iraq's possession of about 25 pounds of highly enriched uranium. The officials said that this was sufficient to produce one nuclear device.

The Iraqi reactor attacked by Israeli planes yesterday, called Osirak, was sold by the French in November 1975. France is said to have made one delivery of highly enriched fuel, but the sales contract commits the French to delivering 154 more pounds. Officials said this would be enough to make 10 bombs.

[6/9/81 NYT A9]

France

France today termed the Israeli air strike against Iraq's French-built nuclear reactor "unacceptable" and, taking issue with Israel's official account, said that a French technician had been killed in the raid.

Great Britain

The British Foreign Office described the raid as apparently "an unprovoked attack" and said, "We can only condemn such a grave breach of international law which could have the most serious consequences."

Secretary-General

Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations, who was in Tokyo on a visit, issued a statement condemning the Israeli action as a "clear contravention of international law."

[6/9/81 NYT A7]

June 18/ June 19 SCOR

SC Resolution 487
19 June 1981

... Fully aware of the fact that Iraq has been a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons since it came into force in 1970, that in accordance with that Treaty Iraq has accepted IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear activities, and that the Agency has testified that these safeguards have been satisfactorily applied to date,

Noting furthermore that Israel has not adhered to the non-proliferation Treaty,

Deeply concerned about the danger to international peace and security created by the premeditated Israeli air attack on Iraqi nuclear installations on 7 June 1981, which could at any time explode the situation in the area, with grave consequences for the vital interests of all States, ...

1. Strongly condemns the military attack by Israel in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international conduct;
2. Calls upon Israel to refrain in the future from any such acts or threats thereof;
3. Further considers that the said attack constitutes a serious threat to the entire IAEA safeguards regime which is the foundation of the non-proliferation Treaty;
4. Fully recognises the inalienable sovereign right of Iraq, and all other States, especially the developing countries, to establish programmes of technological and nuclear development to develop their economy and industry for peaceful purposes in accordance with their present and future needs and consistent with the internationally accepted objectives of preventing nuclear-weapons proliferation;
5. Calls upon Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards;
6. Considers that Iraq is entitled to appropriate redress for the destruction it has suffered, responsibility for which has been acknowledged by Israel;
7. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council regularly informed of the implementation of this resolution.