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9731/06

Classification CONFIDENTIAL **Caveat**
eGram Number 9731/06
From BASRA
Date Created 04/04/2006 20:19:00
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Action Immediate eP FCO
Action Routine
Info Immediate eOGD ;eOGD eOGD DFID;eP BAGHDAD;eP COPENHAGEN;eP UKMIS NEW YORK;eP WASHINGTON;eP CANBERRA;eP UKDEL NATO Brussels

Info Routine
FCO Distribution eDL IRAQ/KUWAIT;eD IRAQ DIRECTORATE
Lead eD IRAQ DIRECTORATE

Military Action Imm
Military Action Rtn
Military Info Imm
Military Info Rtn

Subject SIC19E;pjhq;moduk
Summary NOSEC: SIC19E: Iraq: Basra: Indirect Fire Attack on Basra Palace
1. At least ten rockets/mortars fired at Basra Palace. No/no casualties within the compound. First salvo disrupts Queen's Birthday Party. Fourth salvo hits and damages one of our buildings.

SIC

2. From 1830 on 4 April, Basra Palace was targeted by four salvos of Indirect Fire. The first coincided with the end of the Queen's Birthday Party. Three further salvos followed, at 1925, 2020 and 2043.
3. In all, we believe ten rockets and mortars were fired (full details will only become clear when MND(SE) patrols have reported. But it is clear that the first salvo of two rockets overshot the Palace compound and hit a Park adjacent to it. We observed damage to a house in the Park, and ambulances and police cars outside it shortly after. We will check tomorrow on civilian casualties.
4. Of the second salvo, of two or three missiles, two overshot and fell in the river. The third hit the US Regional Embassy Office perimeter wall. The third salvo, of three missiles, which were launched as a helicopter was coming into land, seems to have missed entirely.

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5. In the fourth and final salvo, again of three missiles, two appear to have overshot and landed in the river. The third struck Building 5 (presently the barracks for our Armor Group Gurkha perimeter security force). Preliminary examination suggests that it exploded, causing some structural damage to one of the Gurkha force's rooms on the first floor. Nobody was inside the room at the time, and no injuries were sustained.

6. We evacuated our Iraqi guests safely. Sir Peter Ricketts, visiting, flew to Basra Air Station late this evening and will fly on to Baghdad tomorrow morning.

Comment

6. A sustained and substantial attack - the fifth on Basra Palace in the last seven days, and by far the most accurate. We will send a more detailed report to SMD and IPU tomorrow.

Sign Off	TANSLEY
Contact Name	
Contact Telno.	FTN
Attachments	



Original eGram

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