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Thursday, October 17, 2002

Anders 100 percent vote for Hussein \$500,00 shows solidarity, say Iraqis probati HOUSTON

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Vice Chairman of Iraqi's

Revolutionary Command

- Izzat Ibrahim

Council

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BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq declared Saddam Hussein the winner Wednesday - by an 11 million-to-0 margin - in a war-shadowed referendum on his two-decade military rule, sending celebratory gunfire crackling from the streets and rooftops of Baghdad.

The 100 percent turnout, 100 percent 'yes' vote shows all Iraqis are poised to defend Saddam against American forces, the country's No. 2 man said.

"If they come, we will fight them in every village, and every house," said Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of Iraq's Revolutionary Command Council, announcing results on what Iraq billed as a people's referendum on keeping Saddam in power another seven years

"Every home will be a front, and every farmer, every shepherd, every Iraqi, will play his role," Ibrahim said. "All Iraqis are armed now, and by God's will we will triumph.'

The White House had dismissed the one-man race in advance. "Obviously, it's not a very serious day, not a very serious

vote and nobody places any credibility on it, press secretary Ari Fleischer said in Washington.

Baghdad crackled with automatic weapon fire at the results, announced live on state TV. Men climbed to rooftops or leaned out balconies, firing into the air. At least one drove the streets shooting, one hand on the trigger and another on the wheel.

This referendum and the 100 percent shows that all Iraqis are ready to defend their country and their leader," said Khaled Yusef, hopping up and down among a cluster of men dancing on a street corner.

The celebration came on a day President Bush signed a congressional resolution authorizing military force, if necessary, to ensure Iraq has no chemical, biological or nuclear weapons program.

At the United Nations, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan backed tougher ground rules for arms inspections in Iraq, and urged Baghdad to use this

Lawmakers were expected to go to Saddam late Wednesday or after to administer the oath of office for the new term. The 65-year-old Iraqi leader, mindful of security, has not appeared in public since December 2000.

State television showed file footage Wednesday of Iraqis dancing in the streets and children wav-

ing fists and shouting Saddam's name.

Spontaneous celebrations in the city of 5m lion appeared few and small, however. The go ernment had declared the day a holiday advance. But many families stayed off the stre in the first hours, some apparently fearful of stra albeit celebratory, bullets

Opposition groups and others outside lragor inside Iraq but beyond Saddam's reachmissed the vote

year ago, have "A joke," said a radio stationin northern Iraq's Western-protected ppeal Kurdish region.

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"Totally fabricated, and a com-plete fiasco," said Hamid a-Bayati, representative of the based Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. "Millions of Iraqis Saddam Hussein," al-Bayati by telephone from London. cited uprisings after the Gulf W when rebels of Iraq's Shiite mai ity rose up in parts of the south

Iraq has no tradition of demo racy, having gone from a mone chy under British sway to c installed military rule in 19 After rising to power in the rul

Baath Party, Saddam was named Iraqi presider Former fede a well-orchestrated transfer of power within the obert Mintz, n party in 1979.

vate practice. The Baath Party got out the vote in neighbor ans Andersei hood-by-neighborhood drives within Baghd hat it faces n Many in Tuesday's vote stuffed handfuls of ballo tended probati into boxes, casting votes for whole families a ms handed

Authorities offered no explanation for ho they counted paper ballots from cities and villa across Iraq overnight.

Ibrahim, announcing the vote, said 11,445,638 eligible voters had cast ballots, and for Saddam.

Someone who does not know the Iraqi peo will not believe this percentage, but it is real Ibrahim said. "Whether it looks that way to so one or not. We don't have opposition in Iraq." Iraqi media compared it to Bush's 2000 e

tion victory, eked out in the Electoral Colle despite losing to Al Gore in the popular vote. 'The truth of the matter is that he (Bush)

aid Anderse by a fraction of the votes, and this fraction we means the rema engineered by sly lawyers' games," said # accounting firm state-run Iraqi Daily. "Maybe this is one of b main reasons for his hysterical threats on ! Iraqi choice!"-

"Last year, Four parcel bombs go off in southern "Last year. isappear by n hocking," B port city of Karachi, nine injured This is a wake KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — MMA, was actually behind the each had been mailed from the

Police and government offices were shaken by a series of parcel bombs that exploded within said. minutes of each other city, injuring at least nine peo- Durrani, condemned the bomb- riors) at the behest of

attacks. "At the moment we cannot say who is involved," he

In Islamabad, one of the reli-Wednesday in this volatile port gious bloc's leaders, Riaz against 'Mujahedeen' (holy'

different post offices. The e-mails said the bon

were "a warning to those po officers involved in operation

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Authorities said at least one of the packages had "from Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal," written on it — a reference to the United Action Front, a coalition of anti-American religious parties that made unprecedented gains in last week's national elections.

Four other bombs were spotted and defused, including two found at a courier service office that read "From the MMA to you, with love and flowers."

Still Sindh province Home Secretary Mukhtar Ahmad Sheikh cautioned it was too early to say the group, whose Urdu-language initials are

"By writing the name of Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal on one of the parcels, some terrorists have tried to damage our cause ... We are against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations," he said. "We know anti-Islamic elements want to defame us with such acts

E-mails claiming responsibility on behalf of militant Muslims were received by a major Pakistani daily newspaper and a local news agency.

Saying they were sent by "Asif Ramzi," a well-known Pakistani militant, the e-mails said 35 packages containing about five ounces of explosives

It threatened guerrilla ope tions would soon start again "anti-Islam police officers other infidels." Other Musi are planning a mass attack the United States, it said.

Americans.

The nine wounded w brought to Jinnah Hospital, most serious of them with hand blown off, said Dr. Se Jamali. He said the man's o hand would also need to amputated. Other victims wounds to the chest, neck, and hands.

"The others are in condition but they are in shoc said Jamali, the head of the h pital's emergency department.

