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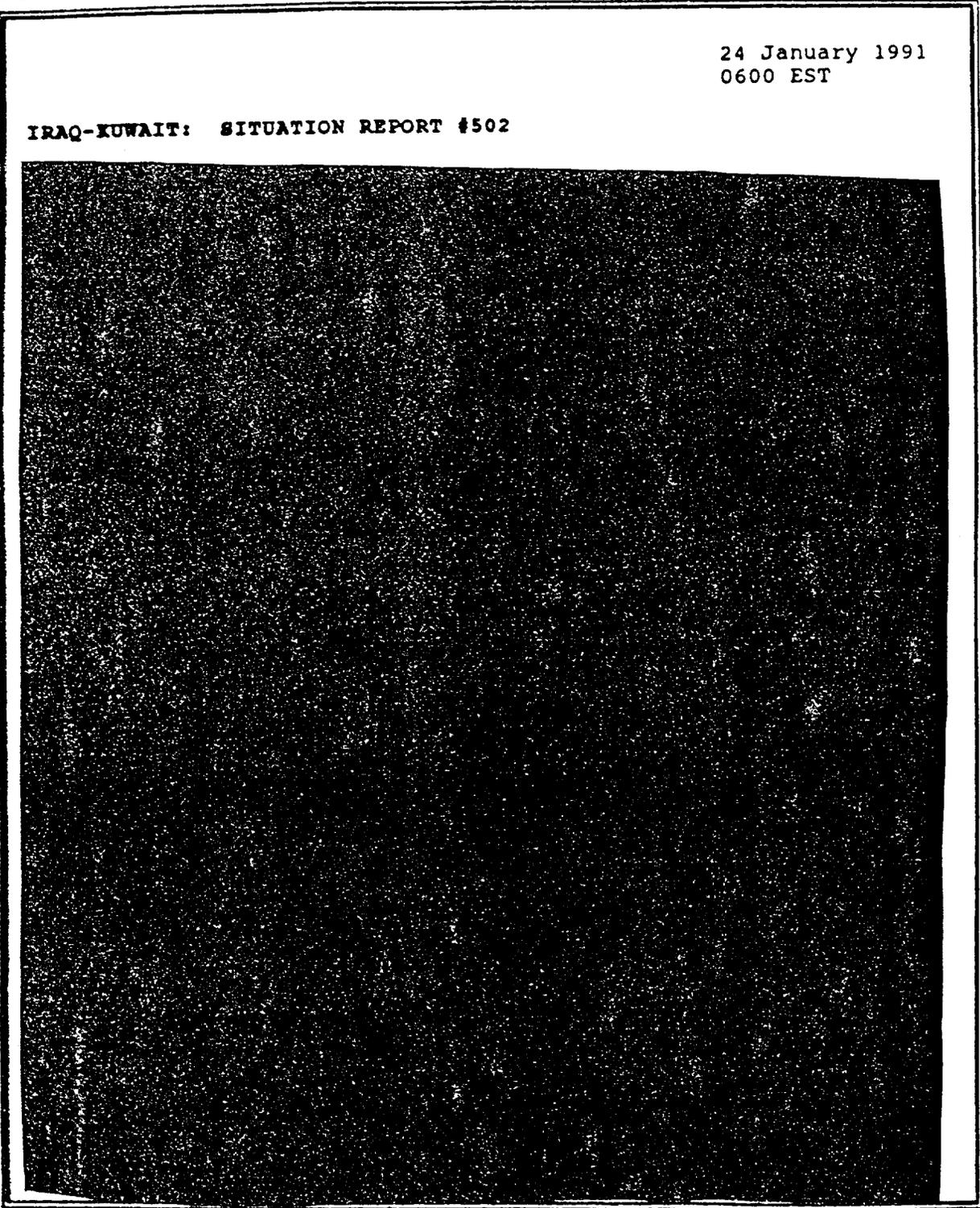


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# SPOT COMMENTARY

24 January 1991  
0600 EST

IRAQ-KUWAIT: SITUATION REPORT #502



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Approved for Release  
Date: 12 OCT 1993

Pages: 2

Exemptions: (b)(1) (b)(2)

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**USSR/Persian Gulf: Soviets Fear Spread of Conflict**

A Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed "profound anxiety" over the third Iraqi Scud attack on Israel and the sabotage of Kuwaiti oilfields by Iraqi troops, according to press reports. Asked whether the US had gone beyond the mandate of the US resolution, he affirmed the USSR's "principled stand" but repeated Gorbachev's warning against further escalation of military conflict. Soviet media have voiced similar concerns; one Pravda article today called for efforts to localize the conflict to prevent new forces--such as NATO--from establishing dominance in the region.

**Comment:** Soviet statements reflect a genuine fear that military conflict could reach the USSR's borders, as well as Moscow's preoccupation with the changing balance of power in the Middle East. Soviet officials probably realize that a wider Gulf war would reduce their chances to play the post-war role of peacemaker in the region.

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