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september 01, 1987

PERSIAN GULF:

Renewed Attacks on Shipping

A Kuwaiti cargo ship suffered only minor damage in an attack by an Iranian frigate in the southern Persian Gulf yesterday

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[REDACTED] the Iranian frigate was operating under a new attack plan, targeting unescorted Kuwait-bound shipping. After tracking the Kuwaiti ship for several hours, the frigate used its 35-mm guns when its Italian-made Sea Killer missiles failed to fire. Additional reporting indicates fast patrol boats may also have been involved in the attack. Meanwhile, at least one Iranian tanker was hit by Iraqi airstrikes yesterday, according to press reporting and a source of the US defense attache in Riyadh.

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(b)(3)

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The Iranian ship attack was in retaliation for Iraq's resumption of air raids in the Gulf. Iran's tactics—targeting an unescorted ship, attempting to use Sea Killer missiles, and staying several miles away from the cargo ship during the attack—suggest precautions to avoid a US defensive response to their renewed antishipping activities. More Iranian retaliatory ship attacks are likely.

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