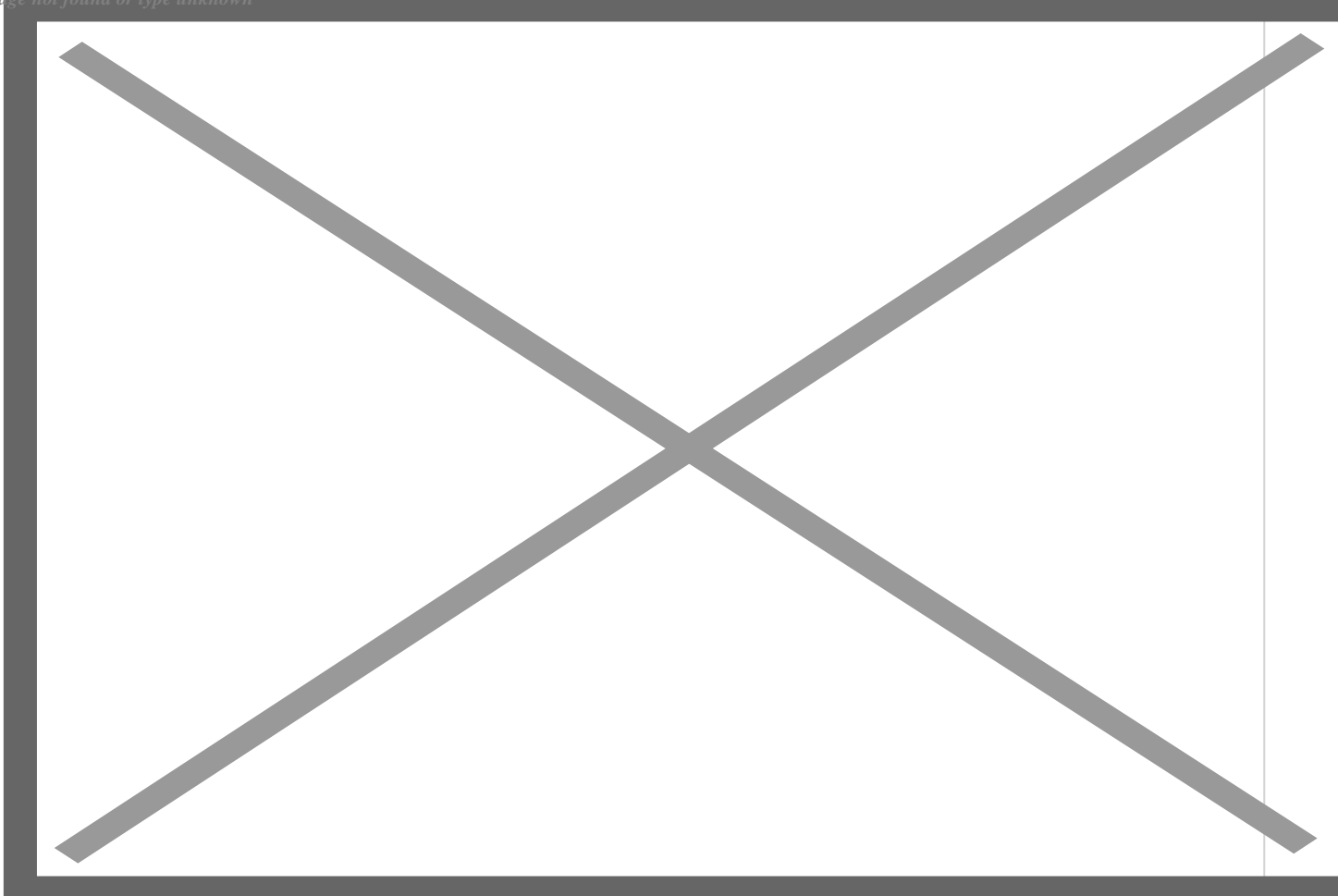


U.S. president orders airstrikes on Iraq-Syria border

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The raids were carried out with US Air Force F-15 and F-16 fighters [File: Hamad I Mohammed/Reuters]

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Washington, June 27 (RHC)-- U.S. President Joe Biden directed military forces to conduct precision airstrikes against facilities allegedly used by Iran-backed militia groups in the Iraq-Syria border region on Sunday evening, according to a news release from the Department of Defense.

"The targets were selected because these facilities are utilized by Iran-backed militias that are engaged in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks against U.S. personnel and facilities in Iraq. Specifically, the U.S. strikes targeted operational and weapons storage facilities at two locations in Syria and one location in Iraq, both of which lie close to the border between those countries," Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said in the release.

Returning to the White House Sunday evening from a weekend at Camp David, Biden did not stop to answer questions about the airstrikes, telling reporters gathered on the South Lawn: "I will talk to you tomorrow."

A U.S. defense official with knowledge of the strikes said that U.S. Air Force F-15s and F-16s were used in the operation. The strikes took place at approximately 6 p.m. Eastern Time, or 1 a.m. local time.

The airstrikes were not the first ordered by this administration. The U.S. military's first known action under Biden came in February when it struck a site in Syria used by two Iranian-backed militia groups in response to rocket attacks on American forces in the region. Those strikes generated concern among lawmakers, who said Biden had not asked for the necessary congressional authorization. The White House claimed then that the strikes were backed by Article II of the Constitution as well as the United Nations Charter -- without offering further proof.

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