

# Saddam gains influence in Iraq

DOKAN, Iraq (AP)—Kurdish allies of Saddam Hussein captured the last stronghold of their rebel rivals Monday—a rout that gives the Iraqi leader his greatest influence over northern Iraq since the Persian Gulf War.

As allied Iraqi forces trailed close behind, the Kurdistan Democratic Party claimed control of the city of Sulaymaniyah after the crumbling forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan abandoned their posts, the United Nations said.

"The PUK had withdrawn and the KDP walked in," said Stafford Clarry, the head of a U.N. guard unit in Sulaymaniyah, Iraqi Kurdistan's second-largest city.

The city was quiet after the takeover, with about 50,000 of its 400,000

residents fleeing since Sunday night, Clarry said.

Saddam's Kurdish allies claimed they entered the city Monday evening after residents rebelled to force out the rival Kurdish faction and its leader, Jalal Talabani.

"The KDP is in control of all the three Kurdish provinces of Dahuk, Irbil and Sulaymaniyah," the KDP said.

Sulaymaniyah was the last stronghold left in the hands of the PUK forces after they lost Irbil, the area's de facto capital, on Aug. 31 in a KDP offensive backed by the Iraqi army.

The Baghdad-backed KDP's capture of Sulaymaniyah means Saddam effectively wields control over much of northern Iraq for the first time since the U.S.-led forces established a

Kurdish "safe haven" after the 1991 Gulf War.

The United States, which launched missile strikes against southern Iraq last week, has made clear it has no plans to take sides in the fighting between the Kurdish factions, who frequently have shifted alliances in the course of their conflict.

The missile strikes appeared to discourage Iraqi forces from taking a direct role in the fighting, but it has not slowed the KDP.

The KDP has been fighting its way eastward since and on Monday took Dokan, a strategic town about 60 miles east of Irbil. Dokan is the site of a major dam that controls the water and power supplies to the region.

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473-7301

FAX NUMBER: 472-1761

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### CORRECTION

Gov. Ben Nelson was misquoted in Monday's Daily Nebraskan in the page three continuation of the NASCAR unveiling story. Nelson's offered his "top five reasons why Nebraskans and I like Husker NASCAR racing," not his "top five list of reasons why Husker NASCAR racing is better than football games," as the story states.

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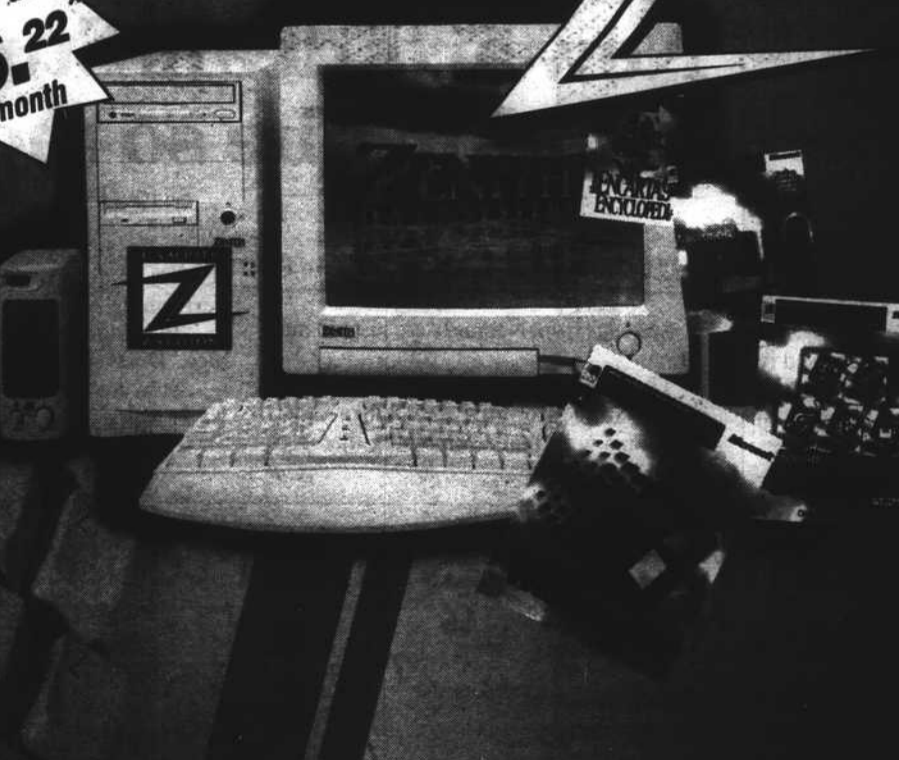
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