



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

**BAGHDAD • IRAQ**

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**khalilzad speeches****United States Condemns Bombing of Important Shia Mosque in Iraq****U.S. statements urge Iraqis to avoid civil war, promise to help rebuild mosque**

February 22, 2006

The United States condemns the bombing February 22 of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, Iraq, one of the holiest places for Shi'a Muslims, as a blatant attempt to foment sectarian strife, and promises to contribute to its reconstruction, according to statements from the White House and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

"This senseless crime is an affront to people of faith throughout the world," President Bush said. He urged Iraqis to show restraint in the wake of the attack and pursue justice through legal means. "Violence will only contribute to what the terrorists sought to achieve by this act," he said.

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad and General George Casey, the commander of the coalition troops in Iraq, said, "Given the historic, cultural, and religious importance of this shrine, this attack is a crime against humanity. The Shrine should be rebuilt and the United States will contribute to its reconstruction."

The bombing of the mosque comes at a time of delicate negotiations among Iraq's Shia, Sunni and Kurdish political groups to form a government of national unity.

For additional information, see [Iraq Update](#).

*Following is the text of the two statements:*

(begin text)

**THE WHITE HOUSE**

Office of the Press Secretary  
February 22, 2006

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**

On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest condolences to the people of Iraq for the brutal bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of the holiest sites in Shi'a Islam. The terrorists in Iraq have again proven that they are enemies of all faiths and of all humanity. The world must stand united against them, and steadfast behind the people of Iraq. This senseless crime is an affront to people of faith throughout the world. The United States condemns this cowardly act in the strongest possible terms.

I ask all Iraqis to exercise restraint in the wake of this tragedy, and to pursue justice in accordance with the laws and constitution of Iraq. Violence will only contribute to what the terrorists sought to achieve by this act.

The United States stands ready to do all in its power to assist the Government of Iraq to identify and bring to justice those responsible for this terrible act. And the American people pledge to work with the people of Iraq to rebuild and restore the Golden Mosque of Samarra to its former glory.

(end text)

(begin text)

Embassy of the United States of America

Baghdad, Iraq

February 22, 2006

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NEWS RELEASE

Joint Statement by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad and General George Casey Denouncing Terrorist Destruction of the Golden Mosque

February 22, 2006

We denounce in the strongest terms the terrorist destruction of the Golden Mosque -- the Shrine of the Askareyen Imams. This heinous crime is a deliberate attempt to foment sectarian strife in Iraq and the region. Given the historic, cultural, and religious importance of this shrine, this attack is a crime against humanity. The Shrine should be rebuilt and the United States will contribute to its reconstruction.

The Iraqi people, in this hour of sadness and anger over a despicable crime, must not allow themselves to be divided. Those who commit acts of sectarian violence in the wake of this tragic event are only serving the interests of the terrorists. The terrorists led by Zarqawi wish to see Iraq descend into sectarian conflict.

This is a critical moment for Iraq. We call on all Iraqis to unite against terror and violence. Coming together in unity to condemn this barbaric act and working for Iraq's salvation will be the right response.

This desperate and despicable act shows that terrorists stop at nothing and care for nothing. The United States and our Coalition partners share in the outrage of the Iraqi people against this crime. We stand with the Iraqi people in their courageous efforts to eliminate the criminal and terrorist elements in their country and to build a government of national unity.

May God Bless the People of Iraq.

(end text)

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