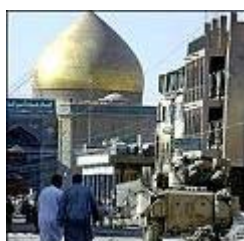




## Iraq rejects Iranian assistance

Sunday, 5th September 2004



United Press International

Baghdad, Iraq - Iraqi government officials said Sunday they have rejected an Iranian offer to rebuild destroyed sections of Shiite shrines in Najaf and Karbala.

Shiite (Waqf) Property Department Spokesman Salah Abdul Razzaq said the government refused the offer to protest Iran's role in recent clashes in Najaf.

He said the Iraqi government has accused the Iranian government of "supporting extremist Shiite groups that seek violence in Iraq," in apparent reference to Iraqi Shiite maverick leader Moqtada al-Sadr.

Iraqi officials recently said they had evidence showing Tehran was involved in intelligence activities and supporting terrorist groups inside Iraq.

Abdul Razzaq also said Kuwait pledged \$17 million to rebuild different parts of Najaf that were destroyed during fierce battles last month between U.S.-Iraqi forces and al-Mehdi militia, led by Moqtada al-Sadr.