



**(TS//SI) Menwith Hill Station Reports on Iraqi Mosque Bombing and Response**

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(U//FOUO) On 22 February 2006, terrorists possibly associated with Al-Qaida bombed a Shi'ite shrine in Northern Iraq and put in motion a series of reprisal attacks on Sunni mosques. The ruined Samarra shrine is considered to be the fourth most holy shrine to the Shi'ites in Iraq.

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(U) *The shattered al-Hadi Shi'ite shrine (Golden Mosque) in the town of Samarra, 100 km north of Baghdad on February 22, 2006 (Reuters)*

(TS//SI//REL) Menwith Hill Station (MHS) linguists and reporters were able to produce immediate intelligence on the incident through targeting of Iraqi Ministry of Interior (MOI) assets and Badr Organization communications. As a result, dozens of Kleiglits, CSG tippers and reports were released from MHS concerning the attack and the MOI's response to managing and containing the violence, most of them on the day of the bombing. Many of the reports were briefed directly to the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, enabling him to maintain situational awareness in the area.

(TS//SI//REL) Within hours of the Samarra mosque bombing, MHS reported that the Badr Organization leadership had called for peaceful mass demonstrations at all Shi'a mosques and in all areas populated by Shi'a, as a response to the bombing. Later reporting indicated that some Shi'a mosques were promoting violence in retaliation to the attacks against the Shi'a people, and the people themselves continued to threaten to take up arms if the government did not step in to protect them. Some Badr officials openly stated their readiness for civil war, if the situation came to that.

(TS//SI//REL) Site's coverage of the MOI highlighted the MOI's response to the situation and provided indications of its ability to control sectarian violence. This also included the reporting on the widespread sectarian violence that regional Badr Organization officials provided to the Badr leadership.

(TS//SI//REL) MHS's reports also covered the damage reports that government officials provided back to MOI Headquarters. The government's initial investigation into the Samarra bombing and use of a commando battalion to contain the situation were immediately reported, while the fact that some officials recommended a nighttime curfew was reported the next day. The investigation revealed that the explosion was caused by 50 to 100 kilos of TNT, as opposed to the 1.5 kilos previously reported to the Iraqi government, and that six people in addition to the guards at the mosque were being interrogated.

(TS//SI//REL) MHS reports were tipped to and read by the military from tactical intelligence units in Iraq to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as other customers within the Intelligence community. Information from these reports was used to track and combat terrorist and insurgent activities in Iraq. The reports also provided crucial information on the level of unrest in Iraq, and on the preparations by the Badr Organization for possible civil war. Some of the Kleiglits were used in the Presidential Daily Briefs. Parts of MHS' Samarra' summary report (3/AL/76-06) were used almost verbatim by DIA and State's INR for their summary reporting.

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