



The White House

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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EMAIL UPDATES

In Focus

- Medicare
- Iraq
- National Security
- Economic Security
- Homeland Security
- More Issues
- En Español

News

- Current News
- Video
- Press Briefings
- Proclamations
- Executive Orders
- Radio Addresses

News by Date

- September 2003
- August 2003
- July 2003
- June 2003
- May 2003
- April 2003
- March 2003
- February 2003
- January 2003
- December 2002
- November 2002
- October 2002
- September 2002
- August 2002
- July 2002
- June 2002
- May 2002
- April 2002
- March 2002
- February 2002
- January 2002
- December 2001
- November 2001
- October 2001
- September 2001
- August 2001
- July 2001
- June 2001
- May 2001
- April 2001
- March 2001
- February 2001
- January 2001

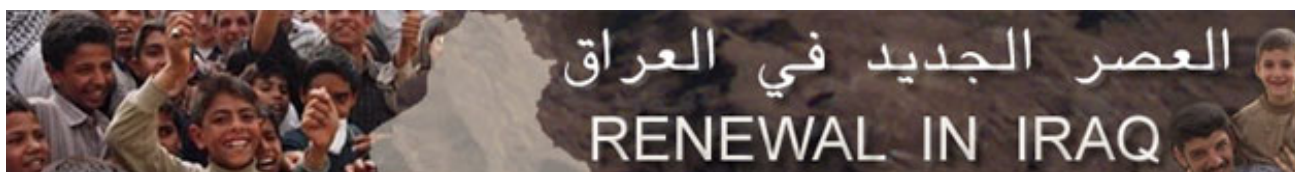
Appointments

- Nominations
- Application

Photos

[Home](#) > [News & Policies](#) > [August 2003](#)

[Printer-Friendly Version](#)



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
August 29, 2003

President Condemns Bombing Outside Imam Ali Mosque in Iraq

Statement by the President

I strongly condemn the bombing today outside the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf, Iraq, that killed dozens of innocent Iraqis. This vicious act of terrorism was aimed at Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, at one of Shi'a Islam's holiest sites, and at the hopes of the people of Iraq for freedom, peace, and reconciliation.

I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims and my hopes for a quick recovery for the injured. I have instructed American officials in Iraq to work closely with Iraqi security officials and the Governing Council to determine who committed this terrible attack and bring them to justice. I also extend my sympathies to all Iraqis, and to Shi'a Muslims around the world.

Ayatollah Hakim had been jailed and tortured for his religious beliefs by the regime of Saddam Hussein, and he had spent many years in exile. He returned to his native land this year, after its liberation. His murder today, along with the murder of many innocent men and women gathered for prayer, demonstrates the cruelty and desperation of the enemies of the Iraqi people.

The forces of terror must and will be defeated. The united efforts of Iraqis and the international community will succeed in achieving peace and freedom.

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Federal Facts

■ [Federal Statistics](#)

West Wing

■ [History](#)

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[History & Tours](#) | [Kids](#) | [Your Government](#) | [Appointments](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Contact](#) | [Text only](#)

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