

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Iraq is undergoing its bloodiest time since the fall of Saddam Hussein. T / F
- b. A nationwide curfew has been imposed in Iraq. T / F
- c. Sunni and Shi'ites have been demolishing each other's mosques. T / F
- d. Iraq's Foreign Minister called for insurgents to be whipped. T / F
- e. A spark set off a fire that destroyed an important mosque. T / F
- f. The mosque contained the remains of Iraq War veterans. T / F
- g. Over 60 mosques have been destroyed in the latest violence. T / F
- h. A revered Shi'ite cleric has implored followers to refrain from violence. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. demise | sacred |
| b. curb | retaliatory |
| c. brink | lawlessness |
| d. tit-for-tat | descending |
| e. all out | beseeking |
| f. spiraling | bridle |
| g. anarchy | respected |
| h. hallowed | downfall |
| i. revered | total |
| j. imploring | edge |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. its bloodiest time since the | demolitions of mosques |
| b. A curfew has been | spill over into all out civil war |
| c. recent sectarian violence may tip | most hallowed shrines to rubble |
| d. Recent tit-for-tat | the country over the brink |
| e. whip up hatred that could easily | of reprisal attacks |
| f. spiraling many parts of Iraq | demise of Saddam Hussein |
| g. reduced one of Shi'ite Islam's | left over 100 people dead |
| h. waves | his followers' fury |
| i. the ensuing violence | into a state of near anarchy |
| j. tried to quell | imposed in Baghdad |

THE ARTICLE

Iraq undergoes biggest unrest in two years

Iraq is experiencing its bloodiest time since the demise of Saddam Hussein two years ago. A curfew has been imposed in Baghdad and three adjacent provinces in an attempt to curb the outbreak of a possible civil war. Tensions are running explosively high and fears are that recent sectarian violence may tip the country over the brink. Recent tit-for-tat demolitions of mosques by both Sunni and Shi'ite factions have brought tens of thousands of protestors onto the streets, many vowing for revenge against attacks on their populations and places of worship. Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari has called for calm and warned insurgents against trying to whip up hatred that could easily spill over into all out civil war. He called it "the most serious challenge to the county's stability".

The spark which ignited the latest unrest, spiraling many parts of Iraq into a state of near anarchy, was the destruction of the Golden Mosque in the town of Samarra, north of Baghdad. The mosque contains the remains of two imams who were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The influential Shi'ite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr, blamed Sunni Muslims for the outrage and called for revenge. Within hours of the blast, which almost reduced one of Shi'ite Islam's most hallowed shrines to rubble, waves of reprisal attacks began across Iraq. Angered Shi'ites attacked at least 60 Sunni mosques and the ensuing violence left over 100 people dead. Iraq's most revered Shi'ite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, has tried to quell his followers' fury by imploring them not to attack Sunni mosques.