

## Iran's presence shadowy in Iraq

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SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON TIMES - BAQOUBA, Iraq -- It is early evening when the call comes through to the Joint Command and Control office at the coalition outpost in central Baqouba. An Iraqi intelligence officer reports that 50 Iranians have been spotted inside a civilian compound in a nearby village.

Spc. Ryan Boschert, on his second tour of duty in Iraq, immediately instructs his Iraqi co-worker to have the Iraqi army investigate.

The telephone tip said the Iranians were at a village on the outskirts of Baqouba, the capital of Diyala province on the border with Shi'ite Iran, which is contested territory in the escalating strife between Iraq's Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims. In recent months, the province has experienced an increase in the presence of Shi'ite militias and in sectarian attacks.  
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