

## Militant group in Iraq causes dispute

*by UPI*

BASRA, Iraq - Leading Shiite clerics disagree with the Iraqi government over the causes behind the emergence of a new militant group in southern Iraq, officials said. A leading cleric with the Islamic Virtue Party faulted the weakness of the Iraqi central government for the emergence of a group calling itself the al-Yamani Group, described in the Iraqi Alsumaria news agency Wednesday as a religious extremist group. The Iraqi government said regional governments and intelligence agencies are at fault for the emergence of the group and others say the general economic, political and social conditions in Iraq are to blame. The group, which Alsumaria said advocates violent Islamic doctrine, fought security forces in Basra and Nasiriyah in mid-January.

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