

zczc nl e011

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mecca 11-21''''

London (upi) - armed +renegades to the islamic religion+ seized the holy mosque of mecca - one of islam's most hallowed shrines - during dawn prayers tuesday, the saudi arabian interior ministry announced, according to riyad radio wednesday.

the announcement monitored in london was the first official word from saudi arabia of the storming of the mosque.
upi 02:07 gmt mnnn

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x x x mosque.

word came after a day of silence from saudi arabia which apparently severed its communications with the outside world while it dealt with the seizure of the mosque.

riyad radio broke into a program of religious songs and poetry to broadcast the statement at 0025gmt. it said:

+a group of renegades to the islamic religion seized the opportunity of dawn prayers on tuesday, the first day of muharram 1400 a.h., to infiltrate the holy mosque. they had with them some weapons and ammunition.

+they presented one of their number to the crowds of muslims inside the holy mosque to lead the dawn prayers, claiming that he was the promised messiah.

+they called on the muslims in the holy mosque to acknowledge him in this capacity, under pressure of the arms they were carrying.

+the authorities concerned have taken all measures to bring the situation under control.

+in accordance with a fatwah (religious decree) by all the ulemas, measures have been taken to protect the lives of the muslims who are inside the holy mosque.+

it said the interior ministry will issue another statement later.

in washington, the state department said tuesday night there had been +disturbances+ in mecca but it had no clear idea of what was happening.

however, a press officer said the saudi government said agreed to a u.s. request on security for the u.s. embassy in riyad and +they have been responsive.+

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upi 02:24 gmt mnnn

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Honkerband