

B'klyn Arabs are for jihad

By NATALIE BYFIELD

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As Iraqi President Saddam Hussein yesterday called for a holy war in the Mideast, Moslems from a Brooklyn mosque denied there was a religious aspect to the conflict. But fearful that the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia is threatened by U.S. troops, many said they supported Saddam's call for a jihad.

"It's a petroleum thing," said Saad Hassanin, one of the imams who leads the worshipers in prayers at the Islamic Mission of America for the Propagation of Islam.

Concern voiced

Hassanin and a multi-ethnic group of Moslems including a Sudanese, a Pakistani and African Americans spoke outside the State Street mosque after the Jumma or Friday prayers and expressed concern for Mecca, birthplace of Muhammad, founder of Islam.

"The holy land won't be in danger from the Moslem people. However, from the Americans, I think so," said Hassanin.

Most of the people, who spoke outside the mosque, said they supported Saddam's call for a holy war and the overthrow of the Saudi royal family.

"If it's a jihad . . . against American invaders . . . let it be," said Abdul Saudi, a 35-year-old Palestinian who lives in Brooklyn.

Koran cited

Other Moslems at the mosque said they deeply believe in the Koran's teaching, which they said prohibits them from calling on outsiders to solve problems among themselves.

"We are not supposed to invite anyone to be in between Moslem people," said the imam.

Mohammed Talha of Pakistan said he considers the Saudi leaders dictators, and, "I would support Saddam Hussein if he is going to change the Saudi kingdom."