

How the US Invasion of Iraq Helped Create Babylon

The United States invaded Iraq in 2003 with good intentions. America stated that the intent was to remove "a regime that developed and used weapons of mass destruction, harbored and supported terrorists, committed outrageous human rights abuses, and defied the just demands of the United Nations and the world." However the long term outcome was much different and a renewed Babylon (Iraq-Syria) is emerging from the ruins and closely tied to Persia (Iran).

Additional reasons for the war included to change the Middle East so as to deny support for militant Islam by pressuring or transforming the nations and transnational systems that support it. For the invasion of Iraq the rationale was "the United States relied on the authority of UN Security Council Resolutions 678 and 687 to use all necessary means to compel Iraq to comply with its international obligations."



In the lead-up to the invasion, the United States and England emphasized the argument that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction and that he thus presented a threat to his neighbors, to America, and to the world community. On November 8, 2002, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1441.



All fifteen members of the Security Council agreed to give Iraq a final opportunity to comply with its obligations and disarm or face the serious consequences of failing to disarm. The resolution strengthened the mandate of the UN Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), giving them authority to go anywhere, at any time and talk to anyone in order to verify Iraq's disarmament."

Throughout late 2001, 2002, and early 2003, the Bush Administration worked to build a case for invading Iraq, culminating in then Secretary of State Colin Powell's February 2003 address to the Security Council. Shortly after the invasion, the Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, and other intelligence agencies largely discredited evidence related to Iraqi weapons as well as links to Al-Qaeda, and at this point the Bush and Blair Administrations began to shift to secondary rationales for the war, such as the Hussein government's human rights record and promoting democracy in Iraq.

Opinion polls showed that people of nearly all countries opposed a war without UN mandate and that the view of the United States as a danger to world peace had significantly increased. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan described the war as illegal, saying in a September 2004 interview that it was "not in conformity with the Security Council."

After the invasion the political change in Iraq in 2003 was the most serious challenge to the once familiar political and social landscapes of the Arab world. With respect to sectarian relations, 2003 turned the unthinkable into a political reality: The empowerment of ethnic and sectarian outgroups – namely Shia and Kurdish political forces.

It also allowed, for the first time ever, the full, unfettered assertion of previously suppressed subnational identities. In other words, 2003 highlighted the uncomfortable fact that there were multiple, indeed contradictory, visions of what it meant to be an Iraqi and by extension what it meant to be a part of the Arab world. In 2003, a longstanding and self-evident, yet relatively well-suppressed, fact was revealed: Historical memory, victimhood, conceptions of the nation's friends and foes, its myths and symbols – in other words what “we the people” constitute and represent – were not a site of consensus but rather of division.

The invasion and occupation by President Bush, and subsequent drawdown of forces by President Obama led to sectarian violence which caused widespread displacement among Iraqi civilians. The Iraqi Red Crescent organization estimated the total internal displacement was around 2.3 million during 2008-2010, and as many as 2 million Iraqis left the country. Estimates of Iraqi deaths range from 100,000 to nearly 1,000,000. Before the war before the war approximately 10% of Iraq was Christian, but nearly all were driven out of the country.

The invasion led to an Islamic constitution which in theory supported democracy as long as laws did not violate traditional Islamic principles, and a parliamentary election was held in 2005. In addition the invasion preserved the autonomy of the Kurdish region, and stability brought new economic prosperity. Because the Kurdish region is historically the most democratic area of Iraq, many Iraqi refugees from other territories fled into the Kurdish land.

Iraqi insurgency surged in the aftermath of the U.S. withdrawal. The terror campaigns have since been engaged by Iraqi, primarily radical Sunni, insurgent groups against the central government and the warfare between various factions within Iraq.

Shia militias, include the southern, Iran-linked Badr Organization, the Mahdi Army, and the central-Iraq followers of Muqtada al-Sadr.

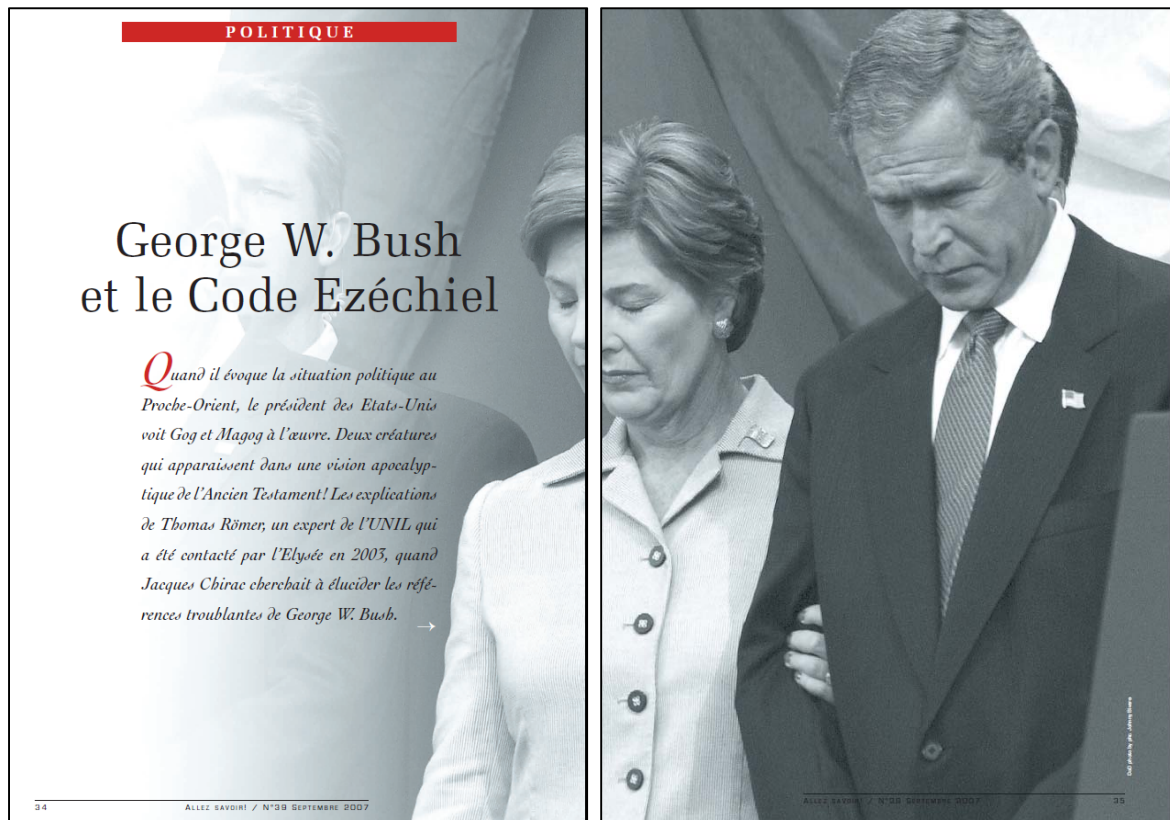
These groups neither advocate the dominance of a single ethnic group, nor the traditional ideologies behind the Iraqi state. These particular Shias do not support the capture of Khuzestan or other border areas with Iran, but rather promote very close and warm relations with Iran's Shia government.



Did Misinterpretation of Ezekiel 38 Start the Iraq War?

In a 2003 interview, Jacques Chirac, President of France at that time, affirmed that President George W. Bush asked him to send troops to Iraq to stop Gog and Magog, the "Bible's satanic agents of the Apocalypse." According to Chirac, the American leader appealed to their "common faith" (Christianity) and told him: "Gog and Magog are at work in the Middle East. The biblical prophecies are being fulfilled. This confrontation is willed by God, who wants to use this conflict to erase his people's enemies before a New Age begins."

(Maurice, Jean-Claude (2003). Si vous le répétez, je démentirai... - Chirac, Sarkozy, Villepin. Paris: Plon. ISBN 978-2-259-21021-8. Agog over Bush's comments on Gog and Magog, Charleston Gazette, July 22, 2009)



President Bush misinterpreted “Gog” and Magog” to be connected somehow with Iraq. The most likely explanation is that “Gog” is the Islamic Man of Lawlessness and leader of the 10 nation Babylon-Persian confederacy (“people of Magog”) to invade Israel in the end times.

But it was incorrect to assume this meant Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003 and, most importantly, that the final battle as prophesied by Ezekiel some 2,600 years ago could be averted by the American led invasion. In actuality, the American invasion actually helped make this Persian led invasion more likely.

As neither Jacques Chirac nor his advisers had understood the Biblical reference, the Chirac administration got to work. The French transmitted the request to Professor Thomas Römer. Thomas Römer is an Old Testament expert at the University of Lausanne, and he issued a report on Gog and Magog from Ezekiel 38 to Jacques Chirac. However, the Römer report was apparently unable to decipher what the meaning was, and they were probably more confused than before.

As Ezekiel Foretold—Israel Is Restored and Few Jews Remain in Islamic Countries

Ezekiel 37-39 describes important modern day events in Israel. Israel has been restored. Jerusalem has been liberated from the trampling armies. The promise of all Jews leaving the land of their enemies (Islamic countries) is now almost complete, as prophesied in Ezekiel 39:28.

Ezekiel 37 describes the future restoration of Israel.

Ezekiel 37 (NIV)

21 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.'

Ezekiel 38 describes a final attack by Persia (Iran), Arabia, Libya, and Turkey (Beth Togarmah) with other nations. "Gog" is the Islamic man of lawlessness.

Ezekiel 38 (NIV)

3 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. 4 I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords.

5 Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, 6 also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you.'

8 In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. 9 You and all your troops and the many

nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

In Ezekiel 39 we learn that the armies from the Islamic countries will be destroyed by God.

Ezekiel 39 (NIV)

1 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshek and Tubal. 2 I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel. 3 Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand.

4 On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. 5 You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord. 6 I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord.

The weapons (nuclear) left behind by the Islamic army will be used for fuel for seven years by Israel. The typical useful life of a nuclear fuel rod is about seven years.

7 'I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the Lord am the Holy One in Israel. 8 It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign Lord. This is the day I have spoken of.'

9 'Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up—the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel. 10 They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign Lord.'

After the battle it will take seven months to clean the contaminated land.

12 'For seven months the Israelites will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. 13 All the people of the land will bury them, and the day I display my glory will be a memorable day for them, declares the Sovereign Lord. 14 People will be continually employed in cleansing the land. They will spread

out across the land and, along with others, they will bury any bodies that are lying on the ground.'

Ezekiel 39 concludes by God saying he will leave no Jews behind in the enemy (Islamic) countries before final event happens.

25 'Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. 26 They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid.'

27 'When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations. 28 Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. 29 I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.'

Jews in Islamic Countries 1948-2015

Islamic Country or Territory	1948 Jewish population	1967 Jewish population	1948-1967 reduction	2015 Jewish population	1948-2015 reduction
Aden	8,000	0	-100%	0	-100%
Afghanistan	5,000	500	-90%	0	-100%
Algeria	140,000	1,000	-99%	0	-100%
Bahrain	1,000	0	-100%	0	-100%
Egypt	80,000	500	-99%	100	-100%
Iran	175,000	60,000	-66%	4,000	-98%
Iraq	180,000	500	-100%	50	-100%
Lebanon	20,000	2,000	-90%	1,000	-95%
Libya	44,000	50	-100%	50	-100%
Morocco	265,000	31,000	-88%	2,000	-99%
Pakistan	2,500	250	-90%	0	-100%
Palestine	10,000	0	-100%	0	-100%
Sudan	1,500	0	-100%	0	-100%
Syria	30,000	4,000	-87%	100	-100%
Tunisia	102,000	8,000	-92%	800	-99%
Turkey	80,000	20,000	-75%	5,000	-94%
Yemen	61,000	500	-99%	40	-100%
Totals	1,205,000	128,300	-89%	13,140	-99%

The Rise (and Fall) of ISIS in Iraq and Syria

ISIS is much in the news today. But ISIS is Sunni and will be replaced by Shia groups loyal to Persia. The central problem facing the government of Iraq in the summer of 2014 was that its armed forces were very clearly not fit for purpose. The Iraqi army collapsed before a much smaller ISIS force in Mosul. The army was beset by deep-rooted corruption and absenteeism, and by an absence of commitment to the fight against the jihadis.



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The rapid success of ISIS in Iraq has several causes: Iraq was politically and ethnically divided and in some places without centralized power. ISIS already had a territorial base in Syria and some Iraqi towns under its control; extensive resources in terms of weapons, money, and fighters; and Iraqi allies in the fight against the unpopular government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in Baghdad.

By adopting the early Islamic concept of the caliphate, ISIS is appealed to many Muslims' longing for cultural authenticity, religious purity, and political unity. It is not fulfilling this promise, however, because its brutal approach is dividing societies and even scaring off many Sunni Muslims – whom it claims to defend.

For the jihadists, the popular uprising against the authoritarian Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad is secondary, the democratization of Syria irrelevant. For them the current-day territory of Syria represents much more the building block of a far-reaching salvation. Their interim goal is the “liberation” of Greater Syria (Bilad al-Sham) – which, in addition to today’s state of Syria, includes Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine (Israel) – as the nucleus of an Islamist empire that is to be rebuilt, that of the caliphate.

Several Shiite shrines are also located in Sham, such as the shrine of the Prophet’s granddaughter Zaynab near Damascus. In addition, Sham is also connected to eschatological expectations, because according to both Sunni and Shia sources a terrible civil war is supposed to foreshadow the appearance of the apocalyptic redeemer (the 12th Imam or Mahdi).

This symbolic density motivates current-day religious fighters of both confessions to come to Sham. Shiite militia members from the Iranian backed Lebanese Hezbollah and from Iraq support the regime of the Alawite Shiite Bashar al- Assad, thereby fueling many Sunnis’ feeling that it is necessary to defend Sunni Islam against “Safawid” – that is, Iranian Shia control.

The Shia controlled central government in Baghdad is aligned and beholden to Tehran. Additionally, two of Shia Islam’s holiest sites—located in Najaf and Karbala—are close to ISIS-held territory. It is therefore no surprise that Iran has mobilized allied Shia Iraqi militias and has taken a prominent and public role in leading the Iraqi campaign against ISIS. Ironically again, American air support to defeat ISIS will end up strengthening Iran.

The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a threat and an opportunity for the Islamic Republic of Iran. ISIS (Sunni) has a vehement enmity toward the Shia, perhaps more so than any other Sunni jihadi group. The Iranian government—the primary champion of the world’s Shia and an obstacle to Sunni jihadi ascendancy in the Middle East—is one of ISIS’s biggest enemies. The ISIS conquest of nearly one-third of Iraq and its ability to threaten Baghdad pose a direct threat to Iranian interests.

The reason why the rise of the Shia militias is of greater import is because it has long-term implications for the political future of Iraq – or at least the section of Iraq that is controlled by the Baghdad authorities. The Iraq Shia militias are political as well as military organizations. They may number more than 130,000 in Iraq and Syria today.

Following Iranian regional strategy, they convert military power into political power. As such, current events in Iraq offer an example and a warning regarding Iranian intentions and strategies vis-à-vis the Middle East. In the current situation, with Iran having now obtained access to monies formerly frozen within the framework of sanctions, understanding the nature of Iranian practice is a matter of urgent importance for the formulation of rational western policy.

Iran (Persia) Intervention in Iraq and Syria

1. Badr Corps

The Badr Corps, now renamed the “Badr Organization”, is the most veteran of the pro-Iranian Shia militias active in Iraq. Founded in Iran in 1982 as the military wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Badr was originally led by Iranian officers and took part in the Iran–Iraq war on the side of Tehran. Returning to Iraq in 2003, it sought to reconstitute itself as a political group, while never ceding its paramilitary capacities. Badr aligned with the US in its fight against Ba’athist elements in the post-2003 period, with many of its members joining the newly reconstituted Iraqi security forces.

Badr has now officially separated from SCIRI, with both constituting political parties. The control by Badr and SCIRI of the interior ministry is a matter of concern for Iraq’s Sunnis. Badr is suspected of involvement in sectarian killings. It claims a membership of 50,000 and has taken an active role in fighting ISIS in Diyala Province, and now on the key Baiji and Anbar fronts.



(for more information see: Cigar, Norman: “Iraq’s Shia Warlords and Their Militia, Political and Security Challenges”, US Army War College, June 2015. PUB1272)

2. Hezbollah (Legions of the Party of God)

Founded in 2003, Ktaib Hezbollah was active in the insurgency against the US. It is included on the US State Department list of Terrorist Groups. Originally led by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a close associate or possibly operative of the IRGC's Qods Force this force has been throughout the most openly identified with Tehran of the Shia military groups in Iraq.

Now numbering around 30,000 fighters, Ktaib Hezbollah commanders consider themselves to constitute a kind of elite or “special operations forces” group within the Hashed al-Shaabi, taking on the most difficult tasks and possessing capabilities in guerrilla warfare beyond those of the other groups.

In the Army War College report, Norman Cigar states he observed Ktaib forces in action in the Khaldiyyeh area of Anbar Province in June 2015, close to Ramadi City. He claims their discipline, cohesion and esprit de corps (in contrast to ISF troops and even to Badr fighters) were “immediately notable.” The organization was involved in the liberation of Amerli from ISIS, where it benefitted from US close air support.



3. Asaib Ahl al-Haq (League of the Righteous)

Led by Qais Al-Khazali, the Asaib emerged from a split away from the Sadrist Mahdi Army in 2004. It became completely independent of the Sadrists in 2008 and continued action against the Americans. Reputed to be the recipient of direct funding from Iran, Asaib is widely feared in Iraq as one of the most criminalized of the militia groups.

Stories of its members seeking to terrorize and extort money from Sunnis who have fled to Shia areas of Baghdad are common. It is suspected of a recent atrocity in Baghdad in which a number of prostitutes were slaughtered. The Asaib is thought to number only around 3,000 fighters. It ran a list in the 2014 parliamentary elections in Iraq (the Sadiqoun Bloc) and won one seat.

4. Saraya al-Salam (Peace Companies)

This is the latest iteration of the military wing of the Sadrist movement. Sadr disbanded the Mahdi Army, which took an active part in the insurgency against the US, in 2008, replacing it with the Liwa al Yaom al Mawood, or Promised Day Brigade. The Saraya al-Salam (Peace Companies) was created as an additional military body following the entry of ISIS into Iraq in June 2014. It has taken an active part in the fighting against ISIS. Estimates of its membership vary widely, with some accounts suggesting it may have as many as 50,000 fighters.

The Shia Islamic groups in Iraq and Syria emerged much stronger after the 2003 toppling of Saddam Hussein. They are aligned with Persia and are focused on the post-ISIS period as well as on the present, and are laying the foundations for a reshaped national power balance in which they and their parties would gain greater influence. A number of factors are likely to affect the developing situation and could have significant implications for Iraq's future and for U.S. and Israel's interests.



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