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**WHAT WILL BECOME OF IRAQ IF THE US WITHDRAWS ITS
MILITARY FORCES BEFORE THE COUNTRY BECOMES STABILIZED?**

ANALYTIC METHODS

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WHAT WILL BECOME OF IRAQ IF THE US WITHDRAWS ITS MILITARY FORCES BEFORE THE COUNTRY BECOMES STABILIZED?

Overview

It has now been over 4 years since President Bush made his dramatic landing on the USS Abraham Lincoln in a Navy S-3B Viking and declared “Mission Accomplished.” While history teaches us that there are no quick victories, many Democratic politicians have been beating the drum of “get out of Iraq” ever since the 2004 elections. In the spring of 2007, congress vigorously attempted to pass legislation that would require US troops to begin their departure as early as October this year. Bush vetoed that promptly and tensions with the anti-war left have been rising sharply. Regardless of the immediate outcome of these legislative attempts, the next presidential elections are just sixteen months away and at some point, there may well be an exodus of US forces regardless of whether or not Iraq has become stabilized. As each day passes, it seems more and more likely that Iraq will soon be faced with the task of reconstruction without the presence of westerners. Due to these unrelenting forces within our government to escape prematurely, it is crucial that we analyze the possible consequences of this choice and come to an intelligent understanding of the potential outcome rather than just jump into an emotionally charged and politically motivated course of action. This paper will use the Lockwood Analytical Method of Prediction to analyze how Iraq’s internal factions as well as the external actors of Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey will affect the outcome of this nation.

1. Determine the Predictive Issue

What will become of Iraq if the US withdraws its military forces before the country becomes stabilized?

It goes without saying that if the US withdraws, all coalition nations will withdraw their forces as well. This analysis includes the assumed simultaneous withdraw of all coalition forces along with that of the US. I have not included any further involvement by the US in the Persian Gulf area although it is likely that a large naval presence will remain due to the ongoing situation with Iran's nuclear weapons pursuit. Additionally, the US would likely remain diplomatically involved but again, I have chosen to eliminate that likelihood for this analysis.

2. Specify the actors bearing on the Problem

The actors bearing on this complex quagmire include a mix of internal as well as external entities. Internally, we have the antagonistic triad composed of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. Externally, we have nearby Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey; all of which find the outcome personally relevant. For the purposes of this analysis, and to keep the number of variables to a manageable size, I am considering only the external actors in determining the outcome. Therefore, in total we have three actors. The omission of consideration of the internal factions represents an obvious artificiality but it is far more important in strategic terms, to understand how the surrounding nations will react to the outcome of Iraq. For reasons which will become clear in later sections, it is impossible to analyze the internal as well as external actors simultaneously using the LAMP method. In order to properly analyze this situation using this method, a separate analysis needs to be done with a focus on the internal factions. Due to this limitation, and in an effort to compensate, I have included a comprehensive discussion on the internal factions in order to reduce the possibility of error in the analysis.

3. Conduct in-depth study of perceptions and intentions of each actor

This analysis will examine the perceptions of Iraq's internal factions, along with Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey as they pertain to the future outcome of Iraq. One may ask why Syria was not included in this list as it is a neighboring country. Although Syria may well have an effect on the outcome, it is relatively far less influential than the three I have chosen.

IRAQ

Iraq has a population of 27.5 million and is made up of 75%-80% Arab 15%-20% Kurdish and 5% Turkoman, Assyrian or other.¹ Within that, there are three major religious divisions – Shi'a (65%), Sunni (32%) and Christian (3%).² While the Kurds are Sunni Muslims, they represent a third separate entity due to the historical lack of amicable relations with the sum of the country over territorial disputes. Present day Iraq sits in the land known in Biblical writings as the “land of the Chaldeans” and is home of one of the oldest and most important civilizations in human history – the Babylonian Empire. Formerly part of the more recent Ottoman Empire, Iraq officially began in 1920 under British mandate by the League of Nations and in 1932 attained its independence.³ Former President Saddam Hussein took power in 1979, was ousted by US forces in the 2003 invasion, was convicted on November 2006 of crimes against humanity and

¹ CIA World Fact Book: Iraq. <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html> : Accessed 14 March 2007.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

executed on 30 December the same year.⁴ Currently, Iraq is led by President Jalal Talabani, a Kurdish member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and Prime Minister Jawad al-Maliki, a Shi'a Muslim. A new constitution was voted on in October 2005 with approval of most Kurds and Shiites but with strong opposition from Sunnis.⁵

The Kurdish people currently represent the largest ethnic group without their own homeland, numbering some 23 million with approximately 5 million within Iraq. The remainder live in eastern Turkey (50%), northwestern Iran and smaller sections in Syria and Armenia.⁶ Those who follow Middle Eastern events seem to have either accepted some assumptions about the identity of these people or they have never taken the time to investigate the reality of their historical roots. You may hear, for instance, that the Kurds have been under various forms of displacement and persecution dating back at least to the 7th century AD and still struggle to this day to build their own independent nation. Recent historical examples of this cited over the last hundred years are the struggle to free themselves from Ottoman rule in 1915-18, refusal of Ataturk in 1923 to grant them a sovereign nation, and beginning in 1958 with the refusal of the Iraqi Ba'athist government to do the same.⁷ But while the present-day acknowledgement of the Kurdish people is commonly accepted, a brief study of the historical origins begs consideration. There appears to be no definite ethnic beginning but rather these people have materialized into existence over possibly the last 1800 years. The first mention of the term Kurds (Kurdan) appears around 226 AD in Persian writing in a list of the opponents

⁴ "Hussein executed with 'fear in his face'". CNN. <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/12/29/hussein/index.html> : Accessed 14 June 2007.

⁵ "Iraq's Election Aftermath Reveals a Failed State," Power and Interest News Report. http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=420&language_id=1 Accessed 21 June 2007.

⁶ The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. <http://www.bartleby.com/65/ku/Kurds.html> : Accessed 26 April 2007

⁷ Ibid.

of the Persian Sasanid Dynasty.⁸ But it is not until the Arabic conquest in the seventh century, that this term is used regularly in Arabic writings. It appears that territory, rather than identity, is really the central concern for the Kurds. The first official mention of “Kurdistan” came from the Ottoman Empire in their declaring of a certain province or region by that name.⁹ Nationalistic movement is completely lacking in historical accounts for most of the existence of the Kurds and, dating as far back as the seventeenth century, there is no evidence of such.¹⁰ In fact, it has only been since the end of World War I that a nationalistic movement begun to build.¹¹ Regardless of whether or not the Kurds have substantial evidence of their historical roots, the last one hundred years have cast them into the lot of being oppressed and unable to gain a satisfactory state of independent rule. To make matters worse, throughout this recent period, they have been under frequent attack by conventional arms from Iraq, Iran and Turkey as well as chemical weapons from Sadaam.

Since 1974, a group of people known as the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) formed with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdish state in southeast Turkey, northern Iraq, and parts of Iran and Syria.¹² They began a campaign of armed violence in 1978 which has resulted in some 30,000 casualties to date.¹³ The group has undergone several name changes including Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan (KADEK), Halu Mesru Savunma Kuvveti (HSK) and Kurdistan People's Congress

⁸ Özoğlu, Hakan. (2004). *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State : Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*. Albany State University of New York Press, 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹² “Workers' Party (PKK),” Federation of American Scientists. Kurdistan <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/pkk.htm> : Accessed 12 May 2007.

¹³ *Ibid.*

(KHK).¹⁴ In late 2003, the group took its current name, Kongra-Gel (KGK), and promoted peace but caveating with violence for self-defense. Since February 2004, the militant wing of the KGK, known as the People's Defense Force (HPG), took over control and renounced any notions of a cease-fire and resumed acts of terror.¹⁵ It should be noted that while Kurds are Sunni Muslims, they have never had any desire to be a part of Iraq. The issue for them is one of nationality, not religion.

Since the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, there have been numerous terrorist attacks against Kurdish targets in northern Iraq but it is very difficult to determine who is conducting the attacks and for what reason. Some news reports speculate Arab Sunnis and some say Turkey is behind the attacks in an effort to destabilize the area and reduce the possibility of a formalized permanent Kurdish region in Iraq but there is not enough consistent reporting to warrant citing them here or in making an informed conclusion about the matter.

The next set of internal actors begs some discussion. The two major Islamic sects at odds with each other inside Iraq are the Sunni's and Shi'a Muslims. Their history is characteristic of all of Islam – and that is anything but straightforward. Perhaps the best summary can be given from Jonathan P. Berkley's comprehensive work, *Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*:

The term "Islam," like any other historical abstraction of comparable scope, indicates a phenomenon of great complexity and constantly evolving dimensions. This should go without saying; unfortunately, given how easily and naturally we fall back on the simple term to describe the complex organism, it

¹⁴ "Federal Register: January 13, 2004 (Volume 69, Number 8)," Federation of American Scientists. <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2004/01/fr011304.html> : Accessed 12 May 2007

¹⁵ "Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," Federation of American Scientists. <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/pkk.htm> : Accessed 12 May 2007.

bears repeating. Islam was not fully formed at the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632, nor a few years later when it burst out of its Arabian homeland, nor even many decades later when it was clear that the rule of those who called themselves “Muslims” was permanent. The story of the emergence during the seventh and eighth centuries of particularly Islamic identities and patterns of religious authority can be read as a continuation of that of the focusing of religious identities which characterized the late antique Near East. The questions posed by the unexpected appearance on the scene of enthusiastic monotheists from the Arabian desert forced adherents of the older faiths to articulate more precisely those contours which defined them against their rivals. But it is also true that Islam itself only took shape through a process of dialogue with the other faith traditions. Indeed, it is misleading to speak of the “appearance” or “rise” of Islam, if those words convey a sense of unproblematic apparition as sudden as that of the Arab warriors before the bewildered Byzantine or Sasanian armies. It would be safer to say that Islam “emerged,” gradually and uncertainly, over the decades — an “ill-defined period of gestation” — which followed the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632.¹⁶

At some point not long after the poisoning death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 AD by one of his Jewish slaves, a dispute arose concerning who was the next in line following Muhammad.¹⁷ Several sects developed and out of those, two main factions emerged into what are now Sunni and Shi’a. The Sunni’s make up the majority of Muslim followers throughout the world with the primary exception being Iran where there is a pronounced Shi’a majority. There is an important distinction to be made between Sunni’s and Shiites. The central dividing point is where the Shiites insisted that the successor of Muhammad was a blood relative, the Sunni’s accepted the consensus of the community in determining who was next in line as the caliph and had at least the political authority of the prophet handed down. Therefore in Sunni terms, community consensus is used in determining their religious lines of authority.¹⁸ This distinction will

¹⁶ Berkey, Jonathan P. (2002). *Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800*. West Nyack, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press. 57.

¹⁷ “Biography of Muhammad,” *Islam Review*. <http://www.islamreview.com/articles/bioofmuhammad.shtml>
: Accessed 7 May 2007

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 142-143.

become important in the discussion of Iran. Shi'a Muslims make up only about 10-15% of all Muslims in the world and believe that the successor to Muhammad must be a blood relative of his. There are several subdivisions within Shi'ism which are based on how many true successors there actually were historically. Some believe only seven, some twelve, and some yet fourteen.¹⁹ Regardless of how many successors there were, the one thing that each faction of Shi'ism has in common is that they all believe the last one will come back and usher in "God's" final will upon the earth. The most prominent sect is the "Twelver" as they are the most numerous and influential of the Shi'a within Iraq and Iran.²⁰ Due to significant differences between Shi'a and Sunni beliefs, they have a history of antagonistic acts including the killing of each others' leaders dating back as far as the earliest years of Islam. One major dispute between Shi'a and Sunni is over who followed Ali ibn Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammad, upon his death in 661 AD.²¹ Shi'as believe Ali was the first Caliph, while Sunnis believe he was the fourth. Incidentally, the term "Shi'a" is a shortened term in Arabic which comes from "Shia-t-Ali," or "the Party of Ali."²² These ancient historical facts are not trivial in our study of the current situation in Iraq. A thorough understanding of the roots and factions of Islam is an absolute requirement for understanding not just Iraq but all of present day Middle East.

The formation of Islam was anything but peaceful and so it is the same today. Since the beginning, this religion has been characterized by strife and infighting and

¹⁹ "Shi'a Islam," Global Security.org. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-shiia.htm> : Accessed 12 May 2007.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Ali," Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali#Shi.27a_biography : Accessed 12 May 2007.

²² "What's the Difference Between Shia and Sunni Muslims?" About Islam. http://islam.about.com/cs/divisions/f/shia_sunni.htm : Accessed 12 May 2007

struggle for earthly power. In order to understand the Middle East, one must absolutely have a comprehensive understanding of this religion. I have attempted to provide as many of the necessary details as possible for the purposes of improving the usefulness of this analysis. It should be noted that despite my efforts, this is still anything but a comprehensive lesson on Islam.

At the current time, Sunni's and Shi'a are engaged in a campaign of sectarian violence against each other which was catalyzed by the bombing of the Shi'a Al-Askari mosque in February 2006. There is no accurate body count available for deaths attributable to sectarian violence but it appears that the Sunni's are by far responsible for most of the attacks.²³ Within the last year, many have begun to characterize the violence as civil war. Recent issues fueling the violence include the oil law proceedings in the Iraqi parliament. In a May 2007 analysis by *Power and Interest News Report* the situation as of today stands:

The Iraqi constitution passed in 2005 was deliberately vague on ownership and control of Iraq's oil. The document was written in such a way as to win the approval of the Kurdish and Shi'a negotiators (Sunni Arab representation at the negotiations was minimal because the Sunni leadership was still largely boycotting the political process at the time). In order to do so, the text was vague on issues of governance and specific on issues of power politics.

Article 111 of the constitution states that "oil and gas are the ownership of all the people of Iraq," while Article 112 calls for distribution of oil revenues to be allocated "in a fair manner in proportion to the population," with little clarity on either issue. Because the constitution was so vague, and because Sunni Arab leaders remain unsatisfied with large portions of the constitution, a new oil law is needed to clarify issues of control and revenue distribution.²⁴

²³ O'Hanlon, Michael. (2007) "Iraq Index Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq," The Brookings Institute. <http://www.brookings.edu/iraqindex> Accessed 26 May 2007. 9-11.

²⁴ "Sectarian Fighting Overshadows Oil Law Debate in Iraq," Power and Interest News Report. http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=653&language_id=1 . Accessed : 26 May 2007.

Oil is the largest source of income for Iraq bringing in 95% of all government revenue.²⁵ The Sunnis are fearful of the Shi'a majority control in government because their part of the country is lacking in oil and this could lead to their ultimate irrelevance in parliament.²⁶ Shi'as want strong central government control of oil if for no other reason than to prevent strengthening of the Kurdish region.²⁷ The Kurds fear the central government will gain too much control over what they claim is their constitutional right to development of their oil fields in the north while Sunni and Shi'a leaders are united in that they do not favor increased Kurdish autonomy.²⁸ In summary:

However, the long-term damage done by the failure to reach a consensus on the oil law will be a hardening of the sectarian fractures in Iraq's political landscape. The debates surrounding the oil law do not center on what is best for the country as a whole, but only on what is best for each sectarian group. By defining the debate as yet another zero sum competition, Iraq's politicians have made it impossible to emerge from the negotiations without at least one group feeling like the losers. The U.S. Embassy in Iraq has only encouraged this situation by insisting on a greater role for foreign firms in future investments.²⁹

To summarize this section on Iraq, the three main factions (Kurds, Sunnis and Shiites) each have very different agendas and resolving these appears at this point to be nearly impossible. In addition, other forces exist within that are providing stiff resistance to any forward progress in the newly formed Iraqi government. Former Ba'athists and Al Qaeda members are adding their share to the consternation. Aside from a miraculous turn of events, it appears Iraq is headed for a failed state.

IRAN

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a state slightly larger than Alaska with a population of 65 million and home of the ancient Persian Empire.³⁰ It is 98% Muslim with 89% Shi'a and 9% Sunni; the remaining 2% include Jewish and Christian among others.³¹ The population is made up of 51% Persian, 24% Azeri, 7% Kurd, 3% Arab and the rest is a mix of some others.³² Farsi is the primary language but large communities speak Azeri and Kurdish.³³ Iran is the 5th largest global producer of oil after Saudi Arabia, Russia, Norway and the UAE.³⁴ Present day Iran was known as Persia until 1935 and then took its present name under the rule of Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1979 following the ousting of Mohamad-Reza Shah.³⁵ Currently, Iran is led by the chief of state Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-Khamenei (4 June 1989) and head of government President Mahmud Ahmadinejad (3 August 2005).³⁶ Most notable recent conflicts include the Iran-Iraq war which was begun on 22 September 1980 when Iraq launched an air and ground attack against Iran beginning a long and costly war which ended in 1988 with Iran unwillingly accepting UN Resolution 598 ending the war.³⁷

Iran has been a Twelver Shiism government since it was established by Shah Ismai'il in 1501.³⁸ In its modern day constitution is written the duty to spread the

³⁰ CIA World Factbook: Iran. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> : Accessed: 30 May 2007.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Wright, Robin. (2000). *The Last Great Revolution: Turmoil and Transformation in Iran*. New York. Alfred A. Knopf Incorporated. 25.

³⁴ CIA World Factbook: Iran. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2176rank.html> : Accessed: 30 May 2007.

³⁵ Daniel, Elton. (2000). *History of Iran*. Westport, Connecticut. Greenwood Publishing. 15.

³⁶ CIA World Factbook: Iran. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html> : Accessed: 30 May 2007

³⁷ Daniel, Elton. (2000). *History of Iran*. Westport, Connecticut. Greenwood Publishing. 202-217.

³⁸ Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. (2006). *Islam and Democracy in Iran: Eshkevari and the Quest for Reform*. New York. I. B. Tauris & Company. 10.

Islamic Revolution throughout the world.³⁹ Ayatollah Khomeini believed that his return to Iran was divinely inspired. He prophesied that there would be an intense struggle which would bring about the conditions necessary for the return of the twelfth Imam including apocalyptic wars which would result in Islam spreading across the world.⁴⁰ Present day President Mahmud Ahmadinejad is by far the most extreme believer of this theology ever to hold office in Iran and had made numerous statements in the media that he fully intends to bring about the conditions required for the Twelfth Imam to return. Ahmadinejad has made it his life's purpose to fulfill Khomeini's prophesy. It is important to emphasize that Iran is a Shi'a dominated country and that it regards this as the only pure Islamic system on earth. Iraq is also a Shi'a dominated society which puts it on theological equality with Iran, although Saddam Hussein was a Sunni and led the country by his Sunni minority. This factor must be considered when determining what Iran's intentions are for its role (overtly or covertly) in shaping the future of Iraq.

Recently numerous statements have been made by the Bush administration that Iran is aiding Shi'a insurgents in Iraq. A PINR analysis describes two compelling reasons why Iran would want to be heavily involved in the outcome of Iraq:

Iran's involvement in Iraq makes sense both from security and geopolitical standpoints. Iraq, which shares a long border with Iran, is in a state of relative anarchy. From a security standpoint, in order to prevent instability from spreading east into Iran, Tehran is attempting to monitor and condition developments so that they do not become dangerous to Iran's internal stability. With a civil war raging, various Iraqi insurgent groups are becoming more skilled in urban guerrilla warfare, and Iran aims to prevent any of these groups from eventually spreading violence into Iran.

Geopolitically, Iran's involvement in Iraq is necessary in order to ensure that the new government in Baghdad is friendly to Iran's interests. All states,

³⁹ Daniel, Elton. (2000). History of Iran. Westport, Connecticut. Greenwood Publishing. 203.

⁴⁰ Evans, Michael D. (2006) Showdown with Nuclear Iran. Nashville, TN. Nelson Current. 8-9.

when facing a neighbor that is experiencing political upheaval, will attempt to shape developments in that state to its interests if it has the power to do so. Iran is no different.

These two factors -- security and geopolitical interests -- explain why it would be surprising if Iran were not playing a significant role in Iraq. It is in Tehran's interests to do so, and the failure to effect a political outcome in Iraq that would be beneficial to Iran would be a foreign policy blunder, especially since developments on the ground appear to be moving in Iran's favor...⁴¹

The Iranian motives are clear but how exactly is Iran executing its plan to influence the Iraqi socio-political outcome? What means does Iran use in its attempt to influence daily matters and affect a strategic shift favorable to its own goals? The following paragraphs will detail two Iraqi resistance organizations that Iran is heavily involved with.

Two Shi'a resistance organizations most likely to be receiving aid from Iran include the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and Muqtada al-Sadr's group. Al-Sadr is a charismatic Iraqi cleric from an influential dynasty who became the most popular Shi'a leaders following the US ousting of Saddam Hussein.⁴² He is the son of the Grand Ayatollah Muhammad al-Sadr, who was assassinated in 1999 apparently by order of Saddam Hussein.⁴³ Recent news reports indicate that Muqtada al-Sadr is in hiding in Tehran following US crackdown on insurgent activities.⁴⁴ SCIRI, another resistance group, was formed in 1982 to oppose the Iraqi-led aggression against

⁴¹ "Intelligence Brief: Iran's Covert Operations in Iraq," Power and Interest News Report. http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=625&language_id=1 : Accessed 14 June 2007.

⁴² "Muqtada al-Sadr," Global Security.org. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/al-sadr.htm> : Accessed 14 June 2007.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Anti-American Cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr Reportedly Flees Iraq for Iran," Fox News. <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,251829,00.html> : Accessed 14 June 2007.

Iran during the Iran-Iraq war and afterwards aimed at ousting Saddam Hussein.⁴⁵ They are made up of Iraqi Shiite exiles and prisoners of war and funded and armed by Iran's Revolutionary Guard.⁴⁶ By the late 1990's SCIRI increased its fighters, known as the Badr Corps, to 4,000 – 8,000, and a cross-border guerilla war was conducted against Hussein's regime.⁴⁷ SCIRI has its main office in Tehran with covert cells throughout Iraq, including in Kurdish areas in northern Iraq.⁴⁸ A brief historical excerpt from Global Security.org provides important insight into the internal strife during Saddam's reign:

At the conclusion of Desert Storm, Iraqi Kurds in the north and the Iraqi Shi'a in the south launched an armed revolt against the regime of Saddam Hussein. Iraqi government troops tried to crush the movement, reportedly razing mosques and other Shi'ite shrines and executing thousands. Amid allegations that the Iraqi army used chemical and biological weapons in their efforts, the Shi'a revolt was suppressed while the Kurdish revolt ended in the granting of political autonomy to the Kurds. But the resistance continued, and tens of thousands of rebels and Shi'ite civilians fled into the southern marshlands between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. There are now roughly 300,000 or more such refugees in the southern marshes or over the borders in Iran and Saudi Arabia.⁴⁹

One final item is the recent shelling of Kurds in northern Iraq. Several times, Iran has attacked PKK positions and according to some reports, has even crossed Iraq to do so. It is suspected that the PKK has ties to Kurdish guerilla groups inside Iran.

Thus, it is not hard to see the degree of Iranian involvement in the current affairs in Iraq. Iran has a very strong interest in influencing the outcome of politics in Iraq; a return to Sunni rule would not be in its favor. The unsettled score against Iraq's Sunni population (Iran-Iraq war), combined with President Ahmadinejad's zeal to fulfill

⁴⁵ "Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)," Global Security.org. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/sciri.htm> : Accessed 14 June 14, 2007.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Khomeini's global prophecy make it clear that Iran will do whatever it takes to affect the outcome of Iraq.

Finally, let us not forget that Ahmadinejad has stated repeatedly that he intends to wipe Israel off the map *and* destroy the United States. Many people are aware of the first part of this pledge but oddly never hear of the second half. It must be emphasized that Ahmadinejad intends to bring the *entire world* under the rule of the Twelfth Imam in a Shi'a-Islamic style apocalypse. A phrase was coined following the attacks on 9/11 in which it was stated that the reason the US failed to take the threat of airline-bombers seriously was because the decision makers in Washington DC confused "the unfamiliar with the improbable". The same applies again with Iran. Let's take the example of religious beliefs in America. In the US, there are a higher percentage of professing Christians than in any other country, yet if you ask one of them at random what they believe about Biblical eschatology (end times prophecy), many of them will likely tell you either that it is really just a colorful allegory or that they don't even know what it is about. Put plainly, it is not important to them. This is relevant to our analysis in that it reveals the perspective of Americans in how they view their own beliefs and likewise, how they assume everyone else on the planet views their individual beliefs. The problem here is one of mirror imaging. The average American (include most decision makers here) can't understand how anyone in another country can take their beliefs seriously. And the obvious result is to underestimate the threat posed by Iran in its seemingly outrageous statements. Regarding Iraq, Iran sees this as one stepping stone in achieving their global aspirations of spreading Shi'a Islam and bringing about their version of the end times. Iran will not sit idly by watching Iraq with detachment or disinterest.

SAUDI ARABIA

The most important thing to remember about Saudi Arabia that it is the birthplace of Islam and it possesses two of Islam's holiest shrines in the cities of Mecca and Medina. It has a population of 27.6 million, all of which are required to be Muslims.⁵⁰ 90% of its population is Arab with the remaining 10% Afro-Asian.⁵¹ The present day Saudi Arabia was unified as a country in 1932 although the beginning of the Saudi dynasty dates back to 1744.⁵² Saudi Arabia has an oil-based economy and is the leading exporter of oil with 25% of the world's proven reserves.⁵³ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is ruled by King and Prime Minister Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, who took power in August 2005.⁵⁴

It should be most fitting and even predictable that the home of Islam should have its own “pure” version of the religion. Leave it to Islam to invent a “new” version of ultra-orthodox legalism and religiosity. And that it did – a super-conservative form of Sunni Islam came about in the mid-eighteenth century founded by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the son of a chief jurist in al-Uyayna.⁵⁵ This form became known as Wahhabism. The primary reason for its birth was Wahhab's intense quest to both

⁵⁰ “Status of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia,” Wikipedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Status_of_religious_freedom_in_Saudi_Arabia : Accessed 16 June 2007.

⁵¹ CIA World Factbook: Saudi Arabia. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sa.html> : Accessed 16 June 16, 2007.

⁵² “Status of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia,” Wikipedia.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Status_of_religious_freedom_in_Saudi_Arabia : Accessed 16 June 2007.

⁵³ CIA World Factbook: Saudi Arabia. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sa.html> : Accessed 16 June 16, 2007.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Commins, David. (2006). Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia. London, UK. I. B. Tauris & Company, Limited. 11.

extricate and further avert all forms of idolatry.⁵⁶ Wahhab found the Shiite customs at the time most offensive in that they often engage in “polytheism”. Polytheism, by Wahhab’s definition, includes things such as venerating dead holy men, decorating burial sites and praying to the dead.⁵⁷ To the Wahhabis, a particularly offensive example of this is the Shiite celebration of Ashura, which means “10th”.⁵⁸ It is a mourning observance of the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson, Hussein, who was martyred in the Iraqi city of Karbala in 680 AD during a battle with the Caliph.⁵⁹ This observance is on the 10th day of the month of Muharram (first month of the Islamic year).⁶⁰ A more common term for Wahhabism is “Salafism”; both equate to the same thing but the term “Wahhabi” can be seen as a derogatory name among people who practice this form.

The Saudi government is ruled by the Al-Saud dynasty which formed in 1744 when the ruler of Riyadh joined with Wahhab to produce a political entity.⁶¹ This Wahhab-based government exists to this day and is responsible for causing increasingly threatening internal strife resulting from its own campaign of religious persecution. While much of the country is Wahhabi, there are several towns and cities that have large Shiite populations. An offshoot of Twelver Shiites composes nearly half, or approximately 100,000, of the population of the southwestern Saudi city of Najran where intense persecution by the Al-Saud government has taken place.⁶² Additionally, numerous Eastern Province towns and cities have 100% Shiite populations which have

⁵⁶ Ibid 12-16.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “The Day of 'Ashura,” About.com: Islam. <http://islam.about.com/od/otherdays/a/ashura.htm> : Accessed 18 June 2007.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Saudi Arabia,” Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia : Accessed 18 June 2007.

⁶² Bradley, John R. (2005). Saudi Arabia Exposed : Inside a Kingdom in Crisis. Gordonsville, VA, USA. Palgrave Macmillan. 73-76.

similarly experienced persecutions.⁶³ In all these areas, mutual outright hostility between the two Islamic sects exists. It is due to the Al-Saud government's malicious persecution of Shiites that the US State Department voiced its concern in September 2004 over the total lack of religious freedom in the country.⁶⁴

What makes this Shiite persecution relevant to our discussion are the events that took place during 1979 when Ayatollah Khomeini called for a global Islamic revolution.⁶⁵ In response to this event, Saudi Shiites took to the streets and were promptly attacked by Al-Saud National Guard troops.⁶⁶ Fearing an uprising of Shiites, concessions were made and expanded during the remainder of Khomeini's rule until his death in 1989, when the Iranian Islamic Revolution died down.⁶⁷ Saudi Arabia attempted some brief alliances with Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, but this produced an awkward, if not comically mixed-up, result as illustrated in the following excerpt:

During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, Saudi Arabia had been allied with Saddam Hussein. It did so in the hope that— when seen along with its own limited domestic reform initiative— a weakened Iran would dampen unrest among its own Shiite population. During Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the invading Iraqi army reached as far as Khafji, the Saudi town on the Kuwait border. Saddam had made clear his intention of entering Saudi Arabia if it continued its support for Kuwait.⁶⁸

Al-Saud's persecutions of the Shiites had sown the seeds of reprisal to be reaped in another season; and that awareness was beginning to surface:

After the fall of Baghdad, the powerful images of more than a million Shiites in the streets of Iraq for the Ashura commemoration, banned under

⁶³ Ibid. 78.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 79.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 81.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 82.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Saddam, was not lost on Saudi Arabia's Shiites. Nor was it lost on the Saudi authorities. Saudi Shiites traditionally have strong links across the border. A leading Saudi Shiite cleric said that Shiites in Saudi Arabia were hopeful that the defeat of Saddam would help their cause in the kingdom. At the same time, the fear that Shiites could align themselves with outside forces led the Al-Saud regime once again to speed up an ongoing process of granting them greater religious freedoms and human rights. In a sense, the pattern of superficial appeasement after the 1991 Gulf war is now being repeated. The kingdom's senior religious leader, Sheik Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah Al-Asheik, suddenly declared that charging other Muslims with disbelief—essentially, the official attitude toward Shiites until then—was wrong. "Charging other Muslims with whom one may differ as disbelievers results in murdering innocent people, destroying facilities, disorder and instability," he added for good measure.⁶⁹

But this awareness would be too little too late as deep hatred of the Shiites had developed for well over a century. In 2003, during an Ashura celebration, and under police protection, three Shiite mosques in the Eastern Province were burned by Wahhabi extremists.⁷⁰ At this stage, Shiites have had enough of persecutions and Wahhabis have learned nothing but hatred. John Bradley paints a clear picture of the average Saudi male in his book *Saudi Arabia Exposed: Inside a Kingdom in Crisis*. He illustrates the seemingly pointless and contradictory life of the average citizen. With no real purpose and no consistently modeled system of values, the average Saudi male is like a caged animal looking to find (or create) meaning in their life. Despite huge oil profits, Saudi Arabia is filled with economic and social problems:

The social and economic problems he inherits from decades of mismanagement under King Fahd are monumental. The unemployment rate is officially 25 percent, but probably much higher. Some 75 percent of the population is under the age of 30, while all the kingdom's leaders are over the age of 75. Saudi researchers now estimate that more than 50 percent of the work force is without a high school diploma. College graduates make up less than 20 percent of the total population.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid. 83.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 85.

⁷¹ Ibid. 236.

Many Saudis watching the Iraq situation unfold have turned their restless energy to foreign terrorism:

Riyadh failed to stop more than 2,500 Saudi citizens from traveling to Iraq to organize or carry out acts of terrorism that undermine the nascent Shiite-dominated government. One study suggested that more than 60 percent of all suicide bombings in Iraq are undertaken by Saudis.⁷²

He goes on to say that by allowing these people to leave and engage in terrorist acts on foreign soil, they will be coming back as heroes with skills to apply on the homeland against the House of Saud. Indeed this has already taken place with numerous attacks within Saudi Arabia and the killing of hundreds. It is speculated that much of these attacks, both in Iraq as well as in Saudi Arabia, have been carried out by Saudi-originated Al Qaeda followers. By refusing to stop the outflow of Al Qaeda members to Iraq, Saudi Arabia is only prolonging the inevitable fight with them in their own backyard.

The dissatisfaction among Saudi's population stems from several factors including King Fahd's mismanagement during his reign from 1982 to 2005, the Saudi alliance with the "infidel" US during the Persian Gulf War and the increasingly contradictory examples set by governing officials who on the one hand, pay lip service to strict Wahhabism and on the other hand, indulge in western luxuries. Therefore, a combination of factors creates an environment where Saudi Arabia absolutely must pay attention to what happens in Iraq. Extremist Wahhabi followers joining the ranks of Al Qaeda and persecuted Shiites both give more than a share of threats to the Al-Saud

⁷² Ibid. 221.

government. Saudi Arabia is caught in a ticking time bomb and the situation in Iraq is not one they can ignore.

TURKEY

Turkey is the final actor to be considered for this analysis. It was founded by the strongly secular Ottoman General Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during World War I.⁷³ Prior to this, it was the site of another major civilization, the Byzantine Empire which lasted from the fourth century until the start of the Ottoman Empire in 1453.⁷⁴ Present-day Turkey has a population of 71 million of which 80% are Turkish and 20% are Kurds; 99% are Muslims and of that, most are Sunni.⁷⁵ Turkey is the odd-ball in the Middle East in that while it claims Islam as its religion, it remains mostly a secular state since its foundation in 1923. Recent events have illustrated the importance of secularism in society when the leading Justice and Development party (AKP) put forward Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul as the next presidential candidate in the 2007 elections.⁷⁶ One million citizens took to the streets to protest this move as many suspect Gul as having an Islamist agenda. The outcome of this incident has led parliament to suggest a constitutional change to allow presidential elections to be based on the vote of the citizens rather than the Ministers of Parliament. Incidentally, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is of the same AKP party and has on

⁷³ Howard, Douglas A. (2001). History of Turkey. Westport, CT, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group, Incorporated.

⁷⁴ "Byzantine Empire," Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire : Accessed 20 June 2007.

⁷⁵ CIA World Factbook: Turkey. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html> : Accessed 19 June 2007.

⁷⁶ "Country Profile: Turkey," BBC News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1022222.stm : Accessed 19 June 2007.

record a criminal charge for reading an Islamist poem at a political rally.⁷⁷ In the past 50 years, Turkey's army, well known for its adherence to secularism, has removed four governments by coup.

Since 1999, Turkey has been avidly seeking membership into the European Union but has received the put-off numerous times. Multiple issues have hampered this acceptance including human rights abuses, women's rights, treatment of the Kurds and the long standing territorial dispute with Greece of the island Cyprus. It should also be noted that Europe does not want an Islamic state in its membership. The April 2007 horrific murder of three evangelical Christians in a Malatya Bible bookstore by five Muslim Turks has most likely added another block of ice to the negotiations, giving the EU another reason to hesitate in its negotiations.

Turkey becomes prominent when discussing the future of Iraq in relation to the Kurds. Referring back to pages 3-5 above, the Kurdish dilemma has no easy answers. Again, 20% of the 71 million population are Kurds living the southeastern provinces bordering Iraq. Recently reports have indicated that Turkey has stepped up military attacks against Kurdish positions in northern Iraq. Another PINR analysis gives an accurate summary of the events from the last two decades to the present. It is clear that Turkey has a compelling agenda its dealings with the Kurds:

Since the start of the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq in 2003, one of the primary goals of the United States has been to prevent Turkey from intervening militarily in northern Iraq. For the United States, maintaining the support of northern Iraq's Kurdish population has been critical throughout its intervention since it has faced instability in the central Sunni and southern Shi'a regions. While Turkey shares the U.S. objective of creating a united, stable Iraq, Ankara differs

⁷⁷ Ibid.

from Washington over the level of autonomy that should be granted to the Kurdistan Regional Government (K.R.G.) in northern Iraq.

Turkey's main interest has been to prevent the P.K.K. and other separatist Kurdish groups from using northern Iraq as a rear-base for attacks in Turkey and, in a worst case scenario, from attempting to cede off parts of southeastern Turkey into a greater state of Kurdistan.

Therefore, while the United States considers supporting the Kurds a key interest in maintaining Iraq's stability, Turkey sees supporting the Kurds as providing assistance to a potential enemy who will only use its bolstered power to weaken Turkey's control of its territory in the southeast.⁷⁸

The Kurds will not cease their attempts to gain an independent homeland. There are plenty of Kurdish fighters and terrorists who are more than willing to cause Turkey a major irritation in the meantime. Since the first Gulf War, the US presence has mostly restrained Turkish military activities against the Kurds. Should this restraining force be removed, it is likely both sides will step up their attacks.

4. Specify courses of action for each actor

Hostile Military (HM) – Direct military intervention against any of the three internal factions in Iraq in order to suppress that faction and support another. This may also include a campaign of covert terrorist acts as a part of military operations (this applies mostly to Saudi Arabia).

Neutral Stance (NS) – Neither hostile nor friendly, either to stand back as the internal factions fight a civil war (scenario 2 below), or remain uninvolved with the affairs of the newly formed government (scenario 1 below).

Covert Terrorism (CT) – Covertly supplying personnel, financial aid, or arms (or any combination thereof) to insurgent groups for the purpose of either influencing the outcome of who ends up in charge of the Iraqi government (scenario 1 below), or to force a division of Iraq, and/or repress another faction (scenario 2 below). *

Diplomatic (FD) – Diplomatic support given to the Iraqi government (this applies only to scenario 1 below).

⁷⁸ “Intelligence Brief: The Risk of Turkish Intervention in Northern Iraq,” Power and Interest News Report. http://www.pinr.com/report.php?ac=view_report&report_id=651&language_id=1 Accessed: 19 June 2007.

* Note that it is well known that Iran is a sponsor of terrorism and many terrorists originate from Saudi Arabia, but Turkey is a different camp altogether. Turkey does have extremist Muslims who would likely commit acts of terror but on a significantly smaller scale than that of Saudi Arabia or Iran. When I included this option, I did so with the understanding that, although possible, Turkey is much less likely to be active in this course of action. As a result, any COA that depicts Turkey with a “CT” will probably be given a very low grade. This is a potential artificiality that must be accepted in using LAMP. Additionally, CT, as it relates to Saudi Arabia does not mean the Al-Saud government is itself involved in these acts but rather it is the sheer number of extremists inside of Saudi Arabia who are filling this role independently of the government. CT in this case means the Saudi’s do not make a deliberate attempt to reign in home-grown Al Qaeda terrorists from crossing into Iraq.

5. Determine the Major Scenarios

Scenario 1: Form a successful unity government where the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds all feel they are adequately represented and are able to resolve each of their concerns fairly (continuing in the direction begun by the United States).

Scenario 2: Failure of the attempted unity government followed by total civil war and division of the country into three separate religious/ethnic regions.

6. Calculate the number of alternative futures

$x^y=z$, where X is the number of courses of action for each player and Y is the number of players

Scenario 1: $4^3=64$

Scenario 2: $3^3=27$

There are two major scenarios with a total of 91 possible alternate futures that will be compared in this analysis.

7. Do a pair-wise comparison of alternate futures

SCENARIO 1: Unified Government

Future #	Iran	Saudi Arabia	Turkey	Future #	Iran	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
1	HM	HM	HM	33	CT	HM	HM
2	HM	HM	NS	34	CT	HM	NS
3	HM	HM	CT	35	CT	HM	CT
4	HM	HM	FD	36	CT	HM	FD
5	HM	NS	HM	37	CT	NS	HM
6	HM	NS	NS	38	CT	NS	NS
7	HM	NS	CT	39	CT	NS	CT
8	HM	NS	NS	40	CT	NS	NS
9	HM	CT	HM	41	CT	CT	HM
10	HM	CT	NS	42	CT	CT	NS
11	HM	CT	CT	43	CT	CT	CT
12	HM	CT	FD	44	CT	CT	FD
13	HM	FD	HM	45	CT	FD	HM
14	HM	FD	NS	46	CT	FD	NS
15	HM	FD	CT	47	CT	FD	CT
16	HM	FD	FD	48	CT	FD	FD
17	NS	HM	HM	49	FD	HM	HM
18	NS	HM	NS	50	FD	HM	NS
19	NS	HM	CT	51	FD	HM	CT
20	NS	HM	FD	52	FD	HM	FD
21	NS	NS	HM	53	FD	NS	HM
22	NS	NS	NS	54	FD	NS	NS
23	NS	NS	CT	55	FD	NS	CT
24	NS	NS	NS	56	FD	NS	NS
25	NS	CT	HM	57	FD	CT	HM
26	NS	CT	NS	58	FD	CT	NS
27	NS	CT	CT	59	FD	CT	CT
28	NS	CT	FD	60	FD	CT	FD
29	NS	FD	HM	61	FD	FD	HM
30	NS	FD	NS	62	FD	FD	NS
31	NS	FD	CT	63	FD	FD	CT
32	NS	FD	FD	64	FD	FD	FD

SCENARIO 2: Division of Iraq

Future #	Iran	Saudi Arabia	Turkey
1	HM	HM	HM
2	HM	HM	NS
3	HM	HM	CT
4	HM	NS	HM
5	HM	NS	NS
6	HM	NS	CT
7	HM	CT	HM
8	HM	CT	NS
9	HM	CT	CT
10	NS	HM	HM
11	NS	HM	NS
12	NS	HM	CT
13	NS	NS	HM
14	NS	NS	NS
15	NS	NS	CT
16	NS	CT	HM
17	NS	CT	NS
18	NS	CT	CT
19	CT	HM	HM
20	CT	HM	NS
21	CT	HM	CT
22	CT	NS	HM
23	CT	NS	NS
24	CT	NS	CT
25	CT	CT	HM
26	CT	CT	NS
27	CT	CT	CT

8. Rank order the alternative futures*SCENARIO 1: Unified Government*

Future #	Iran	Saudi Arabia	Turkey	Grade
57	FD	CT	HM	63
25	NS	CT	HM	62
45	CT	FD	HM	61
61	FD	FD	HM	60
29	NS	FD	HM	50
53	FD	NS	HM	50
41	CT	CT	HM	40
21	NS	NS	HM	30
26	NS	CT	NS	20
59	FD	CT	CT	15
60	FD	CT	FD	15

32	NS	FD	FD	10
28	NS	CT	FD	10
30	NS	FD	NS	10
55	FD	NS	CT	10
58	FD	CT	NS	10
17	NS	HM	HM	6
18	NS	HM	NS	5
19	NS	HM	CT	5
20	NS	HM	FD	5
27	NS	CT	CT	5
31	NS	FD	CT	5
42	CT	CT	NS	5
44	CT	CT	FD	5
46	CT	FD	NS	5
47	CT	FD	CT	5
48	CT	FD	FD	5
62	FD	FD	NS	5
63	FD	FD	CT	5
23	NS	NS	CT	2
24	NS	NS	FD	2
37	CT	NS	HM	2
1	HM	HM	HM	0
2	HM	HM	NS	0
3	HM	HM	CT	0
4	HM	HM	FD	0
5	HM	NS	HM	0
6	HM	NS	NS	0
7	HM	NS	CT	0
8	HM	NS	NS	0
9	HM	CT	HM	0
10	HM	CT	NS	0
11	HM	CT	CT	0
12	HM	CT	FD	0
13	HM	FD	HM	0
14	HM	FD	NS	0
15	HM	FD	CT	0
16	HM	FD	FD	0
22	NS	NS	NS	0
33	CT	HM	HM	0
34	CT	HM	NS	0
35	CT	HM	CT	0
36	CT	HM	FD	0
38	CT	NS	NS	0
39	CT	NS	CT	0
40	CT	NS	NS	0
43	CT	CT	CT	0
49	FD	HM	HM	0
50	FD	HM	NS	0

51	FD	HM	CT	0
52	FD	HM	FD	0
54	FD	NS	NS	0
56	FD	NS	NS	0
64	FD	FD	FD	0

SCENARIO 2: Division of Iraq

Future #	Iran	Saudi Arabia	Turkey	Grade
7	HM	CT	HM	27
25	CT	CT	HM	26
1	HM	HM	HM	25
4	HM	NS	HM	15
22	CT	NS	HM	15
9	HM	CT	CT	10
13	NS	NS	HM	10
16	NS	CT	HM	10
19	CT	HM	HM	10
3	HM	HM	CT	5
17	NS	CT	NS	5
26	CT	CT	NS	5
27	CT	CT	CT	5
2	HM	HM	NS	2
6	HM	NS	CT	2
21	CT	HM	CT	2
23	CT	NS	NS	2
5	HM	NS	NS	0
8	HM	CT	NS	0
10	NS	HM	HM	0
11	NS	HM	NS	0
12	NS	HM	CT	0
14	NS	NS	NS	0
15	NS	NS	CT	0
18	NS	CT	CT	0
20	CT	HM	NS	0
24	CT	NS	CT	0

Note that some alternates received a vote of zero; this is intentional as those particular possibilities are nearly absurd and do not warrant any higher consideration.

9. Analyze consequences of alternate futures

SCENARIO 1: Unified Government

Future # 57: Iran establishes a friendly diplomatic stance towards the new Iraqi government, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi

Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Iran seeks increased diplomatic ties to the Shi'a majority government in an effort to attempt to bring it in line with its globalist agenda. Saudi Arabia does not try to restrict the movement of Al Qaeda members (off shoots of Wahhabis) to Iraq and as a result they commit terrorist acts against Shi'a mosques, civilian population centers and government officials in an effort to keep the Shi'a influence to a minimum. Turkey continues its attempt to repress all Kurdish terrorist cells near the border with military operations that cross into Iraq. Turkey is concerned that the Kurds may take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate their control and form an autonomous stronghold in northern Iraq which will give Turkish Kurds motivation to step up their attempts to create their own homeland out of southern Turkey. Turkey is opposed to losing part of its territory to the Kurds.

Future # 25: Iran maintains a neutral stance towards the new Iraqi government even if for a brief period, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Iran does not support any terrorist activity inside Iraq by providing either personnel, arms or financial aid. This could be a temporary condition while Iran watches to see the types of decisions that are made in the new government. Iran may remain on the sidelines until such time as they decide it is time to include Iraq in their globalist agenda and then it will observe the Iraqi response in order to decide which path to pursue next. Saudi Arabia does not try to restrict the movement of Al Qaeda members (off shoots of Wahhabis) to Iraq and as a result they commit terrorist acts against Shi'a mosques, civilian population centers and government officials in an effort to keep the Shi'a influence to a minimum. Turkey continues its attempt to repress all Kurdish terrorist cells near the border with military operations that cross into Iraq. Turkey is concerned that the Kurds may take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate their control and form an autonomous stronghold in northern Iraq which will give Turkish Kurds motivation to step up their attempts to create their own homeland out of southern Turkey. Turkey is opposed to losing part of its territory to the Kurds.

Future # 61: Iran initiates a campaign of terrorist acts against Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia restricts Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Iran decides it is time to include Iraq in its extremist globalist agenda in which they try to set the conditions for the return of the Twelfth Imam. In this future, Iraq resists and Iran sends in personnel, arms and financial aid to commit acts of terror against mosques and government officials who refuse to take part in Iran's agenda. Saudi Arabia attempts to restrict the flow of Al Qaeda terrorists from passing into Iraq due to Iraq's refusal to be partner in Iran's globalist agenda. Saudi Arabia's Al Saud government is not in favor of Iran's Twelver Shi'a prophecy to bring about the Twelfth Imam and therefore wants the

Iraqi government to maintain its policy of refusing Iran's advances. Saudi Arabia withholds its Al Qaeda members in an effort to maintain the stability of the Iraqi government. Turkey continues its attempt to repress all Kurdish terrorist cells near the border with military operations that cross into Iraq. Turkey is concerned that the Kurds may take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate their control and form an autonomous stronghold in northern Iraq which will give Turkish Kurds motivation to step up their attempts to create their own homeland out of southern Turkey. Turkey is opposed to losing part of its territory to the Kurds.

SCENARIO 2: Division of Iraq

Future # 7: : Iran initiates a direct military campaign against breakaway Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

In this scenario, Iraq breaks into three separate sections with the Kurds in the north having full autonomy over their territory, Shiites in the south and Sunni in the west each have autonomy over their own territories. This causes terrorist acts between the Sunni and Shiites to go out of control, erupting in total civil war. Externally, Iran deploys its military forces to attack Kurdish targets in northern Iraq and Sunni targets in the central and western regions of Iraq. The purpose is to repress the Kurds in order to keep them from establishing a stronger position which could threaten to cause uprisings among the Kurds inside Iran. Likewise, Iran will seek to repress the Sunnis as they are theological opponents and will threaten Iran's globalist agenda. Iran has no plausible deniability in this case by the use of direct military action; this signifies they are not concerned about global opinion of their actions and have most likely pushed their globalist agenda a step farther. Saudi Arabia does not try to restrict the movement of Al Qaeda members to Iraq and as a result they commit terrorist acts against Shi'a mosques and civilian population centers. The terrorist acts are not done to influence any direction in the local populace; this is just violence for the sake of violence. Turkey continues its attempt to repress all Kurdish terrorist cells near the border with military operations that cross into Iraq. Turkey is concerned that the Kurds may take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate their control and form an autonomous stronghold in northern Iraq which will give Turkish Kurds motivation to step up their attempts to create their own homeland out of southern Turkey. Turkey is opposed to losing part of its territory to the Kurds.

Future # 25: Iran initiates a campaign of terrorist acts against Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Same scenario note is true for this future concerning the breakup of Iraq (ref Future #7). Iran provides personnel, arms and financial aid to initiate a campaign of terrorism against Kurdish targets in northern Iraq and against Sunnis in the west. The purpose is to repress the Kurds in order to keep them from establishing a stronger position which could threaten to cause uprisings among the Kurds inside Iran. Likewise, Iran will seek to

repress the Sunnis as they are theological opponents and will threaten Iran's globalist agenda. In this future, Iran seeks to maintain a lower profile than by using direct military action against these targets. There is plausible deniability by this covert terrorist campaign. Saudi Arabia does not try to restrict the movement of Al Qaeda members to Iraq and as a result they commit terrorist acts against Shi'a mosques and civilian population centers. The terrorist acts are not done to influence any direction in the local populace; this is just violence for the sake of violence. Turkey continues its attempt to repress all Kurdish terrorist cells near the border with military operations that cross into Iraq. Turkey is concerned that the Kurds may take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate their control and form an autonomous stronghold in northern Iraq which will give Turkish Kurds motivation to step up their attempts to create their own homeland out of southern Turkey. Turkey is opposed to losing part of its territory to the Kurds.

Future # 1: Iran initiates a direct military campaign against breakaway Iraqi Kurdish and Sunni regions, Saudi Arabia moves its military forces in a defensive measure to block any attempts by Iraqi Shiites from crossing into Saudi Shi'a populations centers and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Iran deploys its military forces to attack Kurdish targets in northern Iraq and Sunni targets in the central and western regions of Iraq. The purpose is to repress the Kurds in order to keep them from establishing a stronger position which could threaten to cause uprisings among the Kurds inside Iran. Likewise, Iran will seek to repress the Sunnis as they are theological opponents and will threaten Iran's globalist agenda. Iran has no plausible deniability in this case by the use of direct military action; this signifies they are not concerned about global opinion of their actions and have most likely pushed their globalist agenda a step farther. Saudi Arabia becomes concerned that Iraqi Shiites in south will overflow into Saudi Shiite cities bringing on a refugee crisis inside Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this defensive move attempts to stop the flow of Sunni aggressors from using Saudi territory as a means of travel to attack Shiite targets in southern Iraq. Saudi Arabia wants nothing to do with this violence spreading to its soil. Turkey continues its attempt to repress all Kurdish terrorist cells near the border with military operations that cross into Iraq. Turkey is concerned that the Kurds may take advantage of the opportunity to consolidate their control and form an autonomous stronghold in northern Iraq which will give Turkish Kurds motivation to step up their attempts to create their own homeland out of southern Turkey. Turkey is opposed to losing part of its territory to the Kurds.

10. Determine focal events for alternate futures

SCENARIO 1: Unified Government

Future # 57: Iran establishes a friendly diplomatic stance towards the new Iraqi government, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi

Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – All Iraqi factions find common ground and generally work towards common goals (does not mean this is a utopia but that enough consensus is reached to make the government work).

FOCAL EVENT – Shi'a-led Iraqi government makes statements indicating favorable view of Iranian leadership.

FOCAL EVENT – Continued social problems inside Saudi Arabia cause Al Qaeda membership to continue to increase and some of these terrorists cross into Iraq to target Shi'a interests.

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds continue their terror campaign against targets inside Turkey in order to continue their goal of achieving an independent homeland.

Future # 25: Iran maintains a neutral stance towards the new Iraqi government even if for a brief period, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – All Iraqi factions find common ground and generally work towards common goals (does not mean this is a utopia but that enough consensus is reached to make the government work).

FOCAL EVENT – Iraqi Shi'a-led government makes no statements for or against Iran.

FOCAL EVENT – Continued social problems inside Saudi Arabia cause Al Qaeda membership to continue to increase and some of these terrorists cross into Iraq to target Shi'a targets.

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds continue their terror campaign against targets inside Turkey in order to continue their goal of achieving an independent homeland.

Future # 61: Iran initiates a campaign of terrorist acts against Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia restricts Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Saudi Arabia establishes friendly relations with the Iraqi unity government and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – All Iraqi factions find common ground and generally work towards common goals (does not mean this is a utopia but that enough consensus is reached to make the government work).

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds agitate Iran with terrorist attacks and hostile statements for the purpose of achieving an independent homeland.

FOCAL EVENT – Iraqi Sunnis make statements against Iran's leadership

FOCAL EVENT – Social problems continue inside Saudi Arabia but the Al-Saud government decides it is time to reign in terrorist cells for fear of attacks against government leaders.

FOCAL EVENT – The Al-Saud government establishes direct diplomatic talks with the Iraqi government in an effort to align themselves with Iraq and against Iran.

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds continue their terror campaign against targets inside Turkey in order to continue their goal of achieving an independent homeland.

SCENARIO 2: Division of Iraq

Future # 7: : Iran initiates a direct military campaign against breakaway Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – Sunnis increase their attacks on Shiites with violence threatening to spill over into Iran.

FOCAL EVENT – Iran masses troops on Iraqi border and shells targets inside Iraqi; Iran is not concerned about international condemnation in this case.

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds increase their attacks on internal Turkish and Iranian targets in an effort to pursue their goal of achieving their own independent homeland.

FOCAL EVENT – Continued social problems inside Saudi Arabia cause Al Qaeda membership to continue to increase and some of these terrorists cross into Iraq to target Shi'a targets.

Future # 25: Iran initiates a campaign of terrorist acts against Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia does not restrict Al Qaeda terrorists from attacking Iraqi Shi'a targets and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – Sunnis increase their attacks on Shiites with violence threatening to spill over into Iran; the only difference between this and future #7 is that Iran decides not to bring international condemnation on itself and so using plausible deniability, it decides covert terror is the more favorable tactic.

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds increase their attacks on internal Turkish and Iranian targets in an effort to pursue their goal of achieving their own independent homeland.

FOCAL EVENT – Continued social problems inside Saudi Arabia cause Al Qaeda membership to continue to increase and some of these terrorists cross into Iraq to target Shi'a targets.

Future # 1: Iran initiates a direct military campaign against breakaway Iraqi Sunni and Kurdish targets, Saudi Arabia moves its military forces in a defensive measure to block any attempts by Iraqi Shiites from crossing into Saudi Shiite population centers and Turkey continues its military campaign against the Kurds in northern Iraq.

FOCAL EVENT – Sunnis increase their attacks on Shiites with violence threatening to spill over into Iran.

FOCAL EVENT – Iran masses troops on Iraqi border and shells targets inside Iraq; Iran is not concerned about international condemnation in this case.

Iran is not concerned about international condemnation in this case.

FOCAL EVENT – Shiite violence spills over into Saudi Arabian Shiite cities in the south and stirs up Saudi Shiites into protests and violence against the Al-Saud government.

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds increase their attacks on internal Turkish and Iranian targets in an effort to pursue their goal of achieving their own independent homeland.

11. Develop indicators for each focal event

FOCAL EVENT – All Iraqi factions find common ground and generally work towards common goals (does not mean this is a utopia but that enough consensus is reached to make the government work).

KEY INDICATOR – violence decreases among factions (see section 12 below)

KEY INDICATOR – Sunnis move towards acceptance of the approved constitution (see section 12 below)

KEY INDICATOR – Sunnis and Shiites renounce major disagreements in their belief systems (see section 12 below)

FOCAL EVENT – Shi'a-led Iraqi government makes statements indicating favorable view of Iranian leadership.

KEY INDICATOR – Iraqi government invites Iran to diplomatic talks

KEY INDICATOR – Iranian delegations meet with Iraqi delegations in Baghdad to discuss Middle Eastern affairs

FOCAL EVENT – Continued social problems inside Saudi Arabia cause Al Qaeda membership to continue to increase and some of these terrorists cross into Iraq to target Shi'a interests.

KEY INDICATOR – High unemployment continues to stir up unrest in Saudi Arabia

KEY INDICATOR – Al-Saud government fails to conduct surveillance and make arrests of internal Al Qaeda members

KEY INDICATOR – Suicide bombings occur in Shiite areas in Iraq, Sunnis do not take credit

KEY INDICATOR – Al Qaeda releases statements to Al Jazeera condemning Iraqi Shiites

KEY INDICATOR – Saudi Wahabbi Imams preach sermons against Shiites

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds continue their terror campaign against targets inside Turkey in order to continue their goal of achieving an independent homeland.

KEY INDICATOR – PKK members attack government and tourist areas inside Turkey

KEY INDICATOR – Turkey shells Kurdish areas in northern Iraq

FOCAL EVENT – Iraqi Shi'a-led government makes no statements for or against Iran.

KEY INDICATOR – self explanatory; it is important to note what *is not* being done or said just as it is important to note what *is* being done or said

FOCAL EVENT – The Al-Saud government establishes direct diplomatic talks with the Iraqi government in an effort to attempt an alliance with Iraq and against Iran.

KEY INDICATOR – Saudi Arabia conducts surveillance on internal Al Qaeda members

KEY INDICATOR – Saudi Arabia sends delegates to Iraq and invites Iraqi delegates to Saudi Arabia for discussions

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds agitate Iran with terrorist attacks and hostile statements for the purpose of achieving an independent homeland.

KEY INDICATOR – Kurdish areas inside both Iran and Iraq are bombed by Iranian suicide attackers

KEY INDICATOR – PKK members attack Iranian cities in northwest Iran with suicide bombers

KEY INDICATOR – PKK releases public statements against Iranian repression and threatening further attacks if no heed is given to their desire for an independent homeland

FOCAL EVENT – Iraqi Sunnis make statements against Iran's leadership

KEY INDICATOR – Sunni government leaders criticize Iran's globalist agenda

KEY INDICATOR – Sunni Imams preach sermons against Iran's Shiite beliefs and prophetic vision of the return of the Twelfth Imam

FOCAL EVENT – Sunnis increase their attacks on Shiites with violence threatening to spill over into Iran.

KEY INDICATOR – Sunni suicide bombers attack government targets

KEY INDICATOR – Sunni suicide bombers attack Shiite population centers

FOCAL EVENT – Iran masses troops on Iraqi border and shells targets inside Iraq; Iran is not concerned about international condemnation in this case

KEY INDICATOR – Iran makes statements in favor of Iraqi Shiites and threatens Sunnis with intervention if Sunnis do not stop their attacks on Shiite targets

FOCAL EVENT – Sunnis increase their attacks on Shiites with violence threatening to spill over into Iran; the only difference between this and future #7 is that Iran decides not to bring international condemnation on itself and so using plausible deniability, it decides covert terror is the more favorable tactic.

KEY INDICATOR – Iran makes statements in favor of Iraqi Shiites and makes threatening remarks towards Sunnis but does not say anything

about intervening, thus maintaining a policy of plausible deniability with its covert terror attacks

FOCAL EVENT – Kurds increase their attacks on internal Turkish and Iranian targets in an effort to pursue their goal of achieving their own independent homeland.

KEY INDICATOR – PKK members attack Iranian cities in northwest Iran with suicide bombers

KEY INDICATOR – PKK releases public statements against Iranian repression and threatening further attacks if no heed is given to their desire for an independent homeland

KEY INDICATOR – PKK members attack government and tourist areas inside Turkey

KEY INDICATOR – Turkey shells Kurdish areas in northern Iraq

FOCAL EVENT – Shiite violence spills over into Saudi Arabian Shiite cities in the south and stirs up Saudi Shiites into protests and violence against the Al-Saud government.

KEY INDICATOR – Iraqi Shiites attempt to join with those inside Saudi Arabia

KEY INDICATOR – Saudi Shiite Imams preach sermons against Iraqi Sunnis and Wahhabis and the repression of the Al-Saud government in stifling their religious freedom

KEY INDICATOR – Saudi Shiites rally around the cause for the Iraqi Shiites following the calls from the Imams to protest

KEY INDICATOR – Shiite suicide bombers attack Al-Saud government targets

12. Assess the potential for transposition between alternate futures

SCENARIO 1: Unified Government

It goes without saying that as of this writing, scenario 1 appears to be nearly absurd (see conclusion for exception). However, I include this in my analysis because 1) the average anti-war-in-Iraq politician apparently actually believes this is possible; and 2) see conclusion. Refer back to section 11 to see what would have to happen for this scenario to become reality, then re-read pages 3-10 for historical insight.

Having already cast doubt on this scenario, it is possible that future 57 could transpose into future 25 and then subsequently transpose into future 61. It is possible that the reverse could also happen. The direction of this situational morphing depends on the internal Iraqi religious, social and political climate at the time of the departure of the US and coalition forces.

Note that there is an obvious artificiality built into this analysis. In determining a course of action for each country, it is assumed that each of these COAs are mutually exclusive. However, for this analysis, that cannot always be true. Take the example of Saudi Arabia – it is possible for the Al-Saud government to be conducting friendly diplomatic relations while at the same time, Al Qaeda members are crossing into Iraq and committing suicide attacks. The fine line here is in whether or not there is a deliberate attempt to reign in the terrorist cells or to just let them run their course while at the same time establishing friendly diplomatic ties. Such a double-minded stance seems to violate logic but, let's not forget, the Middle East does not operate on western logic. The key to reading these COAs is therefore to discern whether or not the government intends to have a true friendly diplomatic outreach while at the same time, attempting to reign in covert terrorist cells. No campaign of rounding up terror cells will be completely effective and so it is the *intent* here that is important, not necessarily the *actual* outcome.

SCENARIO 2: Division of Iraq

At the present time, this is in reality, the only plausible scenario to unfold should US and coalition forces suddenly withdraw from Iraq. As discussed for scenario 1 above, certain events in this scenario will likely morph from one set of alternates to another.

Future 25 could transpose into future 7 if Iran deems that its covert attempts to influence the events in Iraq are insufficient. Alternatively, the reverse could happen if the initial withdrawal of US and coalition forces creates so much havoc that Iran sees no alternative but to immediately move its troops into position. Again, the direction of this situational morphing depends on the internal Iraqi religious, social and political climate at the time of the departure of the US and coalition forces. It goes without saying that it could start off relatively cooler and then become hotter or vice versa.

Note the same artificiality as for scenario 1 – HM does not preclude simultaneous CT. It is more obvious in this case though that HM is a much more significant act than CT and so here we are concerned more with the size and significance of the act rather than in whether or not both are occurring. This situation is too complex for binary thinking and so we must allow for the possibility of non-exclusivity of actions.

Conclusion

Despite taking great pains to analyze this current situation, there is (as promised) one single event that could completely alter what I consider to be the most likely scenario following US troop withdrawal (scenario 2). That single event is the possibility that the United Nations may relocate its headquarters to Babylon, just 60 miles south of Baghdad. If this happens, the global focus will increase on Iraq and the pressure for its factions to “get along” will most likely be increased. Scenario 1 then becomes most probable. This could also very likely produce a major shift in the center of global politics and the

ramifications of that are potentially enormous. Should this happen, it may signal the beginning of the end of the US superpower influence in global politics.⁷⁹

This analysis would be remiss without a mention of the events which transpired in 1914 with the British. It is astonishing to note that the British tried invading Iraq in nearly the same exact manner as we have and it failed miserably. I would like to ask at random how many of our decision makers in Washington DC had any knowledge of these events prior to the invasion. Did anyone bother to check their presidential libraries for a historical insight to strategic planning? I would suggest obtaining a copy of the following two excellent resources: *Understanding Iraq: A Whistlestop Tour from Ancient Babylon to Occupied Baghdad*, by William Polk; and *The Wilson Quarterly*, winter 2007 issue. Both of these detail the British invasion and the miserable end they came to. Sure, these resources were both written well after the US invasion but it need not be said that all this information was readily available before March, 2003. What the US has done in Iraq is practically an exact parallel, even down to details such as the rationale behind the use of airpower assets! Hindsight is only 20/20 when you actually bother to look back. Were there no intelligence experts available to bring such overwhelmingly important information to the attention of our leaders? Even worse, did anyone bring these matters to their attention and receive a “who cares” in response? These answers would be insightful.

⁷⁹ Ayers, Cynthia E. and COL (R) David W. Cammons. “Want Middle East Stability? Move UN to Iraq,” Washington Post. http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/postglobal/needtoknow/2007/04/want_middle_east_stability_mov.html : Accessed 3 July 3, 2007.

Perhaps the most useful aspect of this analysis is right here in this paragraph. In the rush to assume Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, it appears that well thought out processes of intelligence analysis were deliberately omitted. A well known resource called the “Purple Book” details what should have become the standard process for analyzing complex and vague situations. The Analysis of Competing Hypotheses method would have had a profound effect on the final decision to invade.⁸⁰ What good is academia if you can’t apply it in real life? Regardless of what may or may not have happened, it is truly scary that we have completely repeated history that is less than 100 years old. German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel would not be surprised however as he said, “history teaches us that man learns nothing from history.” Shockingly, it appears Mr. Hegel’s advice will remain true until the end of the world.

Having said all this, as it looks right now without a UN move to Babylon, if western forces withdraw, the entire place will erupt in total chaos. Yes, it can be proven that the US has made some progress here and there in the country with various projects such as schools, utilities, etc. Saddam is gone and now the concept of democracy has been introduced into a region that knows nothing but harsh dictatorships. But overall, there is no evidence that any of the internal factions in Iraq will ever get along; they never have. Unfortunately, the US began a project that it severely underestimated, was poorly educated on and failed to adhere to a clear set of fixed strategic goals. As a result, few options are left now but to hope that the least reliable commodity comes through for us. That commodity is “good luck.”

⁸⁰ Heuer, Richards J. (1999). “Psychology of Intelligence Analysis” Central Intelligence Agency. 95-110.

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