

**THE HOLY WAR HAS, ONLY, JUST BEGUN:  
ADD ANOTHER \$US10 BILLION TO THE COST OF 'LIBERATING' IRAQ**

The American taxpayers may not have realised it, yet, but their Government has just added not less than \$US10 billion to the total bill for policing Iraq in order to liberate its peoples and to teach them the many and varied ways of democracy.

That additional sum of \$US10 billion is, probably, a very conservative estimate of the total cost of liberating Iraq from the former oppressive rule of President Saddam Hussein and his family, following the assassination, last Friday, of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim and 100 or so other Iraqis.

What is, perhaps, even more frightening than the wanton killing of this cleric and the cost of trying to contain the Iraqi tinderbox, however, is whether or not Iran will come to the Iraqi 'party' – and cost the American taxpayers, even more money.

Because Iran had been backing Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim for the previous 23 years while he was in exile in Iran, having fled Iraq when Saddam Hussein wanted him, dead and buried.

Tens of thousands of Shiites have been massing at the Iran-Iraq border, wanting to attend the 3-day funeral of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim.

Iraq's governing council had ordered the border to be closed in order to prevent a huge influx of mourners, but it is virtually impossible to prevent Iranians from entering Iraq if they are determined so to do.

Banners, held high at the funeral processions of this Holy man, as he is viewed by many Shiites, stated: *'Our revenge will be severe on the killers!'*

There is every reason to believe these words.

Following the US Army, 'liberating' Iraq from the tyrannical rule of President Saddam Hussein, last March, Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim and some 10,000 of his private militia landed in the north of the country.

Then, Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim made his triumphal entrance in the southern city of Basra.

The 63-year-old, Muslim cleric was the undisputed leader of the Iraqi Shiites; and, the US Government has, always, been very concerned that he would attempt to turn Iraq into another Islamic fundamentalist state, similar to Iran.

The Ayatollah had, always, maintained that he was opposed to the US-led invasion of Iraq; he had, always, claimed that the presence of United States (US) and British forces in his country was unjustified.

He was not alone in this opinion because Russia, France and the People's Republic of China (PRC), to name but 3 of the world's largest powers, shared similar views to those of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim – and said so, publicly, in the United Nations (UN).

Be that as it may, the fox is, now, running freely in the henhouse of Iraq: And all Hell is likely to break lose.

Tensions are running very high, with the US, being pinpointed as having been negligent on the grounds that the American Government, having taken Iraq by force, had a constructive duty of responsibility for the security of Iraq and of its residents, and especially the Shiites, who, for the past 24 years, had been downtrodden by Saddam Hussein, who is/was a Sunni Muslim.

Just prior to the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War of 1980, Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim and thousands of other Iraqi Shiites were forced into exile, just one step away from the Iraqi secret police, arresting him and his followers.

To Saddam Hussein, Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim had, always, represented a very real threat because he had the ear of the Iraqi Shiite community, a community, numbering not less than 60 percent of the entire population of the country.

Saddam Hussein claimed, publicly, to be a devout Sunni Muslim and, in order to impress that fact on the 40-percent, minority population of the country, he took every opportunity to be photographed, praying, along with the recitation of the appropriate incantations, at Iraqi Mosques.

Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim's loyal troops are, still, in Iraq, near Najaf, the holiest city to the Shiite faithful, but their leader, who had just delivered his last sermon at the Imam Ali Mosque, last Friday, is, now, dead.

A force of 10,000, well-armed men, known as the Badr Brigades, having been trained for many years and, all of them, being devout Shiites, could pose quite a threat to the US and British occupation forces, now firmly installed in Iraq.

It would seem to matter little, at this point, as to who is to blame for last Friday's car bomb that killed an estimated 124 Iraqis outside the Imam Ali Mosque because the strong probability exists for a bloody sectarian war to break out between the Iraqi Sunni and Iraqi Shiite.

The sectarian struggle of the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews has lasted, thus far, not less than 55 years, but one may expect the struggle between Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis to last even longer – unless the present situation can be defused with the intervention of the UN ... or Allah.

One wonders whether or not it is of material significance, today, to consider the culprits, who were responsible for the death of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim, be they the followers of Saddam Hussein, followers of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda terrorist network, or, even, members of the Sunni minority of Iraq, who fear, rightfully, that their days of dominance are at an end.

(The Q'ran demands the death penalty for those responsible for the outrage, outside the Imam Ali Mosque; and, for the people of Iraq, especially the Shiite, a public execution of the guilty would be welcomed because it would be in accordance with shari'a.)

Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim was a prominent member of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (which is a Teheran-based Group, founded in 1982) and, although he was considered a moderate, it was unlikely that he would have forgotten his duty of fidelity to Iran and its ruling junta, which had given him sanctuary for 23-odd years.

The Shia have, always, been a political faction – The Party of Ali –, the followers of whom supported the power of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed and the fourth Caliph (the temporal and spiritual ruler) of the Muslim community.

History records that Ali was murdered in 661 A.D. and his chief opponent, Musawiya, became Caliph.

After Ali's assassination, The Great Schism between the Sunni and Shias began.

That is 1,341 years of The Great Schism – and it continues, today.

And, the situation has just been exacerbated by the assassination of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim, it would appear.

One has to remember that it was only on April 10, this year, that another Shiite cleric, Abdel-Majid al-Khoei, was murdered in circumstances that are still partially unknown – also in the Holy city of Najaf.

Many of the Shiite faithful of today have voiced concern at the fact that US military have had no, or little, visible presence in Najaf in view of the violence that has been known in the area.

A US Government spokesman, commenting on this fact, said: *'No coalition forces were in the area (last Friday) ... because it is considered Holy ground.'*

There is every probability that the *'civil war'* between the rival factions of Islam has started: Between Sunni and Shiite; between Shiite and Shiite.

The killing of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim is just the beginning.

The US President, Mr George W. Bush, might well have to reconsider his determination to bring home the sons and daughters of America, now serving in Iraq, those who represent the occupation/liberation forces in the country.

So, add another \$US10 billion (or more) to the cost of *'liberating'* Iraq and its peoples.

One of the many historical problems that has faced the US Government, other than 18<sup>th</sup> Century United States, is that its successive Administrations never employed, or appreciated the efficacy of, a sufficient number of well-versed sociologists, political scientists and/or philosophers, and even in respect of those whom it did employ, by accident, for the most part, the ruling US Government Administration of the day was not known to have listened, very carefully, to them – if at all.

Although it is unlikely that Iran, officially, will enter Iraqi politics, it is quite likely that the Iranian Government will seek to ant its way into it ... and it is probable that it has, already, installed its people there, in one position or another.

That the US Government has made numerous errors of judgment in the past with regard to the religious fervour of the Middle East is legend: The death of Ayatollah Mohammed Basqr al-Hakim is but another example of poor judgment on the part of the world's only real superpower.

It is irrefragable that the US Government's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – unquestionably, the world's best covert intelligence agency – could not have foreseen the

probability of secular, as well as religious, strife to break out between various factions of the Shia community of Iraq, as well as between Iraqi Shiites and Iraqi Sunnis.

Yet, no action was taken to try to avert the events of last Friday.

It is possible, of course, that the CIA did warn the US Administration of the probability of violence in Najaf, well in advance.

And it is more than likely that this warning was dismissed, out of hand.

And, now, the American taxpayer will foot the bill for either the US Government, failing to heed the CIA's warnings, or, alternatively, the US Government's failure, even to have considered the probability of the tragic events of last Friday.

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