

The growth of the IRGC as the power behind the second horn started in 1980 when the war with Iraq began. The IRGC fought the Iran-Iraq War from 1980 to 1988. During these years the IRGC was transformed from an under-trained bodyguard of the supreme leader into an organized fighting force.⁵ One author has made the claim that the IRGC may not have achieved all the power it has if it were not for the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s that gave it the boost it needed.⁶ It is here we see that the actions of the lion in the First Signpost directly sowed the seeds for the Second Signpost.

Following the war, and during the presidency of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani from 1989-1997, the IRGC first became involved with the economy of Iran.⁷ The Iranian government wanted to create jobs for the returning war veterans in order to contribute to the country's stability. The IRGC's engineering corps was reorganized into a major civil engineering company that built houses, roads and bridges.⁸ Besides building houses, the IRGC has grown to the point that it also speculates in real estate abroad.⁹ The IRGC took over many of Iran's high-tech businesses and now produces consumer goods. It later took over seaports and border areas to control trade and border security. The IRGC has taken over the telecommunications industry.¹⁰ Most recently it has even taken over part of the oil industry.¹¹

In summary, the IRGC is now involved with every major moneymaking business in Iran.¹² The IRGC's economic position has even continued to improve in recent years despite the international sanctions against Iran. The sanctions caused many foreign companies to leave Iran allowing the IRGC to win the equivalent of multibillion dollar contracts in Iran with no competition.¹³ It is not known with certainty how much of the Iranian economy the IRGC directly controls, but forty percent could be a fair figure derived from a consensus of various sources.¹⁴ The profits derived from all of these industries are used in part by the IRGC to acquire weapon systems, pay IRGC salaries, bribe politicians, fund terror groups, and recruit new members using financial incentives such as cheap housing.

During the presidency of Mohammad Khatami from 1997-2005, the IRGC first became involved with both state security and

national politics. IRGC Intelligence and the Basij replaced the older security and intelligence ministries. The IRGC's involvement with politics came as a consequence of its growing power. The IRGC was directly represented in national politics when it supported Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a former Basij commander, to be president in 2005 for his first term. Against popular opposition, the IRGC also made Ahmadinejad the president for a second term, having him "win" the election in 2009. It was indeed the Basij stuffing ballot boxes in some of the provinces that allowed Ahmadinejad to win a second term.¹⁵ At that point it could be said that the IRGC had the power to control who could be president. Though the supreme leader chooses the candidates who will run for president in Iran, it is the IRGC who can effectively decide who will be president. They do this to place a man in office who will most push their agenda. The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as Iran's sixth president greatly benefitted the IRGC. Ahmadinejad appointed a record two-thirds of the cabinet positions to former IRGC commanders. This allowed the IRGC to continue to expand in domestic influence, and in particular, banking and the oil industry.

Add to the IRGC's control over the presidency the control of intelligence, the military, and much of the economy, along with the fact that the supreme leader relies on the IRGC to suppress rebellion to stay in power, and this is why the IRGC can be said to be at least as powerful as the supreme leader himself. Even when the "moderate" candidate and cleric Hassan Rouhani surprisingly won the election in June 2013 and became Iran's seventh president, it is because the supreme leader and IRGC allowed it.¹⁶ I believe the supreme leader and the IRGC let Rouhani win so the majority of the public of Iran would be pacified long enough to allow the regime to complete its plans.

My first hint that the second horn was possibly getting ready to take power was by the actions of Iran's former president, Ahmadinejad, starting in 2010. He was always outspoken with his own ideas on what Iran's domestic and foreign policies should be, much to the dismay of the supreme leader. It was in the last

three years of Ahmadinejad's administration that he belligerently increased his challenges to the supreme leader's policies. For a while it looked like he might exceed the supreme leader in power, making him the second horn. If this were true then the Second Signpost was about to start back in 2011. However, Ahmadinejad was a false alarm, and the IRGC itself fits the description of the second horn much better. The IRGC has been growing non-stop for thirty years, and has real power that only now rivals the supreme leader, while the presidency always had the same minimal power it does now and that has not changed.

It has only been in the past year or so that it has become apparent that Ahmadinejad, not formerly one of the core IRGC leaders, acted on his own beliefs. He may have challenged the supreme leader's positions thinking he had the backing of the IRGC. The IRGC, however, stopped supporting Ahmadinejad and came to the aid of supreme leader Khamenei.¹⁷ At the end of Ahmadinejad's second term, the IRGC labeled his administration as containing a "deviant current."¹⁸ With continued observation and research over the past year, it has become apparent to me that Ahmadinejad was a red herring that was being used by the IRGC to further its own agenda, and that the IRGC leadership is the real power that is the second horn.

The IRGC's power has increased to the point where one could debate that it rivals or exceeds that of the supreme leader. However, it is differences in ideology with the supreme leader that will finally cause the IRGC to be the driver and planner for the invasion by Iran. We will look at the IRGC's ideology in the next section.

Now in 2013 we are at the place where observers and analysts watching Iran wonder who really is in charge of Iran—the supreme leader or the IRGC?^{19, 20} From a prophetic viewpoint, has the second horn already grown longer than the horn that is the supreme leader, or does the IRGC have a final move to make to establish the second horn as longest? I believe the position of power that is the second horn, and thus the IRGC, will come into its own as the longest horn when it takes the power to declare war away from the supreme leader. But

this transfer of power may be hidden and may have already happened. The IRGC may either operate with this power behind the scenes with its leadership overruling the supreme leader, or it may establish an official government office. We probably will not know until the first overt and significant event happens—whether a new office in Iran takes greater power, or the great invasion itself begins. How I wish it were the former since in that case we might have the luxury of extra time to warn and prepare, but I fear it is the latter.

Positions of power in the IRGC are somewhat veiled, and so the invasion could happen tomorrow with the IRGC already having exceeded the supreme leader in power, or there may be a visible shuffle of power in Iran first. We simply cannot know. Therefore, we do not really know how much more time we have until the great invasion. If the position of power stays hidden in the leadership of the IRGC, this makes the great invasion by Iran in the Second Signpost imminent—the next thing to watch for in Bible prophecy.

In summary, Iran has its first horn, the first king. One author wrote about the supreme leader's position in Iran as that of "a Platonic philosopher *king*."²¹ Regarding the IRGC's rise and becoming the premier de facto power in Iran, another author wrote that the IRGC is "a *king maker*" in Iranian politics.²² This second quote relates to the IRGC's ability to make whomever it wants to be president. But, when the time comes its leader will in fact be the second king and the IRGC will have made him king. It is interesting to me that two secular authors speak of the two horns of the ram just as Daniel 8:20 does when it says, "the two horns are the *kings* of the Medes and the Persians."

When the position of the second horn is finally established with power exceeding that of the supreme leader, then the prophecy in Daniel 8:3 that says the second and longer horn "grew up later" will be fulfilled. At that time, in addition to Saddam Hussein and the democratizing of Iraq that fulfilled the prophecies pertaining to the First Signpost, we will see prophecies pertaining to the Second Signpost starting to be fulfilled.