

A Shift in Power in Iran’s Government Prior to War

SECOND SIGNPOST EVENTS TIME LINE	Vision of Bear (Daniel 7:5)	Vision of Ram (Daniel 8:3-4, 20)	Vision of Rider (Revelation 6:4)
A) A Shift in Power in Iran’s Government Prior to War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One side higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newer horn is longer • Horns are kings of Medes and Persians 	---

We begin our examination of the Second Signpost by looking at the higher and lower sides of the bear, and the two horns of the ram. We know from Chapter 8 that the bear and the ram both represent modern Iran. We will also see that the sides of the bear and the horns of the ram also represent the same thing relative to each other, i.e. the leadership of Iran.

Daniel 7:5 tells us about the bear’s sides where it says, “It was raised up on one of its sides.” Bible commentators, supporting the fulfillment of this vision in ancient times, have said that the bear’s two sides represent the two powers within the ancient Persian Empire— the Medes and the Persians. The Medes ruled first and then the Persians who were stronger ruled later. Hence the Persian side was the higher side in the bear over the Mede side. But, of course, the problem with this idea is this vision is to be fulfilled in the end-times. So, instead of the two sides representing kings of two ethnic groups within the old Persian Empire, I believe the two sides represent two positions of power within the government of modern Iran. These positions of power either presently hold, or will hold the most power in that country, sharing power, with one leader being greater than the other. Today, most Iranians are descended from the Medes and Persians and so can be considered Medes and Persians themselves. Therefore, the two leaders will indeed be the kings of the Medes and Persians in these end-times.

In addition to the bear having two sides with one higher, we have more information due to the ram’s two horns. Daniel 8:3 says, “there before me was a ram with two horns.” Daniel 8:20 gives us

the interpretation of the two horns of the ram: “The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.” Again, the popular view that supports an ancient fulfillment would say that these are kings of the ancient Persian Empire ruling one after the other, just as with the bear. But, with the modern fulfillment, these kings must represent individual leaders in Iran that are contemporaries of each other. As mentioned in Chapter 6, just as the horns on the goat represent single leaders, so do the horns of the ram. The symbols used within a vision must be consistent.

Therefore, when the ram charges out having two horns, Iran will be led by two leaders who are sharing power. The two leaders will be occupying two positions of power that will be the two highest in Iran at the time of the start of the war. A position of power can be officially recognized like a government office, or it can be less official but nevertheless present, such as a high-ranking general supported by his military where power is behind the scenes. The ram’s horns and the bear’s sides “agree” and can both support the same interpretation of two leaders ruling together and sharing power.

We have even more information about the horns from Daniel 8:3. In addition to the ram merely having two horns, it is the growth and establishment of the horns relative to each other that is astonishingly similar to what has been happening in Iran for the last thirty years or so. Daniel 8:3 says of the ram’s two horns, “one of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later.” In other words, at the beginning we start with one long horn and one short—maybe even stubby—horn. At the end of the growth phase there will be two long horns on the ram. The short and stubby horn in the beginning becomes the longer one in the end. The long horn in the beginning stays that way all the time while the short horn becomes the longest horn. The long horn in the beginning therefore ends up having his power exceeded by the growing horn that is the second horn.

Astonishingly, this describes the situation perfectly between the supreme leader and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). I believe the supreme leader of Iran is the first horn that was initially longer—the horn that in the end will be exceeded in length by the

second horn. The IRGC is the power behind the second horn, the horn that grows up and becomes longer in the end. We do not yet know who the man will be who is the second horn, but his power will come directly from the IRGC. He may be a representative of the IRGC or an IRGC commander.

The supreme leader appeared first as the top leader of Iran back in 1979. The second horn—the other position of power—in reality has been growing up quietly for thirty years behind the scenes. We do not yet know what form this second position of power will take, but we do know it will come about as a consequence of the IRGC's growth in power relative to the supreme leader. Just as Julius Caesar established his praetorian guard as a bodyguard of the emperor and a couple centuries later that guard ended up deciding who would be emperor, so now the Iranian guard (the IRGC) seems to be on the same path. The IRGC has grown from being merely the supreme leader's bodyguard in 1979 to being a body that in some ways exercises greater control over Iran than the supreme leader does.

Following the revolution in Iran in February 1979, a constitution was approved in Iran in October of that year establishing the supreme leader as the highest office. The supreme leader is not elected by the people but by a special committee of clerics—much like the cardinals in Rome elect the pope. The office of the supreme leader is considered to be the highest leader of the land and the religious leader of the nation. The supreme leader sets national policy and is the commander-in-chief of the military forces.

(As a side note, three additional lower offices were established at the same time. These three offices are the president, the head of parliament and the head of the judiciary. The president is the executive who merely carries out the direction set by the supreme leader, and is elected directly by the people. The supreme leader also decides who can run for president. The president only has power with the people, but no real power over the matters of state.)

The first man to hold the office of supreme leader was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who founded the Iranian Revolution. The second and current man is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei who took over in 1989.

When the office of supreme leader was established in 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini was seen by many in Iran as speaking in the very name of God and so had near absolute power over Iran. The first horn was, as Daniel 8:3 says, indeed long.

At the same time, Ayatollah Khomeini himself sowed the seed for the second horn when he started the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in April 1979. A statute legally defining the IRGC was ratified toward the end of April 1979, by the Council of the Revolution, the highest de facto governing body at the time in Iran.¹ In this statute the functions of the IRGC were defined: (1) to guard the Islamic revolution in Iran, which included defending the supreme leader, and (2) to export the Islamic revolution to other countries.² To execute these functions the statute also gave the IRGC the role of army, police and intelligence. The IRGC, also known as the *Pasdaran*, has its own army, navy and aerospace force apart from Iran's regular armed forces. It is the aerospace force that controls the country's nuclear and missile programs. Iran's regular armed forces, also known as the *Artesh*, have an army, navy and air force whose function it is to defend Iranian territory from outside aggression.

In addition to the IRGC's own army, navy and aerospace force, it has a fourth branch known as the *Basij* paramilitary. The Basij began as a separate force, but was formally incorporated into the IRGC in 1981 by the Iranian parliament.³ The Basij has fulfilled the role of internal religious police since 1979, but during the Iran-Iraq War the Basij was also called to fight on the battlefield. It was the Basij that provided the human waves of zealots that threw themselves against Saddam's army in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq War. It is the Basij that has suppressed rebellions that have threatened the regime over the years. The Basij is an all-volunteer force and the IRGC recruits its members for its other branches from the Basij.⁴ Finally, the IRGC has a fifth major branch known as the *Quds* Force. It is named after the Arabic word for "Jerusalem." It is the Quds Force of the IRGC that is presently "exporting the Revolution" by funding, training and arming many of the Islamist and terror groups in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and the Gulf states.