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## Religion in American Politics The war on Iraq is a model Historical study

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### Abstract

The American constitution stipulated the separation of religion from the state, and despite this it is noticed that the role of religion in American politics was present in most American foreign policies, especially those related to Iraq and the Middle East, and this role has witnessed progress and decline at other times over the course of the relatively long history of the United States, depending on The orientations of the president who takes over the American administration.

Religion contributes to Americans 'visions of the world and of the United States' mission in the world. The different theological visions had political consequences that affected the course of foreign policy, as there are many currents in the United States, including (Christian liberalism, Evangelicalism, and fundamentalism) .

Fundamentalism had a major role in the Middle East, which occupies an important place in the literature of Christian fundamentalism. Throughout its long history, this region was the focus of the greed of colonial countries for various reasons (political, economic, and geographic). The aforementioned, there is a religious factor that drives Zionist fundamentalism to control the East.



The war on Iraq was politically justified by various pretexts that began with weapons of mass destruction and did not end with al-Qaeda. However, the religious factor played a fundamental role in this war, and the Bush administration (the son) was distinguished as the most American administration that employed religion in politics, and this employment was He is directly linked to Israel. Even the Republican candidate for the presidential elections in 2000 described the American war on Iraq as an Israeli war by proxy.

**Key words:** Religion in American politics, Zionist fundamentalism, fundamentalism , Middle East, the US war on Iraq.

### Introduction

In 1945, the world witnessed a sharp turn in the balance of power through the collapse of most of the world powers and the emergence of the United States of America as a superpower that dominated the international arena, and the subsequent emergence of the Soviet Union as a competing power in the framework of the Cold War that lasted about four and a half decades and with the beginning of the nineties the world witnessed Another global event, which is the collapse of the Soviet Union and the United States' singling out international leadership.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the traditional enemy of the United States, the features of religious conflicts began to become clear, especially after the United States adopted Islam as an alternative enemy to the Soviet Union, and the role of religion began to become clear in most world policies after its role was relatively absent, and for the United States of America religion began to take place. An important part of its policy since the twentieth century, when the Islamic revolution took place in Iran, as the American decision-maker began to recalibrate his calculations regarding the Middle East, and this does not mean that religion was not present in US policies in its various stages of history.

### The history of American politics between the religious and material foundations

Since it became an independent and united entity, American policy has maintained a relatively fixed path, and up to the present time. These foundations were launched from a divine perspective based on the fact that what American presidents are doing is a measure outside of human will, and most American presidents have expressed this view<sup>1</sup>, and this can be seen in the sayings of a number of these presidents, for example John Adams<sup>2</sup> said: ((I consider Always the establishment of America as a divine goal designed

1. Robert Meckeever and others, politics USA, London, 1999, p . 474

2. He is the second US President who ruled during the period (1801-1797).. Modo MusclePeter Sham. The story of the presidents of the United States of America 'T. Ali Abdel-Rahim, Damascus, p. 9-11.



with the intention of enlightening and liberating humanity))<sup>1</sup> forgetting what the early Americans did in the exclusion, elimination and colonization of the indigenous people (the Indians), and the elimination of them and colonizing their land<sup>2</sup>, as President Franklin Roosevelt<sup>3</sup> mentioned ((Our destiny is the Americanization of the world))<sup>4</sup>, and in the same framework , the President John F. Kennedy<sup>5</sup> sees that ((Destiny wrote that Americans have no choice to be guardians of the walls of freedom in the world))<sup>6</sup>. This idea has remained entrenched in the thinking of most American presidents in various historical stages and up to the present time, as we note that the United States, based on the idea of divine mandate, was able to impose its will on most of the peoples of the world and direct it in accordance with its orientations and self-interests <sup>7</sup>.

The foreign policy of the United States in its early years was based on an economic basis, and tried as much as possible to avoid the political conflicts existing at that time between European countries, and this can be seen in the farewell speech<sup>8</sup> of US President George Washington <sup>9</sup>, in which he laid the foundations for the United States' dealings in its foreign relations.

American presidents adhered to a certain extent to the foundations laid by Washington for a period that lasted about two and a half decades, until the American colonial spirit emerged and began to compete with other colonial powers, when the United States proposed the Monroe Doctrine , which defined Latin American countries as an American sphere of influence, and under the umbrella of this principle the states were tightened. United took control of the American continent

The Monroe Doctrine was an expression of the United States 'fear that other colonial countries would exploit the fragile situation of Latin American countries, as a result of their recent independence, and impose their control over them. Therefore, it sought to impose its control over the region through the aforementioned principle. Most historians believe that this principle is the beginning of American isolation from international affairs, but we see in it a bold step through which a newly established

1. Claude Julian, *American Empire*, T. Naji Abu Khalil, Beirut, 1970, p. 23.

2. Allen Nevins and Henry Steele Kumberg, *Brief History of the United States*, Part I, T. Muhammad Badr al-Din Khalil, Dar al-Maarif, Cairo, 1974, p. 82 .

3. He is the thirty-second president, who ruled for the period (1933-1945). Peter Sham, *Op.Cit* , pp. 89-91.

4. Claude Julian, *Op.Cit*, p. 39.

5. He is the thirty-fifth president who ruled during the period (1961-1963).

6. Victor Pirlo, *Pillars of American Colonialism*, T. George Hanna, Beirut, 1954, p. 20.

7. The pretext of the divine mandate was evident in the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, when US President Bush announced that God appeared to him in the White House and blessed him for the war on Iraq. See: Shady Fakih, *Bush and the Great Day of God*, Dar Al-Alam for Printing, Publishing, Distribution and Marketing, Beirut, 2004, p. 13

8. The speech was delivered on September 27, 1796, see :. Henry Steel Commager, *Document of American History*, VOL II, New York, 1944, pp169-175.

9. He is the first president of the United States and ruled for a term (1789-1797), and was elected for two consecutive terms. Peter Sham Mudomska, previous source, p. 4



country was able to impose its will on the other powers present on the international scene in that time, and to impose itself as a strong rival that threatens those who touch their interests. It started in the countries of Latin America and continued until it encompassed the whole world.

After the United States secured its external borders, it tended to pay attention to internal affairs, and industries grew as a result of the availability of raw materials, capital and manpower, resulting in the accumulation of American capital at home, and the emergence of huge capitalist companies<sup>1</sup>.

The accumulation of capital and the emergence of huge capitalist companies created a difficult equation inside the United States, so these companies started looking for foreign markets to sell their products and invest the surplus capital, then they headed towards the Pacific countries inhabited by millions of people<sup>2</sup>, and commercial ships began to arrive in these countries until the American penetration reached the point The overthrow of the political system in some countries of the region<sup>3</sup>.

Based on the foregoing, we can say that the US foreign policy is distinguished from others in terms of being complex and extended and encompassing all parts of the world, as a result of its reliance on the rule of supremacy emanating from the perspective of the divine mandate that most Americans believed in, especially the presidents among them, and from this perspective the United States set up itself ((a protector of the walls of freedom in the world)) as President Kennedy mentioned, and this strengthened the economic and military power it possessed that resulted from its interest in the economic aspect and avoiding the European wars that were taking place at the beginning of its inception, so it dealt with the outside world with an economic mentality and tried as much as possible to avoid wars, And it has made the first pioneering economy of all its foreign policies, which over its relatively long history has become the focus of its global policy and up to the present time, and we can prepare the farewell speech of George Washington - the aforementioned - the practical beginning of this policy based on avoiding wars and problems that do not return to the United States with any beneficial outcome. And the trend towards the economic side.

Although the economic factor was the focus of American global policy, there was another factor in its side no less important than the economic factor, which is the religious factor through the missionaries who launched from the theory of divine mandate - the one mentioned above - as well as the influence of the Jews who were able to convince the Christians of the West

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1. Mustafa Hussein al-Najjar, *America and the World: A Study in International Politics*, Atlas Publications, Cairo, , p24.
  2. Muhammad Refaat, *America and the Far East*, Al-Katib Al-Masry Magazine, Issue 15, Cairo, December 1946, p. 414.
  3. Bemis, Op. cit, p459-462



that the return of Christ The second depends on the gathering of the Jews in Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel.

As a result, various currents have emerged that seek to fulfill the Christian-Jewish dream, most notably the Zionist fundamentalist trend, which had a serious role in directing global events in a way that suits its perceptions and goals and had a fundamental role in drawing the scenario of the war on Iraq, which resulted in the US occupation of Iraq. This occupation was justified by various pretexts and took many aspects, and in every aspect the religious factor took a basic place, whether it was apparent or hidden under various pretexts. In this next axis, we will try to highlight the role of religion in guiding US policy.

### **Religion and American politics:**

The American Constitution provides for the separation of religion from the state<sup>1</sup>, and despite this it is noticed that the role of religion in American politics was present in most American foreign policies, especially those related to Iraq and the Middle East, and this role has witnessed progress and decline at other times over the course of the relatively long history of the United States according to the directions of the President Who takes over the American administration <sup>2</sup>.

Since the inception of the first English colonies, Americans have seen themselves within the great current of the history of salvation, and they have seen that God chose the prairie for them in order to reform Protestantism, whose followers came to the new land from various directions of Europe <sup>3</sup>.

Religion contributed to Americans' visions of the world and of the US mission in the world. The different theological visions had political consequences that affected the course of foreign policy, as there are multiple currents in the United States, including (Christian liberalism, Evangelicalism, and fundamentalism), and each of these currents have visions and perceptions about the world. Christian liberals call for the establishment of a peaceful world order, and that morals are one. In all the world, the differences between Christians are simple, and this view dominated the international political perspective in the United States during the Second World War and the Cold War, but in recent years it faced coolness due to secularism and separation from religious tracks. As for the Evangelicals, they represented a middle trend and were seeking to establish a peaceful world order and make Christianity global, but they agreed with the fundamentalists on beliefs on morals, and they believed in the Bible's prophecies about the end of the world. And they see that the Jews have an important role in the end of the world and the second return of Christ. As for

1. Frank Lambert, *Religion in American Politics: A Brief History*, Translation. Abdul Latif Musa Abu Al-Basal, Nomou Publishing House, Riyadh, 2015, p.2.

2. Muhammad Al-Sammak, *Religion in the American Decision*, Dar Al-Naqash, Beirut, 2003, p.11.

3. Frank Lambert, *Op.Cit*, p 15.



the natives, they are distinguished by their pessimistic view of the possibility of a peaceful world order, and they placed the Bible in a high position, and saw the necessity of separating the Christian world from the non-Christian world, and they focused on the persecution of Christ abroad and adhered to what came in the part of the Torah about the end of the world<sup>1</sup>.

Fundamentalism goes back to the Protestant religious reform movement in the sixteenth century, which appeared in a number of Anglo-Saxon countries, which made the Old Testament a guide for the religious and secular life of people and was considered as a Jewish mission because it focused on the Torah, which is a record of the history of the prophets of the children of Israel, their kings, their worship and various matters<sup>2</sup>. The fundamentalist current was known by the name of the Christian Zionist movement due to its strong association with Zionism, and they believe that a Christian can only be understood through his understanding of the Old Testament and that the Old Testament is the basis for understanding the past, present and future, and it is the introduction and explanation of the New Testament and for a person to be a true Christian, the teachings of the Torah must be applied or The whole Old Testament<sup>3</sup>.

It is worth noting that the Christian faith believes that the Jewish nation ended with the coming of the Messiah and that the exodus of the Jews from Palestine was a punishment for them for the crucifixion of Christ and that the return of the Jews again to Palestine as stated in the Torah occurred when they returned from the Babylonian captivity at the hands of the Persian emperor just as Palestine is Christ's gift to Christians.

In the year 1523 A.D., a religious reform movement emerged in Europe centered around the saying (that the Jews are the chosen people of God and linking Christians to the second return of Christ on the condition that an Israeli Zionist state be established in Palestine, and a disagreement appeared within the movement itself about whether the Jews would remain in Judaism or convert to Christianity after the return of Christ, "the British said. The Jews will convert to Christianity and return to Palestine as Christ. As for the Americans, they said that the Jews will return as Jews and after the return of Christ, they will convert to Christianity, but they will remain separate from the Church<sup>4</sup>.

1. Shaima Bahaa El-Din and Majida Ibrahim, *The Religious and Politician in the United States of America: A Comparative Presentation of New Religions*, p. 16.

2. Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, *The roots of bias: a study on the impact of Christian fundamentalism on the American policy towards the Palestinian issue*, Abu Dhabi, 2002, p.8.

3. Shady Fakihi, *Bush and the Great Day of the Lord*, Dar Al-Alam for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Beirut, 2004, p.19.

4. For details on this seen: Redaa helal, *Christ Jewish and the end of world*, cairo ,2nd.ed ,2001.



### **The Middle East and Zionist fundamentalism:**

The Middle East occupies an important place in the literature of Christian fundamentalism, and how does the Torah decide the fate of the Jews in this part of the world. Over the course of its long history, this region was the focus of the greed of colonial countries for various reasons (political, economic and geographical), but this region has a special position in fundamentalist politics. Zionism is, in addition to the aforementioned reasons, there is a religious factor that drives Zionist fundamentalism to control the Middle East. There, the dream of the Jews and Christians who are established as they claim is fulfilled.

And there are many American presidents who care about Middle East matters from a purely religious side. In the era of President Lyndon Johnson every time a Middle East issue is raised before the US National Security Council, representatives of the Church were invited to the meeting to participate in making decisions that are compatible with the religious prophecies contained in The Old Testament <sup>1</sup>. And President Ronald Reagan hoped that he was the one who pressed the nuclear button to accelerate the second return of Christ.

The first person to use the term Christian Zionism was Theodore Herzl in his description of the founder of the International Red Cross, Henry Dunant, a wealthy Christian who provided assistance to the Zionist movement. Through the organic and political presence of Israel <sup>2</sup>. And one of the priests of the Christian Zionist movement says ((Zionism is understood through the Christian vision as being part of religious theology and not part of politics ... and that the State of Israel is just the beginning of what God does for the Jewish people through the Jewish people)) and accordingly they see It is the Christian's duty not to support Israel only, but to support its policy, considering that Israel is a divine sign of God's mercy and a response to His will <sup>3</sup> as they claim.

With this logic, the Jews were able to convince the Christians of the West to support them and preserve the existence of Israel, and this explains the unlimited support provided by the West to Israel, especially the United States, which is the focus of the Christian Zionist grouping and meets with Christian Zionism and Zionism in one point, which is the construction of the Temple on the Mount of Olives because this matter has Jewish Zionism as a sign The inevitability of the birth of Christ, the Jewish prophet who will make the Jews rulers of the world<sup>4</sup>, while this matter for Christian Zionism is a sign of the second return of Christ, which will make the whole world Christian.

1. Muhammad Al-Sammak, Religious Exploitation in Political Conflict, House: 1st ed , Beirut, 2000, p.61.

2. Muhammad Al-Sammak, Religion in the American Decision, p. 16.

3. Ibid , p 16-17.

4. Shady Fakih, Op . Cit , p. 22



### The American war on Iraq

Religion occupies an important place in most political conflicts, if not the basis of the conflict in most of them, and although the Constitution of the United States of America provides for the separation of religion from the state, religion has had a fundamental role in the American political decision-making process, and the presidents of the United States have built their foreign policy on the idea that God (Almighty and Majestic) has chosen this country to carry out a "sacred divine mission" as stated by a number of American presidents in various historical stages<sup>1</sup> as mentioned above.

Although the war on Iraq was politically justified by various pretexts that began with weapons of mass destruction and did not end with Al Qaeda, the religious factor had a fundamental role in this war, and the Bush administration (the son) was distinguished as the most American administration that employed religion in politics, and this employment was directly linked to Israel, so that the Republican presidential candidate in 2000 (Patrick Buchanan) described the US war on Iraq as an Israeli war by proxy<sup>2</sup>.

The American support for Israel in the past and present was ambiguous in many aspects, and if we want to understand the reason for this unlimited support, then we do not substitute for a return to the sixteenth century when the Protestant religious reform movement emerged in Europe and Martin Luther challenged the church's monopoly to interpret religious books and his revolution on the idea of selling bonds of forgiveness. The reform movement focused on the Old Testament and emphasized that it is the supreme reference for behavior and belief, and it became the right of every individual to interpret the Torah according to his trends and opinions, and a new revival of Judaism began after the Jews were rejected in Western societies.

The Reformation movement focused on the second return of Christ and the role of the Jews in this return<sup>3</sup>. They believe that Christ appeared first among the Jews and in Zion, and in order for him to return he must be between the Jews and in Zion. Therefore, they see the necessity of bringing the Jews together again in Zion, and Theodore Herzl adopted these ideas in 1897. He borrowed the word Zionism to express the legitimacy that believes in the necessity of the return of the Jews to Palestine. As a result, many interpretations of the texts of the Torah appeared that promoted these ideas, perhaps the most important of which was the book that published by Rev. Cyrus Scofield in 1930, and an explanation of Bible prophecies based on the ideas of the Irish priest Nelson Derby, founder of the dispensational movement, and the Scofield Angel stated that God has two kingdoms

1. Julian Claude, , Op .Cit, p. 38

2. Shady Fakh, Op . Cit, p. 22

3. Youssef Al-Hassan, The Roots of Bias, A Study on the Impact of Christian Fundamentalism on the American Policy Toward the Palestinian Cause, Abu Dhabi, 2002, p. 8-11.



Heaven is the Church and its Christian people, and the kingdom of the earth and its Jewish people. Therefore, every Christian must strive to establish the kingdom of God through Israel .

With this idea, he persuaded the Christians to cooperate with them to bring Christ back again and turn the Jews from outcasts that no one wanted them to become a chosen people. Most of the Western Christian peoples seek to establish their kingdom for the second return of Christ.

From this standpoint, the Christian fundamentalist or Christian Zionist movement emerged, and they believe that there are four inevitable signs of the second return of Christ, namely- :

- 1- The gathering of the Jews in the Holy Land.
- 2- Declaring Jerusalem (Jerusalem) as the capital of the Jews.
- 3- Building the Temple in place of Al-Aqsa Mosque.
- 4- Battle of Armageddon<sup>2</sup>.

And Armageddon was mentioned in the Torah more than once and they believe that it is a devastating battle that will take place in the future between the armies of the East and the armies of the West, and the battlefield is the Middle East. Thousand years<sup>3</sup>.

Christ clerics in the United States confirm that the war on Iraq is the first stage in the Battle of Armageddon<sup>4</sup>. The US President Bush is considered one of the pillars of the Mesodite sect expressing the Christian Zionist alliance, and British President Tony Blair is one of its members<sup>5</sup>. The fundamentalists found in Bush the son what they wanted, as he believed in their views to a greater extent than either Reagan or Bush the father had<sup>6</sup>.

This current or alliance played an important role in President Bush's victory in the presidential elections in 2000 and won 54% of the vote from the fundamentalist movement, as the United States has a large number of Protestants belonging to two hundred sects, and the largest of these sects is the indispenation that arose out. In the United States, after the establishment of Israel and until the eighties, it included more than forty million Americans, and former US President Ronald Reagan was one of its members. This movement believes that God (Almighty and Majestic) placed in the Bible prophecies about how He would manage the affairs of the universe and its end, including the rise of Israel and the battle of Armageddon and others, and the mission of its members this movement is to manage and prepare all the matters that accelerate the return of Christ to earth, and this movement possesses huge media capabilities and broadcasts

1. For more, see: Fakher Ahmed Shreiteh, Christian Zionism, MA Thesis / The Islamic University, Gaza, 2005. pp. 18-20.

2. Shady Fakih, Op .Cit , p. 20-39.

3. Muhammad Al-Sammak, Religious Exploitation in Political Conflict, Beirut, 2000, p. 55-57

4. Muhammad Ibrahim Bassiouni, the great conspiracy, the scheme to divide the Arab world after Iraq , Beirut, 2004, p. 54-55.

5. Shady Fakih, Op.Cit , p. 115-116 .

6. Frank Lambert Op.Cit, p. 166.



Programs presented by Christian fundamentalists and their ideas broadcast through (1,400) television stations in America and (400) radio stations. The most famous of these are Pat Robinson, Kenin Copeland, Jerry Falwell, former Vice President Reagan and one of those close to US President Bush Jr<sup>1</sup>.

President Bush had close relations with a group of fundamentalist pastors such as Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham and others who were the link between Israel and the United States, and who succeeded in linking political facts with biblical predictions. The priests of the Christian Zionist movement have promoted the war on Iraq, so Reverend David Brickz says ((We know that the destruction of Babylon that was mentioned in chapter 18 means the destruction of Iraq)) and Rev. Charles Dyer, professor of theology at Dalla Sama University, claims that Isaiah 13th indicates the rise of Saddam Hussein And his invasion of Kuwait to establish a base for the attack on Israel. Dyer considered Saddam Hussein to be the successor to Nebuchadnezzar, who had taken the Israelites into captivity and destroyed the Temple. The writer of President Bush's speeches is one of those priests, Michael Gerson. In addition, the US administration includes a large number of American Jews and some of them worked as advisers to previous Israeli governments. They are members of Sharon's Likud party, and these are the ones who proposed to Netanyahu in 1996, to work with the administration The US government aimed at overthrowing the Iraqi regime at the time and fragmenting the national unity of Iraq by hitting the Shiites by the Sunnis, the Kurds by the Arabs and the Muslims by the Christians.

To clarify more, the plan for the war on Iraq was drawn up in 1996 by Richard Yberle, President Bush's Middle East advisor and head of the Defense Ministry's political council, who was the representative of the Israeli Soltam Weapons Company in conjunction with Second Deputy Defense Minister Douglas Feith, and they were at the time serving as an advisor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. And they devised a plan to rearrange the Middle East in a way that suits the Israeli strategy using the means we mentioned above, and pushed the United States to implement it through a legitimate pretext to justify the war, such as the 9/11 scenario, which later turned out to be the planning of American terrorists. New York, where the events took place, included the majority of opponents of President Bush's policy and his war on Iraq. So did the events of September 11th convince New Yorkers, who are not fundamentalist Jews, and after them, the world that the war on Iraq is necessary for the security of the United States?

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1. Khaled Bashir, the five largest religious affiliations in the United States ... Do you know it, 10/28/2018, a report published on Hafarat.



That the war on Iraq did not come out of nowhere, but was planned at every step and came in implementation of Jewish plans to fulfill its hopes for establishing the Greater Hebrew State from the Euphrates to the Nile and to choose Iraq itself because it is directly related to the Christian belief, because the books of this sect see that Christ is like pure gold Sincere, and that this gold must be surrounded by huge quantities and must come from one of the countries near Jerusalem (Jerusalem) and it has certain characteristics and is found in a country that owes Islam and that the characteristics of this state apply to Iraq, and that the Gold Mountain is still present inside Iraq. The Messodian books say that if the Iraqis succeed in controlling the Mount of Gold, they will control the entire region and will go to the war of Israel and defeat it, which would delay the return of Christ by hundreds of years<sup>1</sup>.

With this Caliph, the United States rushed from behind Israel to destroy and control Iraq, and US Senator John Mirwan mentioned on March 3, 2003 ((that the war that is looming over Iraq is the fabric of the hands of American Jews)) and two days later, the American political commentator Nicholas Creston published an article in The American Gerald Tribune newspaper stated that ((the evangelical religious right plays an influential role in the political decision-making process of President George W. Bush, and that the president's decision to war on Iraq reflects to a large extent the extent of this influence, and therefore the war on Iraq has a clear religious dimension<sup>2</sup>.

In this way, the Jews were able to convince the Christian fundamentalists of the connection of the return of Christ to the establishment of the State of Israel, and focused on its hostility against Iraq, because the Jews realize that the destruction of their second state will also be at the hands of the Babylonians, and this meaning was mentioned in the Holy Quran in Surat Al Israa<sup>3</sup>. They worked to weaken Iraq by various means and justifications.

### **Conclusion**

So the United States has never separated religion from the state. Rather, religion was present in all its political decisions, especially those related to the Middle East, Iraq and Israel. Although its constitution, which the world boasts about, provides for the separation of religion from the state, it linked its concept of religion to achieving political goals and objectives through The main driver of its foreign policy is the Christian Zionist movement.

Hence, we can say that the war on Iraq was not due to weapons of mass destruction and other political justifications that were used as a front to justify the war in front of the world. Rather, the motive was that it was with

1. Shady Fakih Op.Cit, p. 110.

2. Muhammad Al-Sammak, Religion in the American Decision, p. 83-84.

3. The Holy Quran , SuratAl-Israa, 17.



the fundamentalist yaris who believed that Iraq was an obstacle to the second return of Christ.



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