



The United States of America and the use of terrorism tools in the future competitions with China and Russia

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Abstract

States are known as the most important actors in international relations, but this doesn't mean that other actors do not play a role. Now, considering the decline of American hegemony on the one hand and the rise of revisionist and aligned countries such as China, Russia and Iran on the other hand, the current research tries to address the question of "How can the United States use terrorist groups to compete with China and Russia and maintain and enhance its hegemony?". The entry of non-state and terrorist actors into the international system, especially after the end of the Cold War, has overshadowed the state-centered approach and has caused governments to accept and influence this phenomenon. One of the important issues regarding terrorist groups is their relationship with various states and the use of their tools, which, by nature, great powers at the global and regional levels have a greater ability to direct and exploit terrorist groups. In other words, the state, as the main actor in the international system, interacts with many non-state actors in the domestic and international arenas, and places some of these interactions within the scope of security interests and studies. Therefore, one of the dimensions of this interaction matrix is the use of non-state actors by the state for its own purposes. One of the most important manifestations of governments' exploitation of terrorist movements is the use of Takfiri groups by the United States and some of its allies in the Middle East in recent decades, especially in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq. The reason why the United States tends to adopt such a policy despite having a large military force is one of the challenging issues in the field of international relations and regional studies. Considering the element of competition between countries in the international system, it seems that the competition between the United States and other global and regional powers and the United States' efforts

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to maintain its superpower status are to prevent other great powers from rising as rivals and to prevent great powers from forming alliances against it. The research findings show that the United States can take conventional measures to prevent other actors from balancing, such as resorting to military action and war, utilizing UN and Security Council mechanisms, and engaging in economic sanctions and trade wars. But the United States faces various challenges in using these tools because its rivals cannot be controlled through conventional measures due to their possession of nuclear weapons, large economies, and membership in the UN Security Council with veto power. These obstacles are causing the United States to move towards the use of unconventional measures, one of the most important of which is the use of terrorism. In addition to the factors that create and exacerbate the emergence of terrorism (such as social, economic, political dissatisfaction, etc.), another factor called "organizer" should also be considered, which refers to the geopolitical interests of international and regional powers as a sufficient condition for the formation of terrorist groups. As American officials also acknowledge, without state sponsors, terrorist groups will have a much more difficult time obtaining the funds, weapons, materials, and safe areas needed to plan and carry out operations. Accordingly, there are two types of approaches to using terrorism to achieve the goals used by actors, especially great powers: first, which is mainly carried out by calling opposing actors sponsors of terrorism in order to put pressure on them; and second, which is mainly carried out through covert material support (military, intelligence, economic, logistical, etc.). With the lack of sufficient effectiveness of the first aspect of terrorism for the United States (calling other countries sponsors of terrorism), this country can also use other terrorism-based strategies to prevent the growth and balancing of rival countries, which will include two areas: first, strengthening and supporting terrorist groups within China and Russia and their immediate external environment (direct approach); and second, strengthening and supporting terrorism in areas where China and Russia have interests and allied governments (indirect approach). In other words, the United States is trying to pressure rival governments into terrorist activities at three levels. The first two levels relate to the direct use of the lever of terrorism against China and Russia, namely, the US support for Salafi-Takfiri groups within the

territory of these two countries, with regard to the issue of Islamism in Xinjiang and the North Caucasus at the first level, and also the support for Takfiri terrorism in the immediate vicinity of China and Russia as the second level, which includes the Central Asian region. The third level is the US support for terrorism against Russia and China indirectly, which means the US effort to create challenges in areas where these countries have important interests. The best option for the third level from the US could be the Middle East region due to the location of the Islamic Republic of Iran in this region and its cooperation with China and Russia. This use of terrorism by the US, which was raised at three levels, can help the US achieve its goals in the form of a proxy war. Goals such as overthrowing the governments of China, Russia and Iran, and thus reducing their influence in the external environment; reducing Iran's power; creating security threats on the borders of China, Russia and Iran and pushing them into regional conflicts; ensuring the security of Israel; Islamophobia and presenting a violent face of Islam; creating ethnic and religious conflicts, especially between Shiites and Sunnis; and creating an excuse for intervention and military presence in the peripheral environment of competitors such as China, Russia and Iran. In this research, the future research approach and the scenario writing method have been used.

Keywords: Takfiri terrorism, International system, American strategies, Security, Futures studies.

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