

Explanation Shiite Identity Seeking and the Middle East's New Geopolitics

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Social movements are regarded as one of the most efficient factors affecting the Middle East's regional geopolitics. Such a development can be taken into consideration in the process of political changes in the spring of 2011. Watching the Middle East's developments, one can see fundamental changes in the power structure, political process and geopolitical formations. In this process, grounds have been prepared for structural changes, shift of power, and the spread of political instability. The evolutions including the political leaders change in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, and suppression of the Shiite revolutions in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Syria, are political changes. The United States, as a world power, is trying to create new geopolitics in the region within the framework of the Middle East's political developments. The article by using content analysis method based on library sources pursues to explain Middle East's recent developments. The findings tend to define Shiite's identity seeking on the basis of three focal points of "demographic growth", "participation in power", and "political geography".

Methodology

As a methodology the content analysis is used in this article. The role of political factors, identification and analysis of security events and developments in the Middle East has been evaluated.

Discussion and Results

The Middle East in the 21st century has encountered with changed security equation. September 11 led to a sharp confrontation with the American conservative and Islamist extremist groups. Subsequently, the US Military attack against Afghanistan in November 2001 and the overthrow of the Baas regime in Iraq in March 2003 occurred. As a result of US occupation, a new discourse by US authorities in connection with the Middle East came into being. Middle East equation, aimed at expanding the democratic process and westernization was organized in the region.

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Conclusion

New geopolitical developments of the Middle East began after the Cold War. It can be as result of numerous political actions of regional actors and international actors as well. In this process, the transformation of political equation has occurred. This sign can be regarded as various topics of interest. The results of this paper show that:

1- During the Cold War, identity-oriented social forces in the Middle East were more active. The reason for this can be seen in the groups that were trying to form the new power equation. Among these groups, the Islamists and Shiites' can be considered as geopolitical power groups that were in lack of power in previous years.

2- Islamist groups have been in the situation of confronting the power structure. This resulted in regional changes in the policy equation. Side effects of regional integration through the partnership between US and the Middle East have been revealed. On the other hand, in response to the rise of conservative groups and social groups have been an identity seeking action.

3- US military forces in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, in the years after the collapse of the bipolar system and the end of the Cold War, have been significantly increased, so has created a regional war that led to Iraq and Afghanistan occupation.

4- President Obama administration has made more efforts to control the security environment by means other than armed conflicts, trying to control Shiite movements in region, and radical anti-US approach that has trouble to cope with. This can be seen in connection with the Alliance of US and Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Social Movements, Structural Developments, Shiite Geopolitics, Great Middle East, New Middle East.