

New Geopolitics of Shiism in the Middle East and Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

After US strike on Iraq, emergence of the second Shiite government in the Middle East is one of the most important focal points of the history of the region past the Islamic revolution victory because new changes have been made on the Mideast geo-strategic and geo-politic interactions given the revived Shiites and their represented identity in the regional states as well as their geopolitical-ideological effects on the regional security and authority structure. The issue, raised as a Shiite crescent designed or new geopolitics of Shiism formed, has been underscored by a large number of cross-regional and regional authorities; besides their reactions to the increased soft power of Shiites and Iran have aggravated the intense sectarianism. Accordingly, thanks to the significant role of new changes of regional geopolitics in the new security, socio-political order in the Middle East, this article deals with analytic evaluation of how process or project of new geopolitics of Shiism in the Middle East is formed, identified and politicized and has discussed essentials of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy in this regard.

This research aims to study and geopolitically elucidate the status of Shiites in the Middle East and reasons behind the formation and importance of Shiism geopolitics in the region. Based on this, this research has looked at geography and historical background of isolation, tyranny, suppression and social discrimination of Shiites as the minority religion in the Muslim world and has assessed the areas of a critical approach to Mideast geopolitics in the shape of Shiism geopolitics in the face of hegemony geopolitics. Therefore, main question of this research is that: "On which of the two approaches of hegemony geopolitics (in the shape of a project) or resistance geopolitics (in the shape of a process) has the new geopolitics of Shiism been formed?" Analytic-descriptive method has been applied in this research.

Methodology

Considering the fact that the researcher has both attempted to designate what's of new

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geopolitics of Shiism in the Mideast and sought to elucidate geopolitical considerations dominant over the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, collection of information has been made by different methods; generally by library and internet and findings have been appraised based on a qualitative analysis.

Results and discussion

Although Shiite crescent design can be considered as end result of strengthened social, economic and political potentials of Shiite geopolitics in the region, paving the ground for modified ideological and political map of the Mideast and has helped increased self-awareness and identification of Shiites in the region, no consensus exists over how it has appeared in the Mideast. This is while two discourses of hegemony geopolitics (raised by superior cross-regional and regional powers and in line with preserving and expanding their interests as a pre-designed project and resistance geopolitics (posed by Shiites as a social movement against ruling history-long structural discrimination in the region in the shape of a process) have been forged by different narrations. Nevertheless, plot of Shiism geopolitics can be regarded as dialectics of the two discourses of hegemony geopolitics and resistance geopolitics in the form of a process following a project and a discourse structure which is both constructed and constructive.

Conclusion

Shiism geopolitics is on one hand a critical statement of representing the collective and individual identity of Shiites when they express their dissatisfaction over the status quo and try to turn it into a desired situation and on the other hand, it is a discourse structure in the hegemonic geopolitics to maintain the status quo for balance of power in the Mideast.

Keywords: Geopolitics of Shiism, Shiite (Shi'a) Crescent, Geopolitical Hegemony, Geopolitical Resistance, Middle East, Iran.