

China and Russia against Islamic Fundamentalism

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Davood Mirzaei*

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Fundamentalism, today, is one of the most important threats that different states face in international relations. Although this issue has been different according to the principles and foundations of the internal and foreign policies of the governments, their approach to the nature, roots and contexts of the emergence of this phenomenon and the proximity or distance from the center of activities of fundamentalist groups and the consequences affected by it have been different. The common thread of foreign policy of all governments is the necessity of fighting, curbing and controlling fundamentalism. This issue has intensified especially after the September 11 incident and the U.S. effort to create a global consensus against terrorism and the developments affected by the Arab Spring and especially the formation of Islamic fundamentalist groups such as ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, etc., and then the Syrian crisis added to its importance.

In the meantime, China and Russia have adopted similar and different policies towards fundamentalism in their foreign policy. This issue is in the manner that it is possible to consider "the structural realism approach based on repelling threats and securing benefits from similar points of their policies and using China's soft and diplomatic power and Russia's military confrontation and regional pragmatism as one of the most important aspects of the difference between China and Russia strategy against fundamentalism. In this framework, China and Russia, on the one hand, due to the political and security considerations faced by their Muslim citizens, and on the other hand, due to the concern about the influence of the activities of fundamentalist groups in neighboring countries in Central Asia and the Middle East have reacted to this phenomenon.

In this context, Russia's foreign policy strategy against fundamentalism have been based on cooperation and partnership with the main players in the fight against terrorism and fundamentalism, focusing on greater political-security convergence with the countries of Central Asia, strengthening aligned governments in the countries of the Middle East region, using the potential of regional organizations such as the Shanghai Pact,

* Ph.D. of International relations, Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University, Qom Branch, Qom, Iran
Davoodmirzaei55@yahoo.com

maintaining and strengthening its military presence in the region and even military intervention to fight terrorism and extremism in Syria. On the other hand, China in domestic politics, while suppressing any Muslim activities in its country, especially in Xinjiang, in foreign policy, cooperates with key actors in the fight against Islamic fundamentalism, focusing on neighboring countries in Central Asia to curb and control of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, strengthening active presence in regional and international organizations, especially in using of the Veto power against resolutions in the Security Council regarding to Syria crisis, and also playing an extensive role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, however, China's foreign policy, unlike Russia and its pragmatic and military policy, under the influence of the strategic culture of this country, has tried to put the curbing of fundamentalism on its agenda by giving priority to its soft and diplomatic power and using political, economic, social and cultural tools.

In short, it can be said that the foreign policy of China and Russia is aligned against fundamentalism to the point of military intervention, China has adopted an economic and cultural approach and therefore, it does not try to have a military presence in critical areas such as Syria and Afghanistan but Russia have selected a military confrontation and regional pragmatism.