

Chapter 13. The United States' Use of Military Force and Terrorism

Abstract

When the United States intervenes militarily into the affairs of another state--whether it is a matter of furthering particular interests or of increasing its global influence--it may produce unintended negative consequences. Chapter 13 examines the impact of U.S. military intervention on the emergence of terrorist activity. It is argued that U.S. military action inadvertently increases the number of terrorist incidents by undermining the domestic security apparatus in the target state and by providing targets for terrorist groups. A cross-national, time-series data analysis of 166 countries during the period from 1970 to 2005 shows that the effect of U.S. military intervention is detrimental to its stated objectives, as it often incites greater terrorist activity. This finding implies that the United States, arguably the most powerful democratic hegemon, ought to be cautious of the use of military force as a foreign policy tool, as it may further provoke terrorist activity abroad.