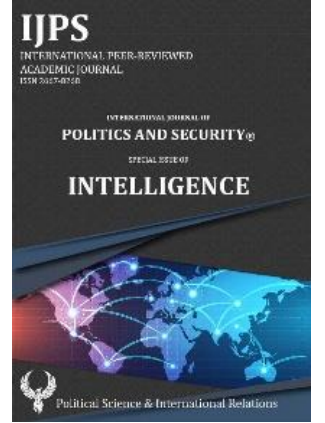


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Covert Action: Perils and Advantages

Halil ŞENER*

Abstract

Covert action is intelligence activity that is described as the "hidden hand" of states, in which states can create political, military, economic, and ideological effects in foreign policy. While it has a use rate of around five percent in traditional intelligence activities, it has a vital and facilitating effect on states' foreign policy. States seek to achieve foreign policy goals through covert action thanks to its facilitating nature. It provides capacity and can hide states' involvement in events via "plausible deniability". While it may provide quick and cost-effective solutions in the short term, it may leave a long-term hostility in the hostile state. The article uses a literature review as a research method. It aims to contribute to intelligence studies literature by analyzing covert actions in Iran, Albania, and Syria.

Keywords: *Covert Action, Foreign Policy, Intelligence, Intelligence Services, National Security.*

Örtülü Operasyon: Tehlikeler ve Avantajlar

Özet

Örtülü operasyonlar, dış politikada devletlerin siyasi, askeri, ekonomik, ideolojik etkiler yaratabildiği ve bu etkileri yaratırken rollerini gizleyebildikleri, devletlerin "gizli eli" olarak nitelendirilen istihbarat faaliyetleridir. Geleneksel istihbarat faaliyetleri içerisinde yaklaşık yüzde beşlik bir kullanım oranına sahip olsa da devletlerin dış politika araçları içerisinde kilit ve kolaylaştırıcı bir etkiye sahiptir. Devletler, geleneksel istihbarat faaliyetleri yürütmenin yanı sıra bu faaliyetlerle erişilmesi mümkün olmayan dış politika hedeflerine kolaylaştırıcı olması nedeniyle örtülü operasyonlar vasıtasıyla ulaşmaya çalışmaktadır. Örtülü operasyonlar, uluslararası sistemde devletlere kapasite ve etki sağlamakta, "makul inkâr edilebilirlik" bağlamında devletlerin olaylara dahiliyetlerini gizleyebilmektedir. Kısa vadede hızlı ve düşük maliyetli çözümler getirirse de hasım devlette uzun vadeli bir düşmanlık bırakabilmektedir. Çalışmada araştırma yöntemi olarak literatür taraması yönteminden faydalanılmıştır. Çalışmada İran, Arnavutluk ve Suriye'de gerçekleştirilen örtülü operasyonlar incelenerek, istihbarat çalışmaları literatürüne katkı sağlamak amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dış Politika, İstihbarat, İstihbarat Teşkilatları, Milli Güvenlik, Örtülü Operasyonlar.*

1. Introduction

Henry Kissinger, the former secretary of state of the U.S. legitimately notes that every nation needs an intelligence community that can defend domestic interests in the grey arena where military activities are not appropriate and diplomacy may not function.¹ In the most straightforward form, covert action is to influence the foreign audience to change their policies

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¹ J. James Wirtz and Loch K. Johnson. "Intelligence: The Secret World of Spies: An Anthology." Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2004):15.



in ways that benefit the government that carries out such covert action.² In that sense, this article argues that while covert action has emerged as a powerful tool during the Cold War and has been playing a pivotal role in implementing the foreign policy of the governments for a long period, little is known about covert action and what advantages and perils it has.³ This article initially argues that the issue of covert action has been a controversial and much-disputed subject within the field of intelligence studies since it has always been hard to define and suffers from an epistemological vulnerability.⁴ It further argues that despite the significance of covert action, there remains a paucity of evidence due to its exhaustive secrecy. Then, this article aims to show that covert action has been a dominant form in implementing foreign policy objectives and has been utilized by Secret Intelligence Service and Central Intelligence Agency in Eastern Europe for furthering the containment policy against the Soviet Union and for preserving the interests of the UK against Iranian and Arab nationalism in the Middle East, it has inherent problems. This article describes the design and implementation of covert action in Albania in the late 1940s, and Iran and Syria in the 1950s and critically analyze the perils and advantages of covert action. As a research method, the article utilizes a literature review. Despite its importance, covert action is controversial in intelligence studies, as it is difficult to define, and it suffers from epistemological vulnerability and evidence bias. This article aims to contribute to intelligence studies literature by analyzing covert actions in Iran, Albania, and Syria.

2. Literature Review

The United Kingdom has been engaging in covert action, meddling in domestic affairs of another nation in a plausibly deniable manner for a long time. The late 1940s experienced operations to 'liberate' Albania. The regime-change operations in Iran and Syria were observed in the 1950s.⁵ Covert action is closely related to foreign policy implementation through the use of secret service, as Richard Aldrich notes, it is to manipulate the political atmosphere in hidden

² William J. Daugherty, "Covert Action: Strengths and Weaknesses." In *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, by Loch K. Johnson, 608. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2010).; Ahmet Ateş, "Current Challenges and Trends in Intelligence", *Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi* 9, No 1, (2020): 193.

³ Ahmet Ateş and Anıl Çağlar Erkan, "Governing the European Intelligence: Multilateral Intelligence Cooperation in the European Union", *International Journal of Politics and Security* 3, No 3, (2021): 234.

⁴ Len Scott, "Secret Intelligence, Covert Action and Clandestine Diplomacy." *Intelligence and National Security*, (2010): 322.

⁵ Rory Cormac, "Disruption and deniable interventionism: explaining the appeal of covert action and Special Forces in contemporary British policy." *International Relations*, (2017): 169.



means for national, ideological, or ethnic objectives.⁶ However, the study of covert action remains insufficient within overall intelligence studies.⁷ Covert action has always been hard to describe. Even though covert action seems an American invention, the British used 'special political action' and 'disruptive action'⁸, and the Soviets have their term such as active measures, which refer both to overt and covert methods.⁹ That said, covert action naturally and ultimately poses an inherent epistemological problem. Furthermore, the academic study on covert action inextricably suffers from epistemological vulnerability due to its sophisticated secrecy. The world of covert action is the world of known unknowns and unknown unknowns as rightfully noted by Donald Rumsfeld. The academic study on covert action suffers from an evidence bias as well¹⁰ for the greater degree of works on covert action are journalistic works, which contribute as little as to the covert action discipline.¹¹ Having defined the different and complex nature of covert action, this article will move on to analyze the advantages and perils of covert action on a case-by-case basis in Albania, Iran, and Syria respectively.

3. BGFIEND/Operation Valuable

As a powerful foreign policy tool, covert action assumes a war-fighting role and has been used as a discipline of secret services to manipulate the political environment of an adversary. As such, as the Cold War intensified in 1948 with the comprehensive capture of power in Czechoslovakia by the communists along with the utter intelligence assessments on the expansionism of the USSR to a greater extent, covert action seemed to be an appealing option for British and American politicians.¹² BGFIEND/Operation Valuable, the Albanian project, which was carried out collaboratively by SIS and CIA was the epitomic offensive covert operation, which was the first western endeavor to topple a communist ruler that is the Soviet satellite.¹³ Albanian operation was an ambitious liberation operation to stimulate a civil

⁶ Richard Aldrich, "The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence." London: John Murray, (2001):344.

⁷ Scott. "Secret Intelligence, Covert Action and Clandestine Diplomacy." 322.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Abram N. Shulsky and Gary J. Schmitt. "Silent warfare: understanding the world of intelligence." Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, (2002):76.

¹⁰ Cormac. "Disruption and deniable interventionism: explaining the appeal of covert action and Special Forces in contemporary British policy." 169.

¹¹ Elizabeth E. Anderson, "The security dilemma and covert action: The Truman years." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, (2008): 403.

¹² James Callanan, *Covert Action in the Cold War US Policy, Intelligence and CIA Operations*. London: I.B. TAURIS, (2010):11.

¹³ *ibid.*



rebellion in the USSR by aiming to free the Soviet satellite states through techniques of subversion and sabotage, which are short of war.¹⁴ The primary objective is to intimidate the regime and disengage from USSR. However, such objectives should be, as the British Foreign Office clearly stated, carried out through covert actions, which do not include a crucial risk of war.¹⁵ Under such circumstances, covert action, as a 'murky action' governments launch without placing responsibility on the sponsor of such action, i.e. "plausible deniability", emerges as a godsend.¹⁶ Even though it is geo-strategically valuable to USSR, it had never signed a Mutual Security Pact with USSR and it is outside the Russian defensive buffer zone which enables external intervention.¹⁷ Therefore, it was easier for the UK and the U.S. to disengage Albania from USSR than any other Eastern European satellites. Under these circumstances, covert operations in Albania were carried out via Albanian emigres, which were trained by the British and Americans in a futile fashion thanks to the treachery of Kim Philby, a Soviet spy, who was an MI6 liaison officer in Washington, playing an elemental role in coordinating the operation for the British. BGFIEND/Operation Valuable was further hindered by the overestimation of SIS and CIA's capabilities and underestimation of their adversaries and poor selection of Albanian-exile groups. In that scope, while British intelligence officers reviewed Operation Valuable, they eliminated the use of emigres in covert action against the communists, labeling them as infeasible, too perilous, too offensive, and unfit for plausible deniability.¹⁸ Therefore, this article argues that covert action has its perils of producing problematic and unpredictable ramifications when it designates to bring about substantial shifts. It further loses its covertness as it gets so large, pervasive, and apparent and it is inevitable to keep it secret in a democratic society because of the media pressure and the declassification of relevant documents in time. Another peril of covert action is that as the covert operations take a more provocative and adversarial stance, the odds of failure increase, as well.

¹⁴ Rory Cormac, "The pinprick approach: Whitehall's top-secret anti-communist committee and the evolution of British covert action strategy." *Journal of Cold War Studies*, (2014): 5-28.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: The Daring Early Years of the CIA*. New York: Simon&Schuster, (2006):230.

¹⁷ Callanan. "Covert Action in the Cold War US Policy, Intelligence and CIA Operations." 12

¹⁸ Cormac. "The pinprick approach: Whitehall's top-secret anti-communist committee and the evolution of British covert action strategy." 5.



4. Operation Ajax/Boot in Iran

This article further argues that the 'secret but not secret' characteristic of covert action is alluring and exceptionally advantageous to policymakers for it provides them with an influential policy tool. Covert action grants policymakers varying degrees of pressure on the adversary regimes by providing plausible deniability for the sponsor of that covert action.¹⁹ Policymakers utilize covert action programs for multiple reasons, some more conclusive than others, but many times they do so for one simple reason. They work.²⁰ Covert action is less noticeable and less meddlesome than the employment of military forces and further to that, it usually comes to fruition swifter than the lagging steps of diplomacy.²¹ This is evident in Operation Ajax/Boot, which was conducted to topple the popularly elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammed Mosaddegh in 1953 through a coup d'état, which was coordinated by the U.S. and the U.K. to strengthen the monarchical rule of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.²² Iran situates in a geostrategically pivotal place along with its abundant oil reserves. Therefore, it is defined as 'pieces on a chessboard upon which is being played out a game for the dominion of the world' by the British Diplomat, George Curzon.²³ During the First World War, Iranian petroleum reserves were substantial for Churchill, for he changed the Royal Navy to oil-burning ships from coal-burning ones. To control the world's largest reserves, Churchill fought to get the lion's share of the new Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Such a move helps fuel the new armada of the British, therefore, oil became crucial for the British navy.²⁴ The British got excessively more revenues from the oil reserves than the Iranian government. Such injustice paved the way for Mohammad Mosaddegh to be the Iranian Prime Minister, who nationalized Iranian oil.²⁵ Nationalization law gave way for a direct collision with the U.K, which was designed to re-establish its control on the Iranian reserves by overthrowing Mosaddegh.²⁶ The '1953 Iranian Coup was a classic case of nationalism, clashing with imperialism in the third world'.²⁷ In such

¹⁹ William J. Daugherty. *Executive Secrets: Covert Action&The Presidency*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, (2004): 93.

²⁰ Loch K. Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2010):23.

²¹ Loch K. Johnson, "Bricks and Mortar For a Theory of Intelligence in Comparative Strategy." *Comparative Strategy*, (2010): 1.

²² Gasiorowski. "The 1953 Coup D'etat in Iran." 261.

²³ *ibid*

²⁴ Tim Weiner, "Legacy of Ashes: The history of the CIA." New York: Doubleday, (2007):81.

²⁵ *ibid*

²⁶ Gasiorowski. "The 1953 Coup D'etat in Iran." 261.

²⁷ Ervand Abrahamian, "The 1953 Coup in Iran." *Science&Society*, (2001): 183.



economic and political motives, covert action provided the policy-makers with an influential third option. The British attempted to influence Mosaddegh's nationalization law through bribing politicians, newspaper editors, and other agents of influence.²⁸ The U.S. stepped up its campaign of bribery and subversion. Through the British, the U.S. enjoyed the influence-buying network, which was run by Rashidian Brothers.²⁹ Thanks to such influential agents, an almost spontaneous revolution started with people taking to the street, among them, Ayatollah Khomeini, the prospective leader of Iran was present, to shout pro-shah and anti-Mosaddegh slogans, burning the political headquarters of a pro-Mosaddegh party.³⁰ Such subversive action, as noted by Ambassador William M. Rountree, ultimately created a proper political atmosphere, which led to ousting of Prime Minister Mosaddegh, the appointment of a pro-western Prime Minister, and an increase of power of the monarch, establishment of the pro-western and anti-communist regime. To Kermit Roosevelt Jr, the Shah told that 'I owe my throne to God, my people, my army, and to you!', by you, he meant Great Britain and the United States.³¹ Turning now to the advantages and perils of covert action, this paper argues that covert action must achieve the intended political objectives and must provide plausible deniability for the role of the foreign government, at least for reasonable years.³²

5. Operation Straggle in Syria

This article further argues that the implications of a CIA-SIS-backed coup to overthrow Mosaddegh were so successful that such clandestine activities extended to Syria between 1955-1957.³³ Due to its geo-strategically significant position, it has often been a place for covert action as the domestic sectarian struggles have juggled with the meddling external secret services, other Western and Arab powers alike.³⁴ Thanks to its strategic position with oil pipelines and communication lines connecting the Persian Gulf with NATO ally, Turkey, Syria

²⁸ Weiner. "Legacy of Ashes: The history of the CIA."84.

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The struggle for the control of Iran*. New York: McGraw Hill, (1979).

³² Daugherty. "Covert Action: Strengths and Weaknesses." 608.

³³ Douglas Little, "Mission Impossible: The CIA and the Cult of Covert Action in the Middle East." *Diplomatic History*, (2004): 663.

³⁴ Matthew Jones, "The 'Preferred Plan': The Anglo-American Working Group Report on Covert Action in Syria, 1957 ." *Intelligence and National Security*, (2004): 401.



has always been a theatre for the balance of power in Middle Eastern politics.³⁵ However, after gaining independence in 1945 from the French, Syria has been a particular cause for the western powers.³⁶ Due to the power vacuum following the French, Syria experienced an omnipresent sense of insecurity, sustained by the presence of Israel and internal rivalries, paving the way for coups and violence in a turbulent political atmosphere.³⁷ The British placed significant importance on Syria since it attempted to maintain its position through Syria whereas the U.S. had the vision of Arab nationalist leaders to collaborate with the U.S. against the Soviet threat and to further containment policy.³⁸ Accordingly, Syria found itself in a tug of war between the U.S. and the Soviets. In that perspective, following the several military coups and factional struggles within the army and increasing pro-communist Ba'athist influence in Syrian politics, the U.S. was increasingly concerned with the anti-western discourse of Syrian foreign policy and the communist takeover in Syria.³⁹ In such a political atmosphere, covert action was considered a panacea solution as a response to pressing a pro-western government in Syrian politics with a collaborative operation by the CIA and SIS to undermine the Syrian regime⁴⁰ through bribery of the Syrian Army, building up of Iraqi forces in a rapid manner, pro-Iraqi propaganda.⁴¹ The plan was to foment insurgency in Damascus and other large cities. The conservative elements in the Syrian Army would move in and suppress unrest and then arrest the Syrian government by declaring a coup d'état.⁴² Accordingly, the CIA backed this plan with \$167,000 and pledged to assist the new government following the coup. However, Operation Straggle had to be postponed for five days since Israel invaded Egypt, setting off the Suez Crisis and it was believed that it would be a mistake to pull off this plan during Israeli aggression.⁴³

³⁵ Ahmet Ateş, "Syrian Civil War and Its Impact on the Turkish Intelligence Community", in *The Role of Intelligence and State Policies in International Security*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, New Castle Upon Tyne, 105-107.

³⁶ Anthony Gorst and Scott W. Lucas. "Other collusion: Operation straggle and Anglo-American intervention in Syria, 1955-1956." *Intelligence and National Security*, (2008): 576.

³⁷ Matthew Jones, "The 'Preferred Plan': The Anglo-American Working Group Report on Covert Action in Syria, 1957 ." *Intelligence and National Security*, (2004): 401

³⁸ Anthony Gorst and Scott W. Lucas. "Other collusion: Operation straggle and Anglo-American intervention in Syria, 1955-1956." *Intelligence and National Security*, (2008): 576.

³⁹ Matthew Jones "The 'Preferred Plan': The Anglo-American Working Group Report on Covert Action in Syria, 1957 ." *Intelligence and National Security*, (2004): 401.

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ Anthony Gorst and Scott W. Lucas. "Other collusion: Operation straggle and Anglo-American intervention in Syria, 1955-1956": 576

⁴² Jan Goldman, "An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies". Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, (2016): 356

⁴³ William Blum, "U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II. Monroe": Common Courage Press, (2004).



By then the news of Operation Straggle had been leaked to the Syrian government and it had to be aborted.⁴⁴ Due to the unpredictable nature of the Middle East politics, even if the Syrian Government had not been warned, the Suez Crisis would make Operation Straggle an impossible case.⁴⁵ In 1957, the U.S planned another coup (Operation Wappen) to topple the Syrian Government, however, this covert action had to be aborted due to the leaks again.

6. Discussion

This article sets out to portray that while covert action provides an influential tool for policymakers to change the adversary regime through a third option between the glacial pace of diplomacy and thundering nature of employment of military force⁴⁶ and grants a cost-effective solution, as it gets so large, prevalent and glaring, it is hard to keep it secret and it loses its covertness inevitably. It further argues that covert action generates problematic and unpredictable repercussions when it is assigned to achieve major shifts and gets more provocative and adversarial. It discusses that it is difficult to keep it confidential in a democratic society due to the media pressure and declassification of relevant documents. It observes that covert action is a risky venture and is not immune from failures and suffers from worrisome unpredictability, notwithstanding being fully under control. It contends that even though covert action seems a panacea in the short term, it may prove a perilous venture in the long turn for leaving a profound and long-lasting legacy and hostility in the adversary nation due to its unpredictable nature.

Operation Ajax/Boot, provided policymakers with an influential tool to change the adversary regime via covert action rather than ineffective diplomacy and immediate and violent hammer of military force.⁴⁷ It enabled U.K. and U.S. to enjoy a wide range of operational possibilities from putting measured pressure on the audience through bribery of politicians and newspaper editors to highly provocative means such as supporting revolutionary movements.⁴⁸ It further argues that the cost of a covert action can be surprisingly inexpensive.⁴⁹ Operation Ajax/Boot was a cost-effective operation since it was coordinated in a basement in Tehran by

⁴⁴ Goldman, "An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies." 357.

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ Johnson, "Bricks and Mortar For a Theory of Intelligence in Comparative Strategy.": 3.

⁴⁷ Daugherty, "Covert Action: Strengths and Weaknesses." 608.

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ Daugherty, "Executive Secrets: Covert Action and The Presidency." 71.



five intelligence officers, furnished with one million dollars.⁵⁰ To Andrew Killgore, a U.S. diplomat, 'it was a tremendous victory for the CIA, which altered the entire fate of a country'.⁵¹ While Operation Ajax/Boot was highly advantageous for the British and the U.S, it suffered from unpredictability for it left a weighty and long-standing heritage in Iran.⁵² It put an end to Iran's slow progress toward a more representative form of democracy. What's more, it is widely believed that the coup incomparably strengthened the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which toppled West-favouring Shah and ultimately replaced him with the western foe, the Islamic Republic.⁵³ Ultimately, this article discusses that Operation Ajax/Boot was a perilous venture for the U.K. and U.S. in the long run.

As the covert action turns sour, it puts pressure on and tarnishes the credibility of the president on an international scale with a full-blown fiasco.⁵⁴ In that perspective, such perils outweighed the advantages of covert action in the BGFRIEND/Operation Valuable as it was 'overly ambitious and too big to be secure'⁵⁵ and deliver a blow to the agency's prestige.

In evaluating the perilous nature of covert action programs such as Operation Straggle and Wappen, they both were unsuccessful and risky operations, paving the way for the Syrian government to put the American embassy under perpetual surveillance, and expelling secret service operatives and most Western ambassadors. Ultimately, western interests in Syria were greatly diminished and such covert action programs had long-lasting effects since western powers have not been able to infiltrate the Syrian government to change its policies.⁵⁶ This article, therefore argues that even though covert action could be considered a panacea for foreign policy objectives, where diplomacy and employment of military force could not bring about the intended change in an intended manner by providing plausible deniability, previous successes in covert action and over-reliance on a limited tool for changing regimes could give way to long-lasting ramifications.⁵⁷ This article further discusses that as with all intelligence

⁵⁰ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy: Third Edition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, (2003):89.

⁵¹ Weiner. "Legacy of Ashes: The history of the CIA."92.

⁵² Ervand Abrahamian, "A History of Modern Iran." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2008):121.

⁵³ Kinzer, Stephen. "All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror." New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, (2003):197.

⁵⁴ Rory Cormac, "Covert action failure and fiasco construction: William Hague's 2011 Libyan venture." *Journal of European Public Policy*, (2017): 10.

⁵⁵ Callanan "Covert Action in the Cold War US Policy, Intelligence and CIA Operations."85.

⁵⁶ Goldman. "An Encyclopedia of Covert Ops, Intelligence Gathering, and Spies."357.

⁵⁷ Daugherty. "Covert Action: Strengths and Weaknesses." 608.



operations and programs, covert action is a risky venture and not immune from failures and suffers from troublesome unpredictability, notwithstanding comprehensive control. This article also deliberates that Operation Straggle paved the way for long-lasting ramifications for the western powers to play a part in Syrian politics. Furthermore, it argues that as the covert action becomes more confrontational, it is hard to maintain its covertness. This article simply resolves that as the covert action gets more threatening, it attracts the attention of the domestic secret service of the adversary nation.

7. Conclusion

This article has set out to argue that covert action has appeared as a robust foreign policy tool in the Cold War against the Soviet Union for containment policy and preserving the national interests of the United Kingdom against Arab nationalism. It has shown that covert action has been a questionable and disputed area within the field of intelligence studies since it suffers from evidence bias and epistemological vulnerability. Analysis of covert action in Albania, Iran, and Syria has shown that while it provides a plausibly deniable powerful tool and a third option for policymakers between time-consuming diplomacy and tumultuous nature of military force and enables cost-effective solution, as it gets so extensive and noticeable, it is difficult to keep it confidential. Notwithstanding the relatively limited sample, this article offers valuable insight into the advantageous and perilous nature of covert action and has further identified that it produces puzzling and unpredictable repercussions when it is utilized to achieve major shifts and gets more confrontational and antagonistic. The most obvious finding is that covert action is a risky venture and is not immune from failures and suffers from troublesome unpredictability, no matter how well-controlled it is. In general, therefore, it seems that while covert action may seem a cost-effective and influential tool, the perils of covert action may outweigh the advantages in the long run since it leaves a hostile and long-lasting legacy in the adversary nation in an unpredictable manner. Overall, this article ultimately strengthens the idea that a key policy priority should, therefore, be to plan for the longer-term objectives and attain them gradually and incrementally by testing the waters and advancing when conditions are suitable.



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