DOKUZ EYLÜL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM
MASTER'S THESIS

US POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN, 2001-2021: FROM MILITARY INTERVENTION TO MILITARY WITHDRAWAL

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İZMİR-2022

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "US Policy Towards Afghanistan, 2001-2021: From Military Intervention to Military Withdrawal" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resourses in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

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ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

US Policy towards Afghanistan, 2001-2021:
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The 9/11 terrorist attacks that took place at the beginning of the 21st century were among the most critical events that has shaped the century. With concretization of the concept of international terrorism, it has entered the agenda of states as one of the biggest threat and security problem of the new era. The US as the victim of the attacks was most affected. While the attacks caused a foreign policy change for the US, the term "global war on terror" emerged and led to US military intervention in Afghanistan, which would last for about 20 years.

With the beginning of the Afghanistan intervention, very different discussions started in the literature. It has become important to evaluate this intervention in terms of both US foreign policy and the concept of humanitarian military intervention. The questions that constitute the main subject of this thesis are shaped by these two evaluation points. Was US military intervention in Afghanistan morally legal and necessary? Was US military intervention in Afghanistan necessary for US interests and foreign policy? If there is no necessity from both perspectives, what is the logic behind US intervention, the reason for continuing of intervention and the reason for complete withdrawal after almost 20 years?

In order to answer these questions, the thesis evaluates the necessity of humanitarian intervention through the theory of "just war", and from a realistic point of view. From these two perspectives, an assessment is presented

by explaining the reasons behind the US decision of withdrawal. The reasons for the prolongation of the intervention process, which could not be considered as successful from both respects, are also examined.

Keywords: September 11 Terrorist Attacks, Afghanistan Intervention, Humanitarian Military Intervention, Just War Theory, Realism.

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

ABD'nin Afganistan Politikası, 2001-2021: Askeri Müdahaleden Askeri Geri Çekilmeye

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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı

Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans Programı

21'inci yüzyılın başında gerçekleşen 11 Eylül terör saldırıları tüm yüzyılı şekillendiren en kritik olaylardan birisidir. Uluslararası terörizm kavramının somutlaşması ile birlikte, yeni dönemin en büyük tehdit ve güvenlik sorunu olarak devletlerin ajandasına girmiştir. Bu olaylardan en çok etkilenen saldırıların mağduru olan ABD olmuştur. Saldırılar ABD için bir dış politika değişimine sebep olurken, "terör ile küresel savaş" terimi ortaya çıkmış ve ABD'nin Afganistan'da yaklaşık yirmi yıl sürecek askeri müdahalesinin başlamasına sebebiyet vermiştir.

Afganistan müdahalesinin başlaması ile birlikte literatürde çok farklı tartışmalar ortaya çıkmıştır. ABD dış politikası ve insani askeri müdahale kavramı açısından bu müdahaleyi değerlendirmek önemli hale gelmiştir. Bu çalışmanın başlıca konusunu oluşturan sorular bu iki değerlendirme noktası üzerinden şekillenmektedir. ABD'nin Afganistan'a düzenlediği askeri müdahale ahlaki açıdan yasal ve gerekli miydi? ABD'nin Afganistan'a düzenlediği askeri müdahale ABD'nin çıkarları ve dış politikası için gerekli miydi? Eğer iki yönden de bir gereklilik ortada yoksa ABD'nin müdahalesi arkasında yatan mantık nedir?

Bu sorulara cevap verebilmek için bu tez çalışması insani müdahalenin gerekliliğini "haklı savaş teorisi", ve realist bakış açısından değerlendirmektedir. Bu iki bakış açısından ABD'nin geri çekilmesi kararının

arkasında yatan sebepler de açıklanarak bir değerlendirme sunulmaktadır. Bu iki açıdan da başarılı sayılamayacak müdahale sürecinin bu kadar uzamasının sebepleri de irdelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 11 Eylül Terör Saldırıları, Afganistan Müdahalesi, İnsani Askeri Müdahale, Adil Savaş Teorisi, Realizm.

US POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN, 2001-2021: FROM MILITARY INTERVENTION TO MILITARY WITHDRAWAL

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CHAPTER THREE

MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BSA	Bilateral Security Agreement
ETIM	East Turkestan Independence Movement
EU	European Union
HIG	Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin
ICISS	The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	The Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISIS-K	Islamic State - Khorasan Province
MAK	Maktab al-Khidmat (Afghan Services Bureau)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSS	National Security Strategy
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PNA	Preliminary Needs Assessment
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitations Talks
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

INTRODUCTION

The 9/11 terrorist attacks were the most critical issue in the United States (US) national security agenda at the beginning of the 21st century, leading to the emergence of the global war on terror. The war in Afghanistan is the longest war in American history. The reasons of the war in Afghanistan and why it has been so long as well as ethical concerns have been discussed continuously over a 20-years period.

The global war on terror began with the Bush administration's decision to intervene in Afghanistan. As the concept of global war on terror evolved, the US began to use it as a strategy to justify military operations and use of force in different parts of the world (Johensen, 2014). The Iraq War, which Bush launched two years after the Afghanistan intervention using the doctrine of preventive warfare, is the most important example.

The war in Afghanistan became the longest war in which the US participated, surpassing the Vietnam War, when its full withdrawal was completed in 2021 (Malkasian, 2021: 61). More than $2.3 trillion has been spent in this intervention making it one of the most costly expenditures for the US (Crawford, 2021a). In addition, nearly 1 million US personnel served in Afghanistan, with more than 20,000 injured and over 2,400 personnel killed (Crawford, 2021b). While an extra "death gratuity" of around 245 million dollars was paid for those who lost their lives, nearly 500 billion dollars were paid to post-9/11 war veterans within the scope of disability and health payments (Bilmes 2021: 13). It is expected to reach 2 trillion by 2050. This has been a great disappointment for the US, both economically and politically, at the point where the goals of the American intervention and the results achieved are compared.

On the humanitarian side, the Afghanistan intervention has also caused ethical problems in meeting the purpose of humanitarian intervention. More than 46,000 civilians have been killed by the conflict in Afghanistan, bombings, raids, drone strikes, airstrikes, and mutual operations by both the US and insurgent (Crawford and Lutz, 2021). Many more civilians have been injured, harmed, and used because of these attacks (UNAMA, 2022). The Afghan community, which has been trying to escape this violence, has been displaced for 20 years by having to

migrate to surrounding countries and further afield. The total number of displaced people exceeds 3.5 million, while 2.2 million Afghan refugees are in neighboring countries (BBC, 2021). With the Taliban regaining control in Afghanistan, people fleeing the Taliban quickly flocked to the surrounding countries, fleeing as migrants to countries including Turkey, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan.

The liberal internationalist foreign policy attitude of the US has been criticized especially from a realist and isolationist perspective, especially when it comes to the continuation of the war that started in connection with its national security, the weakening of its importance for the US in terms of national interest, and the consequences of the ongoing war. Academics such as Mayer (2018), Miller (1998), Waltz (2000) and Walt (2018) have studied the necessity of Afghanistan intervention under realist lens, together with their research on US interventionism after the Cold War and post-9/11.

There were discussions on humanitarian military intervention in terms of the objectives, strategies, and way of implementing. These discussions, shaped mostly by the ''just war theory", questioned the necessity, justification, and continuity of US intervention in Afghanistan. And it has created a concrete field of study of recent just war theorists. Elshtain (2004), Orend (2006), Wheeler (2002) and Walzer (2002) helped to create the starting point for many works on the ethical infrastructure of the intervention by adapting the just war arguments on military intervention and evaluating the war in Afghanistan. Based on these arguments this thesis evaluates US intervention to Afghanistan. On the one hand, it is seen as an unsuccessful experience when it is examined from a realist perspective, how much the war is beneficial for the US, how profitable it is and how much damage is done. But at the same time, from the ethical point of view, the theory of "just war" and from the perspective of humanitarian intervention, it is valuable for the re-evaluation of norms and even adding new norms, and there has been no successful intervention in this regard in terms of the outcome of the war. Researchers such as Connah (2021), and Varobej (2009) have chosen to analyze the "just war" of the Afghanistan intervention from a realistic perspective and analyze why the Afghanistan intervention began and ended.

The completion of the Afghanistan intervention and the complete withdrawal of US troops is still an up-to-date event. In this respect, it is important to examine and evaluate the entire twenty-year process. At the same time, it is valuable to understand foreign policy transformation of the US and the reasons of withdrawal from Afghanistan. After all, a good number of years in the 21st century has been spent with this intervention. Understanding and evaluating the end of American intervention is important not only for the US, but also for the actors involved and for geopolitical developments. Furthermore, it is essential to analyze the intervention from both ethical and realist frameworks, also from the framework of the US national interests and necessity of the Afghan intervention carried out within the concept of humanitarian military intervention, and from the framework of the morally just war theory, to understand the necessity of war and complete withdrawal.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the foreign policy changes and the path to complete withdrawal in the process of the longest war of the US, which lasted twenty years. While doing this, the thesis attempts to evaluate the "justification" of the war in Afghanistan with a realistic point of view in terms of the national interests of the US. In order to achieve this, the decisions of the US foreign policy and the change process is analyzed beginning from the Obama era, when the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan was first taken, to the Biden era, when the complete withdrawal finally took place.

The thesis is based on qualitative research. The literature in the study, which was conducted to be more desk research, was obtained from academic literature and research from the official websites based on information and data obtained from primary and secondary sources. In this respect, especially from the perspective of "just war theory" and "realism", the policies of the US in Afghanistan are evaluated. The fact that there has been a lot of work since the beginning of the intervention on the subject helped on objectivity and access to information. This facilitated the research in terms of analyzing and evaluating the entire process.

The thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter is conceptual and theoretical framework, the second chapter is on US military intervention and the third one is on US military withdrawal from Afghanistan. In the first chapter, "Conceptual and Theoretical Framework", the just war theory, its definition and

historical developments are explained. The concept of humanitarian military intervention is explained through interventionism, which has been redefined for the last few centuries, and also information about its recent use is given. Then, the relationship between the concepts of just war theory and humanitarian military intervention, their common aspects, and the intertwined concepts such as "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) have been explained and how the realist perspective evaluates the concepts of just war and humanitarian military intervention has been examined. Finally, a realistic evaluation of the post-Cold War policies of the US is presented.

The second chapter, ''Historical Background'', began explaining the developments in Afghanistan before the September 11 attacks. After the attacks, the new foreign policy strategy of the US in the Bush period is explained. The US National Security Strategy is examined under the name of the Bush Doctrine and the global war against terrorism, the US strategies, reconstruction project, continuation of the intervention and development process are evaluated.

In the third chapter, "Military Withdrawal from Afghanistan", the complete withdrawal process from the US's first withdrawal decision and explanation of its strategy are analyzed. In line with the new Afghanistan strategy of the US, which changed with the Obama era, the exit strategy from Afghanistan is examined. The strategy and logic of Trump's foreign policy plan in Afghanistan are explained. The whole process is analyzed by focusing on the complete withdrawal of the US involvement with the Biden era. Finally, this chapter is completed by evaluating the US intervention in Afghanistan and the withdrawal process from a theoretical framework based on the just war theory and realism.

The fact that this thesis is based on the sources in English and mostly on the American literature on this event has provided limited perspective. In other words, the failure to reach to the Afghan literature due to language barriers might cause a limitation. Another limitation might be regarded related to the theories used in the thesis. The subject is evaluated through the "Just War" Theory and Realism, thus there is the lack of evaluation in many aspects of other international relations theories such as liberalism, constructivism, and institutionalism. However, it is considered important to analyze the intervention from two perspectives, in terms of evaluating

the Afghanistan intervention based on national interests and ethical values. Finally, due to limited access to primary sources, access to data and information through secondary sources can be said to be another limitation. However, the fact that most of the data obtained from these secondary sources have direct access to primary sources shows that the collected information is consistent.

CHAPTER ONE
CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The 9/11 attacks were a major turning point in international relations and the work of many disciplines. With the end of the Cold War, while the world was still at a new milestone, this event, which took place in a short time, brought new meanings to the perceptions of war, peace, law, justice and freedom, but also brought many controversies. These new meanings include the concept of just war, which has been discussed since the early years of humanity and has gained new meanings again in all periods of history. The just war, rooted in historical and philosophical humanity, rested as a matter of debate as a result of two sensational events at the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century. The reappearance of the concept of just war, which was mostly shaped in the Middle Ages, and the beginning of new discussion also raised the question of "Is the 21st century the beginning of a new Middle Ages?" by some scholars (Bull, 2002:246; Friedrichs, 2001: 475).

With the concept of humanitarian intervention, which has gained popularity since the twentieth century, the just war theory has gained value again. In particular, the concept of preventive warfare arising from the US National Security Strategy, known as the Bush Doctrine, and subsequent military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, led to the reading of military actions and interventions through this concept by examining the concept of just war (Ozluk, 2015, 17). Therefore, first, in order to focus on the policies and development of the US within the scope of humanitarian military intervention, the just war theory will be defined. Then the concept of humanitarian military intervention will be explained and its relevance and historical development to just war will be given in other section. At the same time, humanitarian intervention will be evaluated from the Realist perspective, and finally, a realistic approach will be presented to the post-Cold War humanitarian intervention of the US.

1.1. JUST WAR THEORY

After the 1990s, the discussion of the concept of just war and trying to enrich it with new definitions owes its essence and its emergence as a theory to medieval political thought and its scholars. However, its existence as a tradition is as old as the war itself (Moseley, 2004). Which in many periods of history has been discussed by other philosophers and scholars as "the child of civilization" (Toynbee, 1951) or "the father of all things...". (Heraclitus, DK B53). As a result, the rules and principles of war have been drawn up since the beginning of history. At the point where human history and war history are held together, it can be said that the concept of just war is the same age as humanity (Weeks, 2010:10).

Faced with the destruction of war with the emergence of the first great wars and mass conflicts, it is also said that humanity has set some principles to limit potential destruction and prevent the destruction of society, and thus the first rhetoric of just war has developed (Moseley, 2004). These principles did not develop in every land where there is humanity. According to cultures and traditions, different human societies tried to determine the issues related to war. In this context, the principles of war, which were initially focused on the concepts of honor and pride, emerged and war began to be seen as a means of justice in the first developed societies such as Ancient Greece (Coskun, 2018:150). The concept of justice has also been an important starting point in shaping the basic framework of just war theory. However, according to his research, Cox (2017) shows that a war ethics was formed not only in Ancient Greece but also in Ancient Egypt, which was shaped as a theory of just war.

The principled foundations of the just war theory were laid thanks to Christian culture and medieval theologues that developed during the Roman period. During this period, some sections of the Holy Bible were referenced to the justice of war and pointing to ethical behavior in war (Dearey, 2003:25). In particular, St. Augustine's teachings and his role in the Christian tradition were a guide for many scholars in the foundation of the teaching of just war (Holt, 2005). Medieval theologues and scholar from St. Augustine demonstrated a limiting understanding of war and began to shape the teaching of just war. Most importantly, Aquinas attempted to define the conditions under which war could be just, and the principles

of just war began to be outsized based on his definitions (Morrow, 1998:28). According to him, three conditions were required for the war to be just: sovereign authority, just cause, just purpose (peace). However, Aquinas is also important for theory in that he is the first thinker to systematically list the conditions under which a war can be considered just and legitimate (Draper, 1990:180).

In the transition to the modern era, ideas about just war continued on the foundations laid by Aquinas. It bears a very similarity to that of Aquinas in the circumstances set by Francisco de Vitoria, who played a religiously important role in Spain's colonial period and conquests (Ozluk, 2015:25). But unlike Vitoria, he said that differences in religion and faith were not justified causes of war (Corey, 2012:131). There has been a transition in terms of modernizing theory and becoming secular Grotius, considered one of the founders of international law, has added a line of law to the teaching of just war, describing the ideas he put forward for the regulation of wars and the conditions for the war to be justified (Corey, 2012:140). Thus, the teaching of just war, which tried to establish a more religious center in medieval teaching, became more secularized and the foundations of today were laid.

Other thinkers such as Suarez, Hobbes, Vattel, Kant, Wolff, Pufendorf in the period that followed Grotius continued to work on just war and tried to make it a teaching of law by trying to distance themselves from their religious phenomena (Nussbaum, 1943:468). However, the implementation of the teaching of just war in international law corresponds to a period that can only be considered as new. With the end of the First World War, a sustainable peace environment was tried to be established with the idea of the League of Nations at the beginning of the 20th Century. It was also possible to prohibit the use of force against each other by the Briand-Kellogg's Pact in 1928 (Ozluk, 2015:18). It then gained a more legal dimension with the United Nations (UN) treaty, setting out the rules for the use of force. With the development of international law, the war called the use of force was characterized as a legal war rather than a just war (Demirbas, 2017:896).

The Cold War dynamics and emerging new types of conflicts and wars have been discussed and brought up again in the teaching of just war. With the emergence of the Korean War, the Cuban Crisis, the Vietnam War, the Arab-Israeli Wars, the Soviet-Afghan War, the likes of Walzer, Struckmeyer, Ramsey began to renegotiate

the doctrine of just war (Johnson, 1984:301-313). The end of the Cold War ignited the reassumed debate about just war. Especially the struggles against humanitarian crises in the Balkans (Bosnia and Kosovo Wars), conflicts and wars in the Middle East (Invasion of Kuwait, Gulf Wars) have been the main areas where just war has been discussed (Domagala, 2004:5; Dolan, 2005: 22). However rising terror has unleashed a new and unknown war and sparked more debate about adapting just war to the present (Dolan, 2005:22). The new just war debate, which started with the concept of humanitarian intervention, continues today due to crises such as the Intervention in Afghanistan and the Iraq War and the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War.

1.1.1. Understanding of Just War: Jus ad bellum, Jus in bello

The concept of just war is used to qualify that war can be carried out for a number of just and fair reasons. It tries to present certain criteria for deciding whether a war is fair or not, serves a just cause and purpose or not (Fixdal and Smith, 1998:286). This idea, which seeks to create a war ethics and morality, also refuses to separate politics from ethics (Elshtain, 2001:3). Understanding is at its core the evil of war and unethical. However, concept argues that war is a means to be applied if just conditions arise to prevent greater evil and injustice. By today's scholars like J. T. Johnson, war is not an evil in itself, they say that we can characterize war as bad or good according to who used it and its purposes (Johnson, 2011:2). In other words, tradition discusses the moral obligations of violence and the use of force. When evaluating the behavior of war in a moral framework, it surrounds the action with certain conditions and restrictions.

The theory of just war, which stands out as a war ethics, raises a series of questions about resorting to war. Why do we fight; it's fair to fight for what; what is allowed in war and what is not... (Elshtain, 2001: 4). These questions are not only about in which situations the war will be justified, but also about the rules and restrictions under which the war can be conducted. Although many different additions and changes have been made to definition and scope since St. Augustine, there are two basic principles adopted by general just war theorists: jus ad bellum

and jus in bello (Calhoun, 2001:45). The other principle adopted since the 20th century but not so common is jus post bellum (Cryer, 2012; Stahn et al, 2014).

The first basic principle of just war is considered jus ad bellum. The main problem with the concept of jus ad bellum is what are the criteria that can justify war. It is a principle that expresses the environment before the war has even started. Main questions what the conditions in the surrounding area are and what the parties are fighting for and whether they have justifications to war (Kolb, 1997). These justifications were also listed for centuries, starting with Aquinas. Although the criteria of many just war scholars are different, they are similar in their basis. For example, there are three jus ad bellum criteria for Aquinas: legitimate authority, just cause, right intentions (Lazar and Frowe, 2018:131). An example from today is Richard Miller's jus ad bellum criteria: right authority, just cause, right intention, last resort, proportionality, reasonable hope, relative justice, open declaration (Miller, 1991:13-15). John M. Mattox lists the principles of just cause, comparative justice, right intention, competent authority, last resort, public declaration, proportionality, peace as the ultimate objective of war (Mattox, 2006:9-10). As you can see, although different environments and periods create different criteria, they have similar outlets at the base, but they are all extended or narrowed down. But the important thing is to focus on and understand the key norms in the theory of just war.

The right/legitimate authority criterion since Aquinas is accepted by almost all just war theorists. This criterion includes discussion about who has the right to use force and how to exercise it correctly. The sovereign authority, which has no higher authority over itself, can only decide war (Demirbas, 2017:903). For this reason, the concept of sovereignty constitutes the essence and dilemma of this criterion. This authority was attributed to God at the earliest days of the theory of just war and throughout the Middle Ages. However, with the secularization of theory and the modern states becoming the present, the fact that the sovereign states are the most authoritative authorities has led to greater debate about who will use the power (Crawford, 2003:7).

Another important criterion has been the just cause. As described in the emergence of the theory of just war, war is seen as unethical and forbidden. However, some reasons may require fighting. Previously, these reasons were usually

caused by religious and spiritual reasons, but today they are caused by more secular and ethical concepts such as defending the innocent, defending themselves, protecting humanity, punishing evil (McMahan, 2005:14). However, the fact that the war is a bipartisan action is another dilemma here. Ian Holliday, for example, argues that war will not be a just war if the other side has a just reason to fight (Holliday, 2002:562, as cited in Ozluk, 2015:29).

The right intention criterion is in contact with just cause. The right intention argues that for just reason, it can be fought to achieve the listed goals (Domagala, 2004: 11-12). Therefore, whatever the just cause at the beginning of the war, the real intention should be to achieve peace and reconciliation. For this reason, this criterion envisages taking the necessary measures to prevent injustice, eliminate the crisis and ensure peace (Lucas Jr, 2003:131). The ultimate goal of a just war will be to achieve a peace that will bring justice (Elshtain, 2001:9).

One of the most important criteria for just ad bellum is undoubtedly the last resort. According to this criterion, any war or military intervention should be used as a last resort. In order not to fight before this, other early and coercive measures must be taken (Domagala, 2004:12). These can be diplomatic negotiations, economic sanctions, political restrictions, embargoes, etc. However, if such tools are used but no results are achieved, use of force could be appliable (Lucas Jr, 2003:136).

In addition to these four main criteria, the other two criteria frequently included by just war scholars, especially after the 20th Century, are proportionality and reasonable hope/probability of success. Reasonable hope/probability of success is the criterion that argues that even if there are fair grounds for entering a war, it cannot be considered a just war if it has no chance of success (Elshtain, 2001:4). In connection with this, proportionality is the criterion that compares the outcome of the war and before. So, if the situation at the end of the war is worse than it was at the beginning and has more harm than benefits, this war cannot be considered a just war (Fixdal and Smith, 1998:303-304, McMahan, 2005: 3-4). In addition, open declaration is frequently mentioned as jus ad bellum criterion. As its name makes clear, it describes the obligation of one party to inform the other party and explain it to the communities when entering the war (Calhaun, 2001:47). Otherwise, a war cannot be considered just and undermines the justification of the just side.

According to jus ad bellum criteria, once the war is considered just, the other principle of just war comes into play. This principle, referred to as jus in bello, has been a matter of debate about how to conduct the war fairly. In the meaning of the word, the principle has tried to establish limitations in the case of war based on the questions of what is right in war and what should be the rights of war (Johnson, 1984:302). Walzer (1977:21) described the independence of jus in bello (law in war) principle from jus ad bellum principle, saying that a war that is justified can be conducted unjustly or a war that is unjust can be justified. The two principles generally accepted under jus in bello criteria are: proportionality and discrimination.

The principle of proportionality describes proportionality of the forces and tools used during the war (Johnson, 1994:323). The purpose of this criterion is to minimize the destructiveness of war and to limit the use of excessive force (Elshtain, 2001:4). It is argued that actions such as rape, plunder, and embezzlement, which are considered unethical and do not coincide with human values, should not be applied.

The discrimination criterion relates to the discrimination of targets in battle. McMahan (2005:6), for example, explains this as the need for fighters' attacks to be targeted only on military targets and soldiers. More specifically, it can be explained as the immunity of civilians and innocents. Because according to just war, war is opened up against those who cause harm and threaten humanity, its main goal is to protect civilians and ensure that they are not affected (McMahan, 2006:50).

With the increase of just war debates in the 20th century, the principle of jus post bellum, which was not previously included in the literature, began to be adopted. This principle is related to the arrangement of peace and the provision of justice after the conflict (Stahn, 2006:921). However, it also includes other actions such as repairing the damage caused by war after the war, determining the responsibilities of the warring and restructuring (Williams and Caldwell, 2006:315).

Generally speaking, the principles of just war have revealed the criteria before, during, and after the end of a war. Although the principles of jus ad bellum and jus in bello have changed shape almost since the beginning of history, there have been two basic principles of just war. The recent change in the values and way of war, and the development of international law and institutions, has played an important role in the jus post-war bellum principle for the postwar situation.

1.1.2. Problems and Critiques

The theory of just war, which has been widely discussed and designed by many scholars and theorists, also has many contradictions and dilemmas in it. Some of these contradictions and dilemmas are caused by principles and criteria themselves, but also by the new dynamics created by the changing world. Certain scenarios that may arise for the principles and the criteria they create cause problems. Just war theorists, on the other hand, have been criticized by others for their mindsets, which can be considered invalid against these scenarios.

For example, the concept of just cause, which is one of the most basic and indisputable criteria, causes some dilemmas in terms of scope. To protect yourself, to protect your allies, to recover what they have lost or to punish the aggressive act are such justifiable reasons that have formed the foundations since the classical teaching of just war (Fixdal and Smith, 2005:295). The changes in the definition of the act of aggression here and the new concepts are quite open-ended. Physical injury is an aggressive act, as well as a commercial embargo against a society or state is an aggressive act in the eyes of the states (Moseley, 2004). So, can the embargoed state carry out an attack as feeling threatened? If this action is justifiable, is the embargoed state deemed to have acted unfairly? Which side has committed the first unjust action? Although it contains no violence, does the embargoed state give the opposite state a reason for a just war with an aggressive act? There needs to be a consistent and robust explanation of what is meant by the right reason for answering such questions. Ultimately, the just war theory does not answer the question of what is just war (Calhaun, 2001:50). Considering that both sides fighting can use this rhetoric when the main goal is to ensure good and peace and to avoid evil, finding out which side has the just cause can also lead to endless debate, because the element that constitutes the just cause may differ from one interpretation to another (Kalkavan, 2018: 4).

Again, the criterion of legal authority in classical just war thinking is still an ongoing condition for just war. The emergence was born of the idea that only legal political organs, not individuals, could wage war. Thus, it was thought that there could be a just war under the responsibility of a legal authority, not the legitimacy of

individuals and certain groups. But can the legality of an authority really be a criterion? Wasn't Hitler himself a leader with legal authority and who had uncovered his own justifications? How legal was the puppet government, which was formed under the name Vichy Government? (Moseley, 2004) Therefore, it will be controversial to refer to the concept of legal authority as a just criterion of war without answering questions about what is meant with the state and how to ensure the legality of a government (Johnson, 1984:309). At the same time, the international emergence of new actors has raised another legal authority issue. Revolutionary groups, separatist groups, terrorist groups have also ignited a huge debate about the legality of the new world as actors involved in the concept of war (Hower and Millies, 2006:9-13).

Another criticism came from the use of war as a last resort. Of course, a just war should never resort to war first. However, the changing definition of war and changes in today's technologies also see the use of war as a last resort as something that may be too late (Calhoun, 2001:49). The more modern, more destructive, and irreversible properties of weapons now make it difficult to use them, but they also provide a window into the side that can use them (Baloglu, 2019:38). This reveals one of the points at which the theory of just war is associated with humanitarian military intervention and preemption. Accordingly, an obstruction that is too late may cause more damage (Fixdal and Smith, 1998:302). Such a dilemma has been pushed to be examined mostly in the name of discussions of humanitarian military intervention.

While having the right intention is also less problematic, its robustness has still been a critical principle, because it may be a mystery at what point the right intentions and interests are separated and intersected (Childress, 1978:438). Helping and defending a neighbor may seem like a moral act, but what if his actions and interests deserve such aggression? In other words, if what is needed to achieve peace is to attack the neighboring state, what will just war say about it? How can we calculate the morality of action if defending the oppressed nation in a state but taking advantage of the turmoil in that country serves the interests of the state? So, it's not just about moving right it's about the right intention, but it's not measurable (Fixdal and Smith, 1998:300).

The principle of reasonable success and the principle of proportionality also create a moral-practical dilemma. If there is no plausible success, shouldn't an oppressed group be helped? If a state has no chance of winning, does it have to give up and surrender? How fair is it to crush a stronger side if it's more cost-effective and more likely to succeed? (Moseley, 2004) Such questions indicate that while these criteria may seem morally correct, there may be problems with their practical application.

Criticism of jus in bello criteria also addressed the lack of practical aspect of theory in general. The emergence of new forms of war on the principle of discrimination, and especially guerrilla wars, has raised new problems in terms of civil and combatant separation (Walzer, 1977:179). At the same time, the fact that the weakness of modern weapons in attacks leads to civilian deaths as 'collateral damage' creates unfairness of any just war (Walzer, 1977:151, Elshtain, 2001:5). In addition, questions about the change of tactics to be used during the war in the new world and that some unethical acts such as assassination can be used to achieve better causes another problematic debate (Moseley, 2004).

The criticisms that can cause problems on the philosophical and moral side of just war and remain philosophical in general have evolved into different discussions due to the changing world, definitions, new ideas and concepts, especially since the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century. Especially with the development of international relations and the concept of humanitarian military intervention in the legal aspect, the theory of just war has been directed to be discussed through this concept and to the concept of increasing interventionism today as a field of discussion for theorists.

1.2. HUMANITARIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION

The concept of humanitarian military intervention can be defined as a state or authority's use of military force to end human rights violations against another state or authority (Marjanovic, 2011). Keohane and Holzgrefe (2002) accepted this definition but highlighted the point of use of military force without the permission of the intervened state within the concept of humanitarian intervention. However, many

theorists and scholars may have different additions or deficiencies in their definitions. However, a common feature of the theories of humanitarian intervention is that humanitarian intervention is based on Kantist moral ethics (Bagnoli, 2006; Nardin, 2002; Pape, 2012).

The idea, theory and application of humanitarian military intervention also present many dilemmas for the international community. Just as in the theory of fair war, definitions that create gaps in humanitarian intervention raise some questions: What are the standards of the humanitarian emergency, and to what extent do different opinions agree on these standards? Even if an agreement is reached in such a situation, do states have the right to intervene? And if it is to be intervened, who should and according to what rules should it act? Basically, the scholars who try to answer these questions are camped out through the "solidarist-pluralist" distinction of the English School (Bellamy, 2003a: 3; Stivachtis, 2017:31).

Pluralists argue that there is no agreement on the standards of the humanitarian emergency. And therefore, they say that the intervention of states in humanitarian crises is usually not due to humanitarian emergencies, but to national interests (Booth, 1999:94). This, arguing that this violates the rights of a state, defies the norm of protection and non-interference in sovereignty, making weak states more vulnerable to the powerful (Bellamy's, 2003a: 4; Dunne, 2016). For this reason, pluralists like Bull argue that states defend the rules of the international community not only with a sense of national interest, but also because the rules appear to have moral and legal authority by the states (Wheeler, 1992:467). In other words, the pluralists argue that humanitarian intervention is illegal according to the rules of the international community, focusing on the norms of mutual recognition of state sovereignty and non-intervention (Bellamy, 2003b:323).

Solidarists, on the other hand, almost completely oppose these views of pluralists. First of all, he believes that the international community can have a common position that will determine the standards of the humanitarian emergency (Bellamy, 2003a: 4). As an example, they cite the human rights regime adopted by the UN as an example. However, they say that the dominant model of pluralists and the non-intervention rule will cause some states to exploit their own communities and citizens (Dunne, 2016). Solidarists think that if there is a great deal of harm and

the sovereign state is guilty or unable to prevent it, then the international community has a duty to intervene to help those who suffer it (Dunne, 2016).

These two views are important for separating the scholars and the academicians to parties in the ongoing humanitarian intervention debate. Because the different discussions in different periods were generally shaped by the definitions within this solidarist and pluralist distinction, and the sides of many scholars were separated from these two concepts. In order to understand the concept of humanitarian military intervention through these explanations and definitions, it is necessary to know the development of the concept of humanitarian intervention.

The humanitarian military intervention was first described in the 19th century. As recently as a century ago, it entered into the debates of international law. However, the roots that form the criteria and principles of the concept of humanitarian military intervention are based on the teaching of just war. From the just war point of view, the humanitarian military intervention advocates can only be for humanity. However, the concept of nation-state and territorial integrity with the 1648 Westphalia Peace gave birth to the concept of non-intervention, which formed the basis of international law and society, and forms another part of humanitarian military intervention (Massingham, 2008:810). However, there is a dilemma here. The concepts of respect for humanity and sovereignty do not correspond to the concepts of war and military intervention (Cassese, 2005:375, Miller, 2000:5). This dilemma over humanitarian intervention is still the basis of the debate over whether such an application should be carried out.

The acceptance of the concept of humanitarian military intervention, which we understand today, in the literature is a 19th-century originated concept. According to Brownlie (1963:338), it is considered an inherently obscure and abusive concept by powerful states. While there is no interpretation of this concept in any legal document or agreement, the concepts of sovereignty and non-intervention of states are emphasized. Yet the League of Nations, the Briand-Kellogg Pact and the Saavedra Lamas Treaty explicitly banned any intervention, both armed and diplomatic, and sought to remain within a more pluralist framework. (Massingham, 2008:812). After the Second World War, the principles of non-intervention, which are still accepted today, were developed under the UN Charter. According to the UN

Charter, all states are equal to each other based on the principle of sovereignty (UN Charter, art. 2, para. 1). It also prohibits the use of force that would harm or threaten the territorial integrity or independence of any other state (UN Charter, art. 2, para. 4). Only the right to self-defense is designated as an exception to this prohibition on the use of force (UN Charter, art. 51). Although human rights are mentioned in many parts of the Charter, it does not contain a clause regarding the use of force. This led to a continuation of the dilemma between a humanitarian cause and a violation of sovereignty, and further fed the thoughts of the pluralists (Franck, 2003: 216).

1.2.1. Humanitarian Intervention during the Cold War

The Cold War and beyond is a paradigm shift for humanitarian intervention, according to Bertschinger (2016). Interventionism in the Cold War was inherently influenced by World War II regulations and considered illegal, including the use of military force for any intervention (Welde and Wardhani, 2020:229). While the unconstructed rule of non-intervention is accepted by the UN charter, human rights violations or civil wars in member states are left to their own internal jurisdiction[1]. And with the exception of the South Africa and Rhodesian examples of the 1960s, the UN did not approach the search for intervention or resolution[2]. Thus, it can be said that the pluralists prevailed during the Cold War.

However, there were inevitably interventions during the Cold War, and there were far from humane. The Cold War rivalry led to numerous interventions by the US and the Soviet Union. The ideological and strategic warfare of the Cold War caused both sides to try to justify their interventions on moral grounds. Military interventions by superpowers, especially during this polar war, appeared to be carried out on humanitarian grounds, but were due to political interests and balance policies (Ayoob, 2015:85-86). As the US rose to superpower status and was in no position to prioritize legal and moral principles in its fight against the Soviets (Walt, 2018:9). In

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[1] UN Article 2.7. It constitutes the article which states that the UN does not have the authority to intervene in matters that fall within the internal affairs of any state. See more in *UN Charter.*

[2] UN member states intervened Rhodesian Civil War by imposed sanctions. Also, UNSC applied Resolution 411 due to ''illegal racist minority regime'' in Rhodesia.

such an environment, there were not many legal developments during the Cold War to defend or advance the legality of humanitarian military intervention.

The 1960s and 1970s were a difficult time for humanitarian intervention. Especially when the reactions against the Vietnam War and US policy combined with the unsuccessful operation, a great disappointment emerged. However, the regulation of refugee aid in the later Cambodia crisis[3] can be said as a positive development against humanitarian interventionism, although it serves political interests. However, although the support for humanitarian intervention was tried to be increased during the Reagan era, previous failures and the bad reputation of the US did not allow this much (AFR, 2021).

During the Cold War, the US also carried out some of the actions it now opposes under the circumstances of that period. For example, in the late World War II, the US bombed German civilian areas, supported the regimes of anti-communism dictators during the Cold War. Also opposed unnecessary interventions for his own benefit, was reluctant to spend money, condoned mass killings like Cambodia and refused to intervene unless there was a strategic and strong justification (Walt, 2018:9). Sometimes went into a pit like Vietnam to balance Soviet competition by not serving its own interests and acting far from the realism of the US (Morgenthau, 1965).

1.2.2. Humanitarian Intervention after the Cold War

Since the 1990s, however, both the end of the Cold War and the different dynamics that emerged have changed the situation. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the unipolar order that emerged in the hegemony of the US also led to a change in humanitarian interventionism and implementation. After the Cold War, the US became more casual and episodic, especially with much less concern about the US interventions (Mastanduno, 1997:57). This was because of the comfort of the lack of a superpower to respond to the US in a unipolar world. Which is a good

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[3] A 24-year crisis that started during the Vietnam War and continued with the invasion of Vietnam. It has caused millions of Cambodians to die, displace and emigrate. It is important that the UN Peacekeeping operations after 1991 and the United Nations Transitional Authority, which he later established in Cambodia, took part in resolving the crisis and restructuring it. see more *https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/untacbackgr1.html*

example of the fact that the US was not involved in the Yugoslav crisis until almost the last moment. However, while oil concerns during the Gulf War and the US interests accelerated the intervention, they resisted intervention in events that did not affect the vital interests of the US, such as Rwanda and Somalia (Mastanduno, 1997:57).

At the same time, the definition of security changed and concepts such as civil wars, conflict resolutions or conflict prevention began to take their place as security objects of the post-Cold War era (Walde and Wardhani, 2020:230). The idea that solidarists and humanitarian crises could also pose a threat to international peace and security began to gain more power (Bellamy's, 2003b: 325). The process that began with the invasion of Kuwait and subsequent UN Coalition intervention in Iraq emerged as an exception to the principle of non-intervention, setting an example for the humanitarian interventions of its successor (Bellamy, 2004:218). Subsequently, the UN's decision to allow military interventions in regions such as Angola, Liberia and Yugoslavia indicated an evolution within the UN within the framework of the concept of humanitarian military intervention (Bellamy and Dunne, 2016:3). At the same time events such as Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia... reinforced the arguments of solidarists (Bellamy, 2003a: 4)

The new crises that emerged in the post-Cold War world were also new opportunities for some. According to Wheeler (2000:154), Western powers began to use humanitarian terms to justify their intrusive actions. According to the observations made by Welsh (2006) and Teson, in the late 90s, although the UN did not explicitly support humanitarian military interventions, it began to tolerate them more, as in the case of Bosnia[4] (Massingham, 2008:814). However, during the 90s, many theories of human intervention began to emerge. While these theories and discussions were mostly about determining the terms and principles of humanitarian military intervention, the discussions began to intertwine, reinforced by the principles of just war.

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[4] UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), which was established with the decision numbered UNSCR 743, was involved in the Bosnian War between 1992-1995 as a Peace Corps on behalf of the UN.

1.3. JUST WAR THEORY AND HUMANITARIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION

The new crises that emerged during and after the Cold War, and especially those referred to as humanitarian crises, also led to the idea of humanitarian military intervention gaining strength in the UN. The development of the concept of human rights and the increase in its universal nature with globalization led to greater expression of the right to receive humanitarian aid and the obligation of international organizations to provide it (Roberts, 1993:435). Many new developments under UN institutions have raised questions about whether consent is needed for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. The controversy swirling over the barriers that state sovereignty has created to provide people with human aid has been coupled with questions about whether states can serve their conqueror purposes by abusing it (Thoolen, 1992 as cited in Roberts, 1993:436). According to Gerald Vann (1999), different questions and answers constitute different intrusive typologies. Hawks who argue that there should be a winner of the war and thus peace can be achieved; like pacifists who argue that no intervention should be allowed in any way, and real interventionists who want to stop the slaughter and destruction, no matter what reason it is caused (Vann, 1999).

Today, when states intervene militarily in other countries, they strive to legalize it by linking it to humanitarian purposes and principles. Indeed, while the purpose of states is to protect the vulnerable, eliminate violence on people and strive for humanitarian assistance, humanitarian military intervention is morally ambiguous (Miller, 2000:3). This uncertainty has led just war theorists to develop ideas on humanitarian military intervention in order to eliminate this moral uncertainty. Nicholas Wheeler[5] was one of the first authors in this field to make assessments on humanitarian military intervention, referring to the principles of just war (Seybolt, 2007:13). Writers who wrote about just war, such as Elshtain, Orend and Walzer, also wrote their own thoughts on humanitarian military intervention.

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[5] *WHEELER, N. J. (2004). Saving strangers: Humanitarian intervention in international society. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.*

Scholars who write about humanitarian military intervention have often tried to focus on in what situations humanitarian intervention would be legal. These scholars, such as Wheeler, sought answers to the question of whether humanitarian military intervention could be done through the criteria of just war (Davenport, 2011:518). For example, under the right authority criterion, no state can intervene in another under conditions where each state is equal according to the UN Charter today. Elshtain and Orend, on the other hand, reconcile the sovereignty of states with the guarantee of the human rights of citizens, saying that a state that fails to ensure the minimum rights of its citizens has lost its legal authority in international law (Orend, 2006:35) In such a case, interfering with this country would not be a violation of legitimate sovereignty. Orend, like Walzer, has been analyzing more of a just cause for reading about the violation of sovereignty. Accordingly, he argues that humanitarian military intervention is only possible in very difficult and narrow situations, that is, when people are not only helpless, but in need, and it is impossible for them to save and protect themselves (Orend, 2006:92). The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) defined these situations as genocide, ethnic cleansing and large-scale human casualties (ICISS, 2001:31). However, Walzer also says that the UN is not an ideal authority for decision-making cases and that a stronger and more central institution is needed under the Right Authority criterion (Davenport, 2011:523).

1.3.1. Responsibility to Protect

The new crises that emerged after the end of the Cold War and the problem of intervening in them also led to the emergence of new norms. In particular, major genocides and tragedies that marked the 90s, such as Rwanda and Srebrenica, demonstrated the failure of the international community. (Kerton-Johnson, 2011: 63-64). This led the UN to question itself and its arrangements for intervention. It raised questions from then-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan about how to respond to severe and systematic attacks against common humanity and human rights violations (UNGA, 2000:35).

It wasn't just scholars who tried to set the criteria for humanitarian intervention. At the same time, the ICISS, the interim commission established in 2001, has tried to determine the conditions for humanitarian military intervention through theories of just war (ICISS, 2001). These conditions, which are determined as six, bear the same names as the criteria for just war, but are similar in content.

The ICISS also set out the principles based on the responsibility of protect (R2P): right authority, just cause, right intention, last resort, proportional means, reasonable prospects (ICISS, 2001: 32). As it can be seen, these criteria are the same as the criteria of just war principles, but they are also very similar in content. The first principle is just cause. Unlike just war, only severe humanitarian causes - genocide, ethnic cleansing, large scale loss of life - can be the causes of humanitarian military intervention (ICISS, 2001:32). The Right authority is attributed to the UN Security Council (ICISS, 2001: XII). The content of Right Intention is almost exactly the same as in just war theory, but the protection of human rights as the focus constitutes a very large part (ICISS, 2001:35-36). While the concept of Last Resort has almost the same characteristics as the concept of having the same name within the criteria of just war, it refers to the moment when people need it most (ICISS, 2001:36). Proportional Means is similar to the proportionality criterion contained in the principle of just ad bellum and argues that the scale, duration and intensity of military humanitarian intervention should be sufficient to secure humanitarian objectives (ICISS, 2001:37). The reasonable prospect requirement can also be seen as an extension of the concept of probability of success in the criteria of just war (Massingham, 2008:822). According to this condition, military humanitarian intervention should not be carried out if there is no actual protection for people in distress or if the intervention will result in a worse outcome in the human condition (ICISS, 2001:37).

The events that followed after the emergence of the ICISS report, and in particular the Iraq War, raised questions about whether the R2P norm could be at the end. However, under the leadership of Secretary General Kofi Annan, norms formulated by the ICISS commission have evolved (Evans and Thakur, 2013:201). At the 2005 World Summit, the R2P norm was unanimously adopted with new and narrower criteria (UNGA, 2005). Accordingly, only four crimes were identified that

could trigger and enforce R2P: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (UNGA, 2005:31, Evans and Thakur, 2013:201). The UN member states have acknowledged that they are responsible for protecting their populations against these designated crimes (Rotmann et al, 2014:365). All member states have accepted the responsibility of protecting, assisting and supporting people who have been subjected to crimes if any state fails to meet its responsibilities to its people towards these crimes (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2021).

In 2009, the new Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon submitted a report to the General Assembly and created a new perspective and evolution on the subject as the first comprehensive document of the R2P[6]. This new report proposed a three-legged approach and constituted three pillars of the current R2P norm: (1) the responsibility of each state to protect its people against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity; (2) the commitment and responsibility of the international community to help protect the peoples of states from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity; (3) the responsibility of the international community to act decisively in accordance with the UN Charter in cases where states have "clearly failed" to protect their own people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity (UNGA, 2009, Evans and Thakur, 2013:201).

The UN's idea of moving away from the name of humanitarian intervention under the name "protection" aimed to move away from the language of interventionism and break some prejudices (Evans and Sahnoun, 2002:101). R2P sought to shift the discussions out of the focus of the right of intervention of the intervening states to the responsibility of the international community to protect rights and civilians from mass attacks and atrocities (Rotmann et al, 2014:363) Thus, the elements that would cause problems to humanitarian intervention such as security and sovereignty were evaluated mainly in the name of protecting society and its people.

According to Evans and Sahnoun, there were three major advantages to choosing R2P over humanitarian intervention: (1) it shifts the main focus to those who need help, not those who will intervene; (2) accepts that R2P belongs to the

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[6] United Nations General Assembly follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. *Implementing the responsibility to protect, A/63/677*

state itself first, but seeks to remedy rights violations on sovereignty by claiming that the international community has a responsibility to act if this does not happen; (3) R2P seeks to be removed from a manipulative concept such as "interventionism" not only on responsibility to react, but also as a responsibility to reconstruct and develop (2002:101).

The standards and evolution of R2P not only created advantages, but also caused some debates. The biggest criticism came from Robert Pape. According to Pape (2012), there are some shortcomings of R2P. Pape tries to explain them in three main points: (1) R2P has failed to establish a standard on the level of crime and level of brutality that would justify military intervention, which compels them to intervene in all kinds of natural disasters, diseases, failed states or civil wars, regardless of the cause; (2) R2P has difficulty determining the casualty levels of the intervening forces and the principles under which potential intervening states must make such calculations. In other words, R2P requires states to devote large resources to ensuring the welfare of foreigners, even at the expense of their obligations to their own people; (3) R2P forces the international community to engage in the construction of a nation after the intervention, which requires the seizure of control of the target state, albeit to protect it (Pape, 2012:51-52).

Pape developed the concept of "pragmatic humanitarian intervention" in several points: (1) Irrefutable evidence of crimes does not have to be expected before intervening; (2) States will not need to put the safety of their own citizens behind the security of foreign citizens thanks to their early intervention plans; (3) The international community will only provide sufficient assistance to ensure the right of the target population to self-determination, will not engage in costly efforts such as reconstruction or further violate state sovereignty, and the possibility of being an excuse for the interests of states has been eliminated; (4) Other interventions following successful intervention examples should develop accordingly (Pape, 2012:43).

The R2P norm has remained as a problem, whether it is the concept of "pragmatic humanitarian intervention" or any other form of humanitarian intervention, in general, the reluctance to act against serious threats (Evans and Thakur, 2013:205). The 2011 Libyan intervention demonstrated that the UN has a

defining goal in the protection of humanity and human rights (Ban Ki-moon, 2012). Yet in the Libyan case whether the NATO-led operation can be considered as an R2P is debated. The ongoing gaps cast doubt on its success due to crisis and civil war in Libya (Thakur, 2011). This then caused divisions in the international response to the Syrian crisis, creating divisions in the Security Council along with political reasons[7].

Humanitarian intervention is indeed like a police job when read through such conditions and standards, but also involves interfering in the sovereignty of another state and entering its internal affairs (Miller, 2000:6). That's why Walzer (1977:101-108) says that humanitarian military intervention has a higher burden of proof than just war, even if it is subject to similar conditions to justified wars, because governments have the potential to abuse it for their own benefit. That's why the presumption against interference is always stronger (Walzer, 1995:54). Therefore, although it creates a field of discussion within the theory of just war, the concept of humanitarian military intervention is an issue that should be addressed within the scope of discussions and criticisms within itself.

1.3.2. Justification for the War on Terror

The theory of just war, which has been around since the beginning of history to regulate, set and control wars and conflicts between states, has been at the center of international law with the development and current evolution of modern law. Towards the end of the 20th century, and especially with the 9/11 attacks and the beginning of the 21st century, increase of terrorism raised a new question. The fact that the war against terrorism is different from interstate wars and what kind of war model and response to terrorism can be uphold became new problems in international law (Oberleitner, 2004:264).

According to international law, whether a war, armed conflict, a national resistance, a revolution or civil war is international or not, it causes questions about both intervention and just war to be unanswered (Calcutt, 2011:113). The UN still

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[7] Russia and China constantly veto the UN attempt to aid Syria due to relations with al-Assad. See more *NICHOLS, M. (2019). Russia, backed by China, casts 14th U.N. veto on Syria to block cross-border aid. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-security-un-idUSKBN1YO23V,* (06.05.2022).

has difficulty making a joint decision on the extent to which these various armed conflicts are legitimate and whether they are of an international nature. Especially in the late 1990s, the rise of radical anti-Western Islamic terrorism and the emergence of unprecedented acts around the world demonstrated the need for more regulation on this issue. Since such arrangements are not easy to make and the continuation of actions threatens basic civil peace and peace, Elshtain (2004:66) sees preventing further damage and restored civil peace as a just cause of war.

Terrorism not only causes physical harm through its actions, but also a psychological war in communities. For this reason, terrorism uses violence to create fear in a wider audience (Garrison, 2003:40). In other words, it is not only the society that is the target of the attack, but a mass attack. At this point, acts of international terrorism led to local and international jurisdiction (Oberleitner, 2004:265). Therefore, the legality of the fight against terrorism is questioned and other questions arise: Can terrorist attacks carry out attacks without regard to "legality", but is legality really sought in the response of states? Can the fight against terrorism be carried out only to prevent the threat and ensure civilian peace? Do terrorist attacks give target states the right to self-defense? If the fight against terrorism establishes the right to self-defense, would it be a completely "legal" act under international law and the UN Charter? Do states have to allow their own citizens and country to suffer more in order to act "legally"? How logical is it to seek mutual "legality" within the scope of terrorist acts and the fight against terrorism?

At this point, most international relations scholars and foreign policymakers focus more on the legality of the war on terror than on its legality (Bellamy, 2005: 275). Of course, modern just war scholars like Elshtain and Walzer continued to question fairness in the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, the legality of the fight against terrorism was examined after 9/11 and later in the US interventions of Afghanistan and Iraq. At this point, two different types emerged. The first is states that commit acts of terrorism, are accused of doing so, and support individuals and groups that have been proven to have done so. The other is individuals and groups (Roberts, 2001) who are considered terrorists who are considered non-state actors with no connection to the states. From this point of view, the Afghan intervention complies with both groups within the scope of the fight against the state supporting

terrorist groups and the groups that carry out terrorist acts and is justified by the US (Oberleitner, 2004:265). However, although this US operation is seen as part of the fight against terrorism, the fact that it is an act of self-defense in terms of its legality does not reflect the legality of the war against terrorism and the use of direct force (Greenwood, 2002:305). This blurred the distinction between whether the actions carried out within the scope of the fight against terrorism were an international armed conflict or an operation against the terrorist group (Sykes and Posner, 2004, Calcutt, 2011: 115-119)

The resulting uncertainty led the US to defend the scope of the fight against terrorism, especially in the early 2000s, by doctrines of self-defense and preventive warfare. The doctrine of just war was used to justify and legalize counterterrorism strategies by referencing to the criteria for protecting the innocent and self-defense (Enemark and Michaelsen, 2005:547). For example, Elshtain (2004:68) in his book "Just War Against Terrorism" assesses US actions in the scope of just war and says that Afghanistan has become better after the intervention. It also suggested that the US Congress met the right authority criteria by referring to article 51 of the UN on intervention and self-defense (Elshtain, 2004:68).

There is a possibility that various violent acts may undermine the justification for using them in the war against terrorism. In other words, actions carried out by terrorist groups contribute to a legitimate and just war, while similar actions that can be applied to terrorist groups during the fight against terrorism can harm the legitimacy and purpose of the war (Abbott, 2004:3). It is also stated by Caleb Carr (2002) that there should be no response to civilians in the same way during the war and that terrorism against terrorism would be the wrong way (as cited in Elshtain, 2004:75). This makes a distinction from the perspective of just war: the war on terror provides a just and just justification according to jus ad bellum principles, but jus in bello principles are not provided for actions against terrorist groups during the war and the observance of civilians. Even the theory of just war, which has no legal validity, cannot be discriminated against and consensuses, while international law, which has hardly ever regulated it, is very difficult to ensure the legality of the fight against terrorism.

As a result, it has become more difficult for policymakers to judge and frame their actions, whether humanitarian intervention or war on terrorism, than it was after 9/11. For example, although the US intervention in Afghanistan began as a self-defense and counterterrorism, the ongoing humanitarian intervention and reconstruction process has emerged as an important criterion for ensuring the actions, perhaps interests, and legality of the US to remain in the region (Dao, 2002, Quinlan, 2001, Kristof, 2002). From this point of view, neither the criteria for fair war nor international law have been sufficient or able to stand up to providing legality within the scope of the fight against terrorism.

1.3.3. Realist Critiques on Humanitarian Intervention

All thinkers and academics of course want to live in a world where crimes against humanity are not committed, war crimes are not committed, genocide is not attempted, and this is ensured. However, according to different schools of thought, the political realities of the world we live in, and the dynamics contained in international relations are interpreted differently. The idea of establishing a world government to establish a utopian world without such mass atrocities among realists drives them to defend that humanitarian military intervention is not possible in today's world (Gallagher, 2012:337). Because the fact that realist thought sees the international arena as an anarchy and an unstable environment and that there is a world government that will limit this instability/anarchy causes states to act with the motives of strength, security, survival and to be in endless competition. Therefore, it may not undermine the security of that state if states pursue fair, dignified, virtuous or moral foreign policy agendas, and they can only develop foreign policies in this way when it is in the interests of the nation (Morgenthau, 1985:12). For this reason, realists see practices and ideas embodied by moral and ethical dynamics such as humanitarian intervention, the theory of just war, R2P as an unrealistic foreign policy (Gallagher, 2012:339).

According to Martin Wight, realistic foreign policies and practices are based on power policies (Wight, 1979:23-30). Therefore, the survival of the state can only be made possible by selfish actions and trying to maximize its power. The idea that

humanitarian intervention does not help to maximize the power of a state, and that intervention usually does not serve the national interests of the state, causes realists to refrain from humanitarian military intervention (Morris, 1991; Wheeler and Morris, 1996). Waltz, like Morgenthau, says that a moral and moral intervention that may arise for reasons other than national interests is unnecessary and dangerous and will undermine the power and prestige of the intervening state (Morgenthau, 1977:13). Robert Tucker argues that military intervention can only be reasoned for special reasons and interests, such as the protection of oil resources, in times caused by crises such as the 1973 Oil Crisis (Tucker, 1975).

Realists advocate non-intervention because of the right of states to govern their citizens in their own sovereign territory regardless of external influences (Welde and Wardhani: 2020:231). The state exists to protect citizens and their fundamental rights. Therefore, foreign intervention cannot help the citizens of the intervened states, but also causes the intervening state to put the lives of its citizens at risk (Bellamy, 2003:10, Walde and Wardhani: 2020:231). This rhetoric is a realist discourse that focuses on the people and resources of the intervening state rather than those in danger. Therefore, it is argued that if there is to be a humanitarian intervention, it must also be in the national interest (Williams, 2001:159). Carr, on the other hand, was more pragmatist than Waltz, Tucker and Fiott. Like other realists, he did not completely reject moral arguments (Carr, 1940: 100). For him, a relationship between morality and interest had to be established in order for a humanitarian intervention to be carried out. Still, Carr was against interference and preferred the changing balance of power process (Carr, 1940: 284).

In the Cold War, a period when military interventionism emerged and was widely used, it was the concept of balance of power that was important for realists. Realists in this period argued that the focus should be on lasting peace between superpowers, not on human rights (Fiott: 2013:769). Any humanitarian intervention that could arise was not seen as logical by realists, as it could turn into a crisis that could bring the two superpowers into conflict and escalate rapidly. Realists who felt it was necessary to maintain balance and continuity in international relations also thought that putting military and financial resources at risk beyond the national interest would harm the international system (Waltz, 1979:185). At the same time,

realists place their attitudes against humanitarian military intervention into a legal framework, arguing that the principles set forth in the UN Charter (Articles 2.4 and 2.7), established as an international authority, prevent humanitarian intervention (Fiott, 2013:770).

But the post-Cold War era also created a challenge to realist arguments. The humanitarian crises that emerged during this period, which is seen as a new unipolar world order, have led to greater emphasis on the protection of human rights. Experiences such as Iraq (1991), Bosnia (1992), Somalia (1992), Haiti (1994), Rwanda (1994), Kosovo (1998) began to form concrete examples of the necessity of humanitarian military intervention (Fiott, 2013: 770, Roberts, 1998). With the 9/11 attacks and the rise of radical Islamic-linked acts, criticism of realism has also increased. Yet the subsequent discussions on the Afghanistan intervention and the Iraq intervention took it to a different level.

With the changing world order after the 2000s, realists began to accept that morality cannot be removed from international relations and that the nature of discussions of humanitarian military intervention requires both moral and political perspectives. However, against the principles laid out by ICISS, the Cold War realists put the principles of national interest and survival first. For this reason, thinkers like Beardsworth promoted the concept of pragmatism. Accordingly, ethical motivations apply in international relations and interventionism, the priority should be on the power relations of states (Beardsworth, 2008). Thus, it can help outline the boundaries when the urge to intervene on human grounds arises thanks to "progressive realism", as Fiott says (Fiott, 2013:778). Thus the realist legacy from the Cold War era still retains its place, bringing with it a stance against the concept of humanitarian military intervention of realist thought.

1.4. TOWARDS A REALIST APPROACH: CHANGES IN US STRATEGY AFTER THE COLD WAR

When humanitarian military intervention is viewed as a definition, it is an external, foreign military intervention aimed at removing human rights barriers, helping those in difficulty, preventing hunger/distributing food, or helping the people

whose basic human rights have been blocked by the government. Pickering and Kisangani (2009) accept this definition of humanitarian military intervention, but they say that the definition of US humanitarian military intervention is different and that the US resorts to humanitarian justifications to justify and legalize its military interventions. Pearson (1994, as cited in Choi, 2013) argues that humanitarian and moral motives contribute less to US intervention. From this point of view, the US focuses more on its own political, economic or geopolitical interests than on human rights. This leads realists to claim that US humanitarian interventions are carried out in the national interest by using humanitarian motives (Binder, 2009:329).

According to the study on characteristics of successful US military interventions (Kavanagh et al, 2019) the US conducted approximately 145 different military interventions between 1898 and 2016. Of course, the frequency of these interventions and the periods in which they occurred corresponded to very different political stages. And most of them were made within the scope of balancing and framing policies during the Cold War period (Kavanagh et al, 2019:31). And these were the mutual actions of the two superpowers during the Cold War, as realism predicted, and were based on balancing each other (Walt, 2018: 9). It was also very diverse regionally and had an intrusive approach that covered many parts of the world.

Unipolarity in the post-Cold War world and US hegemony has now led to changes in the concept of interventionism and goals (Barna, 2012:12). The elimination of a Soviet-like threat to American security has given the US great freedom over its foreign policy choices (Waltz, 2000:29). Although there was no superpower to balance after the Soviets dissolution, the US did not withdraw its military network, which had been scattered around the world, and instead began an effort to spread a "liberal world order" to continue its dominance (Walt, 2018:10). To spread democracy, to increase their alliances, to spend more investment and effort to improve their population in ex-Soviet countries, which, according to Waltz (2000), the US has a long history of intervening with the intention of bringing democracy to weak states, and in doing so has not hesitated to impose sanctions on governments and regimes that oppose it. With the more active non-state actors such as terrorist groups and the emergence of the concepts of rogue states, the new era presented a

different political framework and required different measures. As a result, the US chose military action in this period in order to achieve its interests, solve problems and inadequacy of final situations (Mayer, 2018:5). And while this made less popular, it allowed other major powers such as China to rise (Walt, 2018:15). These actions of the US also paved the way for the realists of the period to oppose and react[8].

Since military power was the most expensive tool in state expenditures and also the most dangerous tool of state administration, it was an objectionable tool in the interests of states (Art, 2003:4). From a realist point of view, it would only be possible to use this military force if it made sense as a result of a cost-benefit calculation (Mayer, 2018:4). Benjamin Miller (1998) also tried to explain US military interventions in his work by trying to read about the consequences and costs. According to him, the combination between interest and cost is the main variable in US intervening militarily or humanitarianly in other regions (Miller, 1998:87). Accordingly, 1990s realists also came up with different alternatives to explain US interventionist policy: neo-isolationism, selective engagement, primacy, off-shore balancing, balance of threat (Posen and Ross, 1996/7: 5; Waltz, 2000; Walt, 2018; Mastanduno, 1997). However, the different alternatives produced by the US to understand in the post-Cold War era are not enough for us to understand humanitarian military intervention alone. While different presidents pursued different policies, they sometimes followed several policies at the same time, causing realists to have difficulty explaining at some points (Barna, 2012:19).

For the first post-Cold War President George H.W. Bush, interventions for humanitarian crises were the main focus of national interest. The Gulf intervention, for example, supports this. For this reason, the dominance of a single power in the Persian Gulf could hinder the flow of oil and gas and threaten the interests of the US. Considering Iraq's intervention in Kuwait as a danger, the US sent nearly seven hundred thousand soldiers, within the scope of off-shore balancing policy according to Walt (2018), to ensure the security of the region and oil (Nationmaster, 2021, Miller, 1998: 88). On the other hand, the humanitarian intervention in Somalia in

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8   Scholars of international security affairs declaration about Iraq War that intervention was not vital or security related interests. See declaration *https://radioopensource.org/wp-content/TimesAd_01.pdf* (06.05.2022).

1992 under the name of a peacekeeping operation was much less effective, because Somalia and its surroundings did not have a direct connection with the national interests of the US (Wolfowitz, 1994, Mastanduno, 1997: 57).

Although neo-isolationism was abandoned in the Clinton era, a selective and collaborative approach was preferred (Posen and Ross, 1996/7:44). With US willingness to protect its national interests, it adopted the idea of interventionism ready for off-shore actions for continued US hegemony and global leadership. This is why the intervention in the Bosnian Crisis took place. With a serious humanitarian crisis and Serbian aggression and ethnic cleansing evident, the US did not even send troops to the Peace Keeping Force, content only with its role on the Security Council (Miller, 1998:95). Unlike the Gulf crisis, the US remained in the background because an intervention in the region was too costly but did not directly serve U.S. interests. The side factors such as the instability that the failure of the Western Europeans to solve the crisis in Europe, the US wanting to assume a global leadership role and Serbia's proximity to Russia resulted in limited US intervention in the region (Binder, 2009:330, Miller, 1998:96, Choi, 2013: 125).

From a realist perspective, the US used its humanitarianism and the concept of humanitarian intervention in order to secure the Kuwait crisis, the Somali crisis, the US values in order to export US values, and the Bosnian crisis to protect its NATO-based interests. However, the idea of widespread humanitarian interventionism and the use of it for profit while advocating more non-intervention ideas of realists during the Cold War and earlier periods provided a 'so-called legal' basis for the interventions of a superpower such as the US. At the same time, the absence of a serious competitor justified the US's effort to create a "liberal world order" by using the crises of countries such as Iraq, Libya or Bosnia (Walt, 2018: 13; Waltz, 2000: 37; Mastanduno, 1997: 81).

The US response to the 9/11 attack and its aftermath had a very different concept than humanitarian military intervention or humanitarian military interventions in the national interest of the US, whether it had done or not before. Twenty years after the attack, as Biden explained, the US had no vital interests in Afghanistan:

> *If we had been attacked on September 11, 2001, from Yemen instead of Afghanistan, would we have ever gone to war in Afghanistan — even though the*

Taliban controlled Afghanistan in 2001? I believe the honest answer is "no." That's because we had no vital national interest in Afghanistan other than to prevent an attack on America's homeland and our friends. And that's true today. (Biden, 2021)

So what was the purpose of the US continuing this war for two decades, and why did the war start in the first place? And how did the motivation of the war change? They were criticized for getting lost in the US intervention in Afghanistan by putting forward more realist views of these questions and more (Celso, 2021).

But was the Afghanistan intervention really necessary? The 9/11 attacks were a bloody attack on US society, and until that event, many aftershocks had occurred, even though they were outside their territory. 9/11 could have been the beginning of more intense and perhaps violent attacks. From this point of view, the operations against Afghanistan and al-Qaeda within the scope of "self-defense", including in a realist view, were correct (Samples, 2011:24). However, although the intervention in Afghanistan began in response to the 9/11 attacks, its objectives, motives and course differed (Jacobson, 2010:586).

With the new NSS and the Bush Doctrine emerging a year after the start of the intervention, the declared war on global terrorism and rogue states became the main ignite of US foreign policy (Latham, 2021). the US, which initiated the reconstruction process in Afghanistan with the withdrawal of the Taliban in the same year, continued to move away from the initial purpose of the intervention. According to realists, the intervention in Afghanistan was not a vital interest other than "self-defense", and they argued that reconstruction Afghanistan, carrying American liberal values there, did not serve any interest of the US (Posner, 2021). They saw the Afghanistan intervention as an American attempt to establish liberal international hegemony, believing it was a military engagement contrary to America's core interests (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2016).

In Afghanistan, which has already spent almost the entire 20th century in war, reconstruction efforts in a post-crisis environment and the continuation of the implementation of military force to achieve this also made it inevitable that new security threats would arise (Mayer, 2018:9). The Taliban installation and the conflict with US forces and objectives in Afghanistan led the US to allocate more resources to the region as part of counter-insurgency. The costs incurred by the

Afghanistan initiative in the White House and Congress, including during Bush's second term, and the course of the war also led to more skeptics about the conduct of the war (Jacobson, 2010:591).

As the war progressed, the situation in Afghanistan tended to be a bigger dilemma. Policymakers of the time tried to approach the case from a more realist point of view, thinking that the investments and policies pursued were no longer worth the cost (Forsyth, 2011:113). In doing so, realist critics tried to cite US policy in Pakistan in the 20th Century. Pakistan's hefty investments in military and intelligence services to create a strong democracy and allies in the region did not yield much result (Wright, 2011). At the same time, the US past report card on such interventions, which included Cuba, Vietnam and Korea, reinforced the rhetoric of realists.

Under Obama, there was a more bipartisan orientation. Obama could look at Afghanistan from a realist perspective, thinking it was a costly and damaging operation to US interests. While there were also those who wanted him to play a more active intrusive role, he could not leave the ongoing al-Qaeda and Taliban problem (Forsyth, 2011:111). For this reason, he tried to act rationally by presenting a more cautious withdrawal project, and with the murder of Osama bin Laden in 2011, he initiated the process of US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The withdrawal process did not take place as expected. Although democracy and stability within the country improved, especially with Abdullah and Ghani forming a joint government, the Taliban's influence and power continued outside the capital (BBC News, 2014). With the Trump era, ISIS stepped in and in 2017 the US bombing of Nangarhar, where ISIS is hiding in Afghanistan, has caused much more strain on relations with the Taliban and the US spending more resources on the region (Cooper and Mashal, 2017). Peace talks with the Taliban and a ceasefire were sought during the ongoing period, but the situation had been completely deadlocked since the war began in 2001.

Biden's decision to withdraw completely after taking office, unlike Obama and Trump, contained no caution. The gradual withdrawal in the past two decades or the realization by the administration what the US intended in time would not succeed in any way, ended with the complete abandonment of Afghanistan (Rohde, 2021).

This can be seen as a late but tangible success for realists who have been exploiting US resources endlessly for years and advocating the end of the Afghan intervention, which has in no way paid for its cost (Celso, 2021). The end of the Afghanistan intervention, which lost its cause, path and purpose for a total of two decades in general, is not a success in the realist framework, but rather the fact that the US is able to allocate more resources against other potential rivals in the age of the new great power struggle (Latham, 2021).

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: US MILITARY INTERVENTION TO AFGHANISTAN

The concept of international terrorism has made a rapid entrance to the literature in a global way with the 9/11 Attacks. This nomenclature, which was previously seen in underdeveloped countries and regions in crisis, and generally given to insurgent and harmful groups, did not exactly correspond to terrorism. With the 9/11 Attacks, this definition became even more complex. Terrorism, no longer territorial or regional, but on a scale from Afghanistan to the US, had become a globalizing norm in the globalizing world. This showed that the measures taken should no longer be on a regional but on a global scale.

What are the origins of the al-Qaeda its actions which were responsible 9/11 and? Why is this global terrorist organization connected to Afghanistan when it has a Saudi leader and soldiers and commanders of many different nationalities? What is the Taliban's connection to terrorism and the reasons for its struggle in the Afghanistan War? Questions such as these are important to understand the process leading up to 9/11, which is the most critical and major event of global terrorism, and the path to the subsequent global war against terrorism.

In this part of the study, the process of Afghanistan's transformation into terrorism, the events leading up to 9/11 and the historical development of the process after it were examined. First of all, by looking at the origins of Afghanistan, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda before 9/11, the anti-Westernism was examined. Then, the events of 9/11, the reactions of the US and the change in foreign policy are explained. Along with the Bush Doctrine, the US's intervention process in Afghanistan, the subsequent restructuring process and up to the Obama era was explained.

2.1. PRE 9/11 ERA: AFGHANISTAN, AL-QAEDA, AND THE US

Afghanistan is in a location between Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and the Caucasus regions and has a high geopolitical importance for the region.

(Dursun, 1999: 49). Due to such a geostrategic importance, it has been threatened by great powers for a long time and has been heavily invaded. For this reason, the country has had problems in ensuring political stability for the last two centuries. The first of these great powers was Britain. In the 19th century, Britain tried to control Afghanistan in order to protect the Indian colony from the Russian threat. This struggle for control led to the Anglo-Afghan Wars (Britannica, 2020). After declaring independence from Britain in 1919, Amanullah Khan established a monarchy in the country in 1926 and proclaimed himself king. However, the administration of the country by a monarch was not sufficient for political stability. First of all, an uprising broke out against the reformist policies of the revolutionary leader Amanullah and the King had to leave the country (PBS, 2011). King Zahir Shah, who came to power later on, ruled the country for forty years and liberal reforms were experienced in the country.

2.1.1. Afghan Civil War and Soviet Invasion

The period in which Prime Minister Daoud's taking power with a coup in 1973 became a new breaking point in the country's history. The Marxist propaganda which increased due to the economic and political instability in the country received support from the Soviet Union (Bolan, 2009: 74). Daoud tried to reduce the influence of the Soviet Union and to limit the communist supporters by establishing the National Revolutionary Party (Clements, 2003: 180). With the rise of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and the coup of Nur Muhammed Tariki, instability in the country broke out again (Atız, 2020). With the coming to power of the PDPA, the influence of the Soviet Union increased. The country was dragged into a civil war. Especially after the coup, the socialist reforms that took place in the country aroused local, cultural and conservative elements. The PDPA government brought many economists and military officials from the Soviet Union to Afghanistan. Even a friendship agreement was signed between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union in 1978 under the development of bilateral relations (Bolan, 2009: 75). However, Afghan resistance to the government and increasing anti-Soviet opposition led to a coup attempt in 1979 and Army officers tried to seize the Presidential Palace.

After the events, the Soviet Union carried out a full-scale military intervention to Afghanistan on 27 December 1979, which included 30,000 military forces, in order to prevent the collapse of the regime and to protect its interests in Afghanistan. (MacEachin, 2007; Gombert et al. 2014).

The transformation of Afghanistan in the 1970s and its relations with the Soviet Union began to attract the attention of the US. When the US, which has close relations with Iran, started to develop its military relations with Pakistan in 1954 (Hartman, 2002: 470), Afghanistan leaders searched for the return the Soviet support (HRW, 2001). After the increasing Soviet interest in Afghanistan in the continuation of the 70s and after the Revolution in Iran, the interest of the US increased even more (Chadwick, 2021).

The PDPA tried to change the Afghan society with its new reforms. These reforms provoked the indigenous people (Hoodbhoy, 2005: 18). The anger of the local people, who are quite conservative and adorned with the Islamic culture, against the long-standing Soviet friendship and libertarian innovations had increased during the civil war. In the 1970s, when political stability was almost gone, a new resistance group emerged in Afghanistan. They called themselves Mujahideen. This term, which was previously used for Muslim resisters in the Anglo-Afghan wars, was of Arabic origin and meant 'fighting in the name of Islam' or 'jihadist'. The Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 20th century were much more diverse. Although they mostly had local ethnic origins such as Pashtuns, Uzbeks, Tajiks, volunteer Muslims from other countries were also in the ranks of the Mujahideen (Szczepanski, 2019). Many supporters from the Sub-Saharan Africa, Chechen, Yemeni and Saudi (Osama bin Laden, who would later form al-Qaeda was one of them) became a part of the resistance of the Mujahideen from other Muslim countries. The Mujahideen, who were mostly based on the borders of Pakistan and Iran, were very effective in the southern parts of the country. Seeing the conflict as a Cold War battleground, the US, the Islamist Saudis, and Pakistan, who thought it would serve their own interests, were the biggest supporters of the Mujahideen group (HRW, 2001).

As the Soviet invasion continued violently, it had turned into a war between the Mujahideen and the Soviet Union. In order to control cities and towns and control the mujahideen guerrilla insurgents, 100,000 Soviet soldiers developed various

intimidation tactics. They tried to cut support for the Mujahideen with airstrikes and bombings targeting rural areas. This caused the civilian population to flee, and nearly 5 million refugees fled to the two countries, Iran and Pakistan. (Britannica, 2021)

The American stance was one of the important factors that changed the direction of the invasion. From the day the invasion began, it tried to mobilize the world public opinion against the Soviet Union. In addition, the US boycotted the Moscow Olympics and made military preparations for the Persian Gulf (Hoodbhoy, 2005: 20). It also played a critical role in organizing the mujahideen using Islam as a defense against communism under the Carter Doctrine (Safa, 2017). It also supplied weapons to the mujahideen through Pakistan during the bloodiest times of the war, and supplied FIM-92 Stingers, which changed the course of the war against the Soviet air force. These technologies and weapons provided by the US played a key role in defeating the mujahideen's Soviet war machine (Hoodbhoy, 2005: 22).

At the end of the invasion, which took about 10 years, the Mujahideen won a victory over the Soviet Red Army. The war in Afghanistan turned into a quagmire and became the Vietnam of the Soviet Union (Hartman, 2002: 468). With the 1988 Geneva Accords, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw all its troops by February 1989. (HRW, 2021). However, the Afghan Civil War continued. After the Soviet withdrawal, the new target of the Mujahideen was the Soviet-backed communist President Najibullah.

2.1.2. US Policy to Soviet Occupied Afghanistan

Afghanistan was never a priority in US foreign policy agenda until the late 1970s. Afghanistan was seen as the area of interest of major powers such as the Soviets and Britain. Although Afghanistan strained to develop good relations with the US after declaring its independence, Europe and the Middle East were the foreign policy agenda of the US. Still, the US did not want Afghanistan to become a Soviet satellite. For this reason, the US tried to provide economic assistance to Afghanistan between the years 1955-65 and to keep it as a neutral country (Khan, 1987:66). Nevertheless, interest in the region has decreased further due to the Vietnam War and

the US withdrawal of troops from the Far East. Yet US policy in Afghanistan to the Soviet invasion of 1979 remained consistent (Hammond, 1984:27).

One of the reasons the US brought Afghanistan to the agenda was the revolutionary process that began in Iran in 1978. During the Pahlavi era, Iran was always the most important partner of the US in the region thanks to its pro-US stances. However, with the Islamic Revolution concluded in 1979, the US lost its most important ally and the need to seek a new partner in the region (Onal, 2010:43). Afghanistan stood out in this search for a partner and became the most important agenda of the US with Soviet invasion.

The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan was an example of Cold War Soviet expansionist policy. It was also a manifestation of the idea of moving south and expanding into warm waters[9], which also constituted the policy of the Tsarist Russia period. In connection with this, the Soviet invasion, which began on December 25, 1979, was seen by the US as the beginning of the Soviet Union's policy of reaching the warm seas via the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf route (Hartman, 2002:468). At the same time, the Soviet approach to Middle East and Central Asian oil and natural resources would threaten the US interests' policies in the region (Lowenstein, 2016:39).

During this period, the US closely monitored soviet interest in Afghanistan and its meddling in its internal affairs. However, the US remained more reactive because it could not draw a policy path to determine its position (Hartman, 2002:468). According to Hammond's (1984) interview with Brzezinski, the US agreed on a "wait and see" policy and began observing the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, which was not so surprising. Thus, the US wanted to plan the right strategy for its own interests, to create time for itself, and to measure Afghanistan's response to the Soviet Union.

The U.S. policy plan after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was revealed by the Carter Doctrine, announced in 1980 (Brown, 2013:65). The doctrine mentioned

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[9] There is a common belief about Russia has historic obsession for warm water ports. Even though no Soviet or Russian leader has admitted such obsession or no single study that demonstrate that obsession. However, claims that Soviet or Russian politics were motivated by the desire for a hot water port appear in both academic and journalistic writing, as well as in the thinking and behavior of Anglo-American politics. See more in *GREEN, W.C. (1993). The Historic Russian Drive for a Warm Water Port: Anatomy of a Geopolitical Myth, Naval War College Review, 46(2), p. 80-102. U.S. Naval War College Press.*

the threat posed by the Soviets in the region and the damage to US interests. It has also been explained that the US must take necessary measures against these threatened interests and will use military force if necessary (Imran and Xiaochuan, 2015:45). In this direction, the US began to take drastic measures and increased anti-Soviet propaganda in the international community. The US withdrew from the SALT II[10] agreement, boycotted the Moscow Olympics and deployed a military response team to the Persian Gulf (Hoodbhoy, 2005:20). Economically, imposed some trade embargoes, deprived the Soviets of fishing rights in its region and limited technology transfers (Bolan, 2009:76). At the same time, there was an attempt to get European leaders to support the anti-Soviet movement within the framework of the invasion of Afghanistan (Lowenstein, 2016:44).

Another policy the US wanted to pursue in occupied Afghanistan was based on revenge. The US wanted the Soviets to experience in Afghanistan what US experienced in Vietnam. The US tried to make Afghanistan very costly for the Soviets. For this reason, the US supported Afghan rebels in the US as the Soviets supported Vietnamese rebels in the Vietnam War. Aid to the Afghan resistance, which began in the 1980s, became a central part of Reagan's Afghan policy (Khan, 1987:73). Afghan insurgents were turned into propaganda by the US and touted as freedom fighters (Emadi, 1999:59). Thanks to connections established by the CIA and ISI, the US began funding the Mujahideen (Galster, 2001). The US assisted the Mujahideen in training Afghan insurgents, providing satellite and intelligence support, providing anti-weapons against Soviet technology, and establishing guerrilla warfare schools (Hartman, 2002:476). Pakistan and ISI were critical to the US at this point. In the quest for a new ally within the region, Reagan sought to forge close ties with Pakistan. Accordingly, Pakistan has been given commitments to provide aid packages and support in regional interests (Imran and Xiaochuan, 2015:48). The link between ISI and Afghan insurgents was used as a supply network of weapons and financial aid.

The US policy in Afghanistan against the Soviets during the Cold War succeeded, but the US gain was limited, because this policy has also created many

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[10]   Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II). Nuclear weapons treaty signed by Carter and Brezhnev in 1979, aimed at restricting the production of nuclear weapons.

problems in the country such as refugees, civilian casualties, instability and corruption. In the war between the Mujahideen and the Soviets, the refugees fled to Pakistan using the Af-Pak border, creating a demographic problem (Jeffrey: 2002). At the same time, the increase in drug production and trade and the use of ISI's network for this reason damaged the international image of Pakistan and the US (Imran and Xiaochuan, 2015:49). Due to over-armament, instability and loss of security within the region led to larger conflicts in post-Soviet Afghanistan. The anarchy and guerrilla culture in Afghanistan did not stop after the Soviet invasion, leading not only to the civil war, but also to a great political instability that the US would later be involved in.

2.1.3. Origins of Taliban and Creation of Al-Qaida

The withdrawal of the Soviets and the end of the invasion further fueled the civil war rather than ending it. A huge power vacuum emerged throughout Afghanistan in the 1990s. The Mujahideen, who fought together during the Soviet invasion and had different loyalties, could not show the same unity in filling this power vacuum. Although they were in an alliance against Najibullah, the tribal-religious division among the mujahideen did not succeed in bringing them together at a common point (Sander, 2003, as cited in Safa, 2017).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's political interests changed. The Moscow government has withdrawn its arms support to President Najibullah since 1992 (Polat, 2006). This caused the Najibullah government to focus on more nationalist elements. He wanted to eliminate the pro-Soviet elements in the army and started to assign tasks to local commanders. General Dostum, Uzbek origin, made an agreement with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan and took a front against Najibullah. The Mujahideen, who acted together with Dostum's forces, took control of many key points in Kabul, and Najibullah had to resign (Chadwick, 2021). After this event, with the agreement signed in Pesh Avar, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi started to serve as the head of state for 2 months. Mojaddedi's statement that he would stay in the government for 2 years caused disagreements among the Mujahideen. Although

Rabbani was later appointed as the Chairman, this did not end the discussions among the mujahideen and created new opposition groups.

During the chaos in the country, many the Mujahideen groups struggled for power. Another group of Mujahideen was formed when a group of madrasa students captured Kandahar in 1994 under the leadership of Mullah Mohammed Omar. Because of the madrasah education and organization, they included in their formation, this group called itself the Taliban, which means student (HRW, 2021). Although their number was very small at first, they quickly started to gain more followers. The group consisted mostly of Pashtuns and the former PDPA members and had a mission to spread Islamic law throughout the country. These missions were important in attracting the support of the public and they achieved a very rapid growth rate by gathering a lot of supporters.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have supported the Taliban insurgents openly and with the help of the US under cover. With the support and financing they received, they gradually increased their influence over the country. As the number of provinces that they captured increased, they came to the door of Kabul in 1996. By seizing Kabul in September 1996, they captured Tajik president Rabbani, whom they considered anti-Pashto and corrupt, and started the Taliban regime in the country (Laub, 2014). As soon as the regime started, they brought sharia, the strict law of Islam, which occupied the most important place in their mission. (Burke, 2004: 148 as cited in Safa, 2017). Against the new regime of the Taliban, Burhaneddin Rabbani, Ahmed Shah Mesud and General Dostum formed the Northern Alliance (BBC, 2001). After that, the harshest conflicts of the power struggle in the country began to pass between these two groups.

The foundations of the establishment of Al-Qaeda are based on the civil war in Afghanistan and the resistance of the mujahideen. In particular, the arrival of thousands of Muslim young volunteers who participated in the declared jihad against the occupation of the Soviet Union to Afghan lands formed the basis of Al-Qaeda. In fact, this was such a foundation that among these young people was Osama bin Laden, who was the founder of al-Qaeda and would be the key figure until his death (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 55).

Azzam and Bin Laden, who were in Afghanistan in the 1980s, established Maktab al-Khidmat (MAK) (Afghan Services Bureau) (Burke, 2021: 13). The purpose of the organization was to register and train foreign mujahideen and to fund the war against the Soviets (Roth, et al, 2004: 88). Among those who funded the organization, the US stood out with bin Laden and in fact formed the basis of the Al-Qaeda organization with these aspects. And with the decision of the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan, the Afghan mujahideen and the MAK succeeded. But bin Laden's and Azzam's jihad ideas were not limited to Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda, meaning *Base*, was founded in September 1988 by Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and a few other Islamists. Al-Qaeda's motto has been "jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences, no dialogues" (Rosenau & Powell, 2017: 9). Al-Qaeda has started to implement its actions by adopting a new mission of liberating all Arab lands from the influence of the West and the US.

2.1.4. Al-Qaeda's Anti-American Attitudes and Actions

After the success of the resistance movement in Afghanistan, Azzam's and bin Laden's goals also changed. Although Azzam was the head and ideological leader of MAK, al-Qaeda was mostly under Bin Laden's command. Bin Laden saw al-Qaeda's mission as more of a global jihadist movement and wanted to prepare the Mujahideen for war anywhere in the world. Azzam, however, did not see the work in Afghanistan as finished. Azzam wanted to continue fighting in the ongoing civil war until Afghanistan passed an Islamic government (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 56). After Azzam's car was bombed and detonated in 1989, Azzam's followers and MAK joined bin Laden and were digested by Al-Qaeda. And with the end of the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia (Scheuer, 2011: 79).

The utopia of al-Qaeda was a Muslim land to be governed by the rules of sharia and stretched from Southeast Asia to Western Europe. They wanted to use the caliphate as a tool to spread Islam all over the world (Rosenau & Powell, 2017: 6). The path they followed in order to carry out these actions was narrower. Al-Qaeda was trying to show the world its jihadist rhetoric and anti-Western attitudes mostly through violence. These means of violence were radical and bloody acts that we call

terrorist acts. These actions and rhetoric were mostly against the US, which they presented as the enemy of Islam. In the fatwa he published with Bin Laden and other jihadist leaders in 1998, The US was presented as the devil (Bin Laden, et al, 1998). In other discourses, he has always defined the US as a seditious, terrorist and bandit (FBIS, 2004). Saying that it is a Muslim's duty to kill any American, bin Laden also made the following statement: "We believe that the worst thieves in the World today and the worst terrorist are the Americans. Nothing could stop you except perhaps retaliation in kind. We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets." (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 47).

With Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saudi Arabia and the Arab region felt threatened by Saddam. Bin Laden offered Al-Qaeda and the Mujahideen to Saudi Arabia both to protect the Kingdom and to join the war in Kuwait. However, Saudi Arabia did not accept this and went to a coalition with the US and American forces were deployed in Saudi Arabia (Jehl, 2001; Scheuer, 2011: 81). Disappointed bin Laden not only denounced this action, but began to organize his own forces for the war in Kuwait. However, this did not please the Saudi government and was sentenced to house arrest (Burke, 2004, as cited in Polat, 2006). Thanks to his family's reputation and ties to the Crown, he left his country to Pakistan in 1991, never to come again (Gunaratna, 2002: 34).

In 1991, at the invitation of Sudanese Islamic leader Hassan al Turabi, he moved to Sudan and moved the headquarters of the organization here and established various commercial ventures to finance various terrorist actions. (Rosenau and Powell, 2017: 10; Kean and Hamilton, 2004: 57; Scheuer: 2011: 88-89). Between 1992 and 1996, he led his actions and al-Qaeda through Sudan and became even more radical. Al-Qaeda's strategy during the Sudanese era was to directly target the West and raise potential terrorists, especially against the US (Sageman, 2009: 4).

In 1992, he started his first discourse with the deployment of American soldiers to Somalia. In addition to issuing fatwas for the withdrawal of American soldiers, al-Qaeda bombed two hotels in Aden in 1992, where they thought American soldiers would stay, and carried out its first action against the US (Kean and Hamilton, 2004: 59; Bergen, 2002: 170). According to American intelligence reports, Al-Qaeda members, who started to train Somalians since 1992, were effective in

shooting down two American helicopters in 1993 and in the early withdrawal of the US in 1994 (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 60).

In 1993, Ramzi Yousef and several radical Islamists carried out a minibus bomb attack on the World Trade Center (Mylroie, 1996; Parachini, 2000; Whitlock, 2007). With the emergence of Yousef's connections with Al-Qaeda in the later information, the action was associated with the Al-Qaeda actions in this period (Huntington, 2004: 240).

In 1995, another attack associated with al-Qaeda took place in Saudi Arabia. Five American soldiers were killed in the bomb attack on the American training base in Riyadh (Benjamin and Simon, 2002: 192; CNN, 1995). Just one year later, in 1996, an attack was carried out, this time in the city of Khobar. 19 American soldiers lost their lives as a result of the bomb attack on the Khobar Towers, where the American personnel were known to stay (Wright, 2006: 269; Creamer and Seat, 1998: 22). Although the attack is thought to have been supported by the Iranian government, the fact that it also bears traces of Al-Qaeda has also associated this action with Al-Qaeda (Benjamin and Simon, 2002: 301).

Due to the terrorist attacks between the years 1992-1996, the Saudi government stripped Osama bin Laden of citizenship in 1994 and the bin Laden family also rejected him. Then, in 1996, Sudan came under pressure from both Western and regional states not to provide shelter to Al-Qaeda. Thinking that Sudan is no longer a safe haven, bin Laden and al-Qaeda had to return to Afghanistan. Here he was invited to Kandahar by making an agreement with the Taliban leader Mullah Omar, with whom he had a relationship in the past Soviet-Afghan Wars (Wright, 2006: 281).

After 1996, the new headquarters of Al-Qaeda moved to Afghanistan. The frequency and severity of the attacks against America increased even more after the fatwa they issued in 1998 (see Bin Laden, et al, 1998). Six months after the fatwa, al-Qaeda attacked the US consulates in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Nairobi in Kenya with trucks loaded with bombs (Scheuer, 2011: 117; Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 69). The attack in Nairobi killed 12 Americans and 201 other nationals. Although the attack in Dar es Salaam caused 11 deaths, no American casualties occurred (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 70). These attacks were also the first events that led to America's

use of force against al-Qaeda (OBL, 2003, as cited in Scheuer, 2011). The US bombed al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and the al-Shifa factory in Sudan, which allegedly belongs to Bin Laden and produces chemical weapons (Astill, 2001; Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 116). However, it was later revealed that this factory only produced drugs and had no direct relationship with bin Laden.

By 2000, al-Qaeda members again planned new attacks. This time their target was a US destroyer named USS Cole, located in the port of Aden, Yemen. Seventeen American soldiers died in the suicide attack on October 12 (Scheuer, 2011: 118; Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 153). This was also their last act before the September 11 attacks.

2.1.5. September 11 Attack

On the morning of September 11, 2001, an event took place that will perhaps be felt throughout the 20th century. While it was a normal autumn morning in New York, the planes crashing into the twin towers one after the other started the post-September 11 era. 19 radical Islamists, thought to be al-Qaeda agents, organized this terrorist attack by hijacking four different planes flying over the US domestic lines.

The first attack targeting the twin towers of the World Trade Center was made by the plane of American Airlines flight 11 leaving Boston. The hijacked plane crashed into the north tower of the Twin Towers at 8:46 am. Another flight from Boston, United Airlines flight 175, crashed into the south tower at 9:03 am. Another attack was made by American Airlines flight 77, which took off from Dulles Airport. The hijacked plane crashed into the Pentagon at 9:37 am. The last attack was United Airlines flight 93 departing from the Newark Airport. The hijacked plane's destination was Washington, DC but crashed into a field in Pennsylvania while trying to be intercepted and diverted by passengers and failed. While nearly three thousand people lost their lives in the attacks, as many were injured (Burke, 2003). At the beginning of the events, bin Laden made statements that he was not behind the events (CNN, 2001). However, three years later, he said that he was behind the events and that he had trained nineteen hijackers (CBC, 2004).

The feature that distinguishes these attacks from other Al-Qaeda and terrorist attacks so far was the magnitude of the action, as well as the fact that the action took place on American soil. No such action had been seen on US soil since the attack on the White House by the British in 1812. Although the Pearl Harbor raid is shown as one of these attacks, these attacks were made on the military base in the American colony. The September 11 attacks, on the other hand, are an attack on national territory and targeting civilians (Chomsky: 2001).

Although the attack created a shock effect in the US and the world, what was done and written afterwards shows that these attacks were not actually a surprise. Al-Qaeda, which has made an impact in the world with its anti-American rhetoric since it was founded in 1988, also heralded the future of such an attack with its successful and unsuccessful attacks between the years 1990-2000. For these reasons, the Bush administration frequently blamed the Clinton era and made statements about not taking the necessary precautions. However, the priority of Bush, who came to the head of the state in 2000, was never Al-Qaeda until the September 11 attacks. Despite Richard Clarke's briefings to the Bush administration, the administration was skeptical that any terrorist organization would take such a large-scale action (Clarke, 2004: 228). Considering these, a surprise attack can actually appear as negligence and indifference. In the period after the attack, the American intelligence was criticized a lot and the fault of being unprepared for the attacks was attributed to the lack of intelligence.

The September attacks had a very rapid repercussion in the world. With the changing balance of power after the Cold War, this terrorist attack against the US, which was seen as the only superpower in the world, revealed how dangerous terrorism is for the world. After the terrorist attacks, countries around the world went into high alert and began to take security measures for any aftershocks. Governments began to enact terror laws, anti-terrorism packages emerged, countries began to make intense efforts to prevent terrorist acts within themselves, and countries began to enact their own Anti-Terrorism Acts (CBC, 2007; Miko and Froeclich, 2004; Coates, 2005; BBC: 2003).

After this incident, radical Islam started to become a symbol of terror in the world (Safa, 2017: 20). The reconciliation between Islam and Terrorism in most

Western circles has damaged the structure of societies and caused discrimination (Ingraham, 2015). A paranoid culture has developed against Islam, especially in the US.

The attack, which went down in history with almost every aspect, is actually an event that opened an era. Aside from the magnitude of the incident and the entourage of the attacks, the transformation of the world, especially the US, together with the September 11 attacks has undoubtedly written these events as a very important turning point for history and international relations and will continue to do so.

2.2. POST 9/11 ERA: NEW US STRATEGY AND MILITARY INTERVENTION

US strategy developed by the Bush administration in the post 9/11 era is examined below which also covers initial reactions, military operation, end of Taliban rule and interim government.

2.2.1. Initial Reactions to Terrorist Attacks and Operation Enduring Freedom

This section examines initial US reaction to the terror attacks and then the military operation.

2.2.1.1. Initial Reactions

With the September 11 attacks, terrorism as a new threat that raised globally after the end of the Cold War caused new kind of war: Global War on Terror (Boukhallat, 2011). After that, the world's and America's perspective on terrorism had completely changed. The September 11 attacks had now shown the world that terrorist groups have the ability to inflict large-scale damage (Bolan, 2009: 126). Global terrorism has now created a worldwide fear and the first response of the US to this was the war against global terrorism (Cakmak, 2003).

Bush described the September 11 attacks as a war against them (Bush, 2002). And the US has identified some issues of vital importance after the attacks. Such as capturing or killing Osama bin Laden as the perpetrator of the attacks; ending the influence of al-Qaeda; struggling with the countries that support terrorism (Lobe, 2005: 10). In this direction, Bush said that countries hosting terrorists should also be seen as equal to terrorists (Thomas, 2019: 3). For this reason, he saw the war against terrorism as a war against the states that sponsor terrorism. It has designated as an enemy not only the perpetrators, but also everyone who stands in its way. In the international community, he said that this incident was an open attack on himself, and that it gave rise to a legitimate right for his further actions. Bush's "either you are with us or you are with the terrorist" rhetoric reflects this exactly (Bush, 2001). In addition, his saying that he will act alone when necessary and that he will continue the struggle alone even if no one fights can be counted as the starting point of the *uniteralist* policies to be followed in the Bush era.

The US took action quickly to determine the strategy after the attack, on September 14, S.J. Res. 23 (P.L. 107-40) voted in Congress to allow the use of military force. The US, which took action quickly to determine the strategy after the attack, on September 14, (P.L. 107-40) voted to allow the use of military force. The US, which expects the support of all states, asked the UN to support military intervention and the use of force. By adopting Security Council Resolution 1368, UN announced that it would take all necessary steps and referred to the right of self-defense (Thomas, 2019: 4). However, there is no mention of any use of military force in this Resolution, Chapter VII is not mentioned neither. NATO decided on 12 September 2001 that the attacks could consider within the scope of Article 5 of the Treaty. With this decision, NATO states stated that they would follow the 51st Article of the UN Charter and stand by the US once it became clear who carried out the attacks (Stahn, 2002: 22). In other words, the US initially wanted to design an international military operation under the name of 'War on Global Terrorism' in order to fight al-Qaeda and other terrorists (Boukhallat, 2011).

In addition to the fight against terrorism in the international arena, the US has given some reactions within itself to ensure national security and fight against terrorism. One of the primary measures taken in this regard was the US Patriot Act. It

was signed by Bush on October 26, 2001 to strengthen the fight against terrorism within the country by granting some extraordinary rights to the state to ensure US national security against terrorism (P.L. 107-56). However, by establishing an impartial 9/11 Commission in 2002, it was desired to create an official report on the terrorist attacks against the US and the events that led to the 9/11 attacks. The report was published in the summer of 2004 under the title "Final Report of The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the US". Although these are the steps taken by the US on behalf of the national dimension of the event, they also received a great support from the public. This has increased the US field of action in the international arena.

2.2.1.2. Operation Enduring Freedom

Beginning on September 11, 2001, Bush and the National Security Council[11] began meeting and planning their strategy against Terrorism. Within the scope of the war with al-Qaeda, it was decided that it should be done jointly with other forces in the region. In this context, it has started to take action with Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Arab Countries. Pakistan partnership was given extra importance (Onal, 2010: 46). First, on September 13, 2001, Pakistani representatives of the US met and asked Pakistan to stand by the fight against Al-Qaeda and to follow the seven steps (Kean & Hamilton, 2004: 331). The next day, the Pakistani administration accepted the seven-point condition presented by the US and declared that it stood by the US in the fight against terrorism (National Security Archive, 2001). After Afghanistan's response, the US sent an ultimatum to the Taliban. The ultimatum consisted of five items: the surrender of al-Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan to the US; the release of all foreign detainees, including Americans; protection of foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers; Closing al-Qaeda training camps and handing over terrorists to the authorities; providing full access to the US to oversee training camps (Bush, 2001). The US, which gave the Taliban a short time to make their demands, was also trying to prepare an international coalition for the Afghanistan intervention. As a result of the negotiations with states such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Egypt,

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[11] The group called the "Vulcans" that formed Bush's administration cabinet.

Russia, India and Pakistan, positive opinions were received for a military intervention (Polat, 2006: 96-97). War preparations started by requesting intelligence, superior and other support from NATO allies according to their qualifications and resources. In addition, the US announced that it will use all its resources and power to eliminate terrorism as a threat, punish those responsible for 9/11, and hold the actors responsible for terrorism (National Security Archive, 2001).

The Taliban rejected Bush's ultimatum, arguing that there was no evidence linking bin Laden to 9/11. The US started air strikes against Al-Qaeda and Taliban forces on 7 October 2001, and began Operation Enduring Freedom.

2.2.1.3. The Strategy of the US Intervention

The US military intervention in Afghanistan did not directly begin with ground combat units. Afghanistan was very different from the regions the US had fought before. For this reason, the US did not want to experience difficulties, did not want to cause more crises in Afghanistan and was afraid that the event would turn into a new Vietnam (Misra, 2002: 17). Bush's War Council was also skeptical of any ground offensive. Events in the previous British-Afghan and Soviet-Afghan wars pushed them to seek an alternative path (Junta, 2013: 34).

The alternative way for the US would be through the CIA. Instead of sending combat troops to Afghanistan, it was the US plan to support and finance the anti-Taliban opponents inside the country. The Northern Alliance, which has been the biggest rival of the Taliban since gaining power in Afghanistan, would serve as a tool for the US (Junta, 2013: 35). Not only the Northern Alliance, but also other tribal leaders were financed and strengthened the opposition and forming a combat unit against the Taliban (Anderson, 2011: 82).

With the formation of the CIA's local combat unit strategy, the US attack plan was also shaped. According to the 9/11 Commission Report (2004: 337-338), the plan consisted of 4 stages: As the first stage, the US and its allies would move their forces to countries such as Pakistan and Uzbekistan to conduct operations from there, which they was possible with the sympathy and support of the international community for the US after the 9/11 attacks. In the period from the terrorist attacks

to October 7, 2001, this stage was actually accomplished. The second phase was linked to the CIA's alternate route. Accordingly, the US was going to attack Al-Qaeda and Taliban targets with air strikes and special operations, while the Northern Alliance and other tribal anti-Taliban groups would launch attacks against the Taliban as combat forces. As of October 7, 2001, the Afghanistan War had begun (Malkasian, 2021)

In the third phase of the plan, all elements of US national power were used to end the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and end al-Qaeda. As of November 9, this phase started with the US-Northern Alliance coalition's capture of Mazar Sharif. With the evacuation of Kabul by the Taliban on November 13, most of the areas under the control of the Taliban in the period until December were captured by the Coalition (Gresham, 2021). The final phase of the plan focused on the post-war part. The task of the US forces in Afghanistan, which has been cleared of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, would change to ensure security and stability.

2.2.2. End of the Taliban's Rule and The Interim Government

About 1,300 US Marines were deployed, along with Northern Alliance and tribal soldiers, against the Taliban, which weakened after the airstrikes (Thomas, 2019). Coalition forces led by Uzbek General Dostum and Tajik General Rashid quickly began to seize areas belonging to the Taliban. Successive Taliban forces in the cities of Taloqan, Bamiyan, Herat, Kabul and Jalalabad were defeated or had to retreat (CFR, 2021). They then continued to lose their southern and eastern territories to the collegiate forces led by Hamid Karzai. On December 9, 2001, when Mullah Omar and the Taliban forces left Kandahar, the last stronghold, the Taliban regime was deemed to have ended (Kantzman and Thomas, 2017: 7).

On 13 November 2001 after Kabul fell, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1378. Accordingly, the UN would play a central role in a transitional period and would send peacekeepers to the region to ensure peace and stability. In line with this, the UN invited a group representing the struggling Afghan groups, the Northern Alliance and the former Afghan King to a conference in the city of Bonn. The Afghan group gathered here adopted measures that would form the basis of

future administration. The first of these measures was that President Hamid Karzai would have a transitional authority and a temporary mandate for a period of six months until the assembly was formed. The interim government, which was formed later, would govern Afghanistan for two years, a parliament would convene for a new constitution, and then free/fair elections would be held. (Fields and Ahmed: 2011) On 5 December 2001, the parties signed the Bonn Agreement, which was ratified by UN Security Council Resolution 1383[12].In addition, The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established pursuant to the Bonn Agreement and Resolution 1386[13]. And on December 22, 2001, the interim government took office under the chairmanship of Hamid Karzai. In addition, the deployment of the Peace Corps and the withdrawal of the Northern Alliance from Kabul were also decided (Onal, 2010: 47).

2.2.3. The National Security Strategy and the Bush Doctrine

On September 17, 2002, one year after the events of September 11, the US published a National Security Strategy (NSS). This document, which was released one year after the crisis presented the national security concerns of the US and what kind of strategies it will implement against them. This is also defined as a documentary expression of the foreign policy plan of the US, which we know as the Bush Doctrine (Gitlin, 2003). The 2002 NSS begins with Bush's words:

> *Our Nation's cause has always been larger than our Nation's defense. We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace—a peace that favors liberty. We will defend the peace against the threats from terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. And we will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent. (US NSS, 2002).*

The concepts of *preemption*, *military primacy*, *new multilateralism* (American *unilateralism*), *democracy promotion* advocated by the NSS were the main characteristics of the Bush Doctrine.

The NSS included the doctrine of preemptive war and military superiority. While trying to say that all countries are now under threat against terrorists, who

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[12] UNSCR 1383, *http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1383*
[13] UNSCR 1386, *http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1386*

were revealed to be capable of high-capacity actions with the September 11 attacks, attention was drawn to the possibility of these terrorist groups' access to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). However, Bush advocated the use of preventive force against groups and supporters who reached or tried to reach these WMDs (Lieber & Lieber, 2002). Bush words, "The US cannot always entirely depend on a reactive policy as we have been practicing in the past….We shall not permit our enemies to endanger our national security and national interests" (US NSS:2002) was referring to this argument. He argues that in order to maintain this preventive power, military superiority must be maintained and only thus can terrorists and their supporting states be prevented from accessing WMDs. When the conditions are necessary, the US will be able to use its military superiority to deter the enemies with the doctrine of preventive war and prevent them from achieving what they want (Daalder, et al, 2002).

Bush argues that the great states should stand on the same side to ensure peace and against international threats. In addition, the NSS emphasized the importance of alliances and international institutions by saying "We are guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone…" (Lieber & Lieber, 2002). Although it was said that the NSS cared about the international community and its support, the sentence "…we will not hesitate to act alone...." also showed that the US was willing to act alone (NSS, 2002). For this reason, America's new understanding of multilateralism actually gave birth to the US unilateralism. The concepts of preventive war and military superiority already included other principles supporting the principle of unilateralism (Schmidt and Williams, 2008: 198). Although Leiber (2002) argues that this unilateral movement used it alone because it avoided creating the effect of multilateralism, in fact, this was a principle that showed that he did not hesitate to use force and act alone even though it did not receive international support, and it was one of the foundations of the Bush doctrine.

Another element is democracy promotion. This element is not only something special to the NSS, but also a very important principle that we encounter frequently in the history of American foreign policy (Schmidt and Williams, 2008: 200). The strategy says that spreading democracy and freedom around the world is an American ethical but also strategic imperative. "…Poverty does not make poor

people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks…" (UN NSS, 2002), he actually characterizes the strategy as a defense necessity to support democracy and freedom. The Strategy also talks about different aid strategies and international incentives to achieve this. For this purpose, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) was established in December 2002. Bush believed that these institutions and aids, democracy promotion, would improve Western security (Dalacoura, 2012: 107).

In general, these three principles that formed the basis of the strategy were also the basis of the Bush Doctrine, which would guide the foreign policy and actions of the US. Although there were ambitious, legitimate and ethical goals in the strategy, it also constitutes a justification for acting in accordance with the American interests. But this has also led to much criticism about the ongoing actions of the US and the discussion on the Bush Doctrine.

There has been a lot of discussion over the US policy towards Afghanistan and the picture that emerged after the intervention. It has been argued that the Afghanistan Intervention is multidimensional to be reduced to the September 11 events only, thus the other motivational sources of the US have been extensively examined. The picture that emerged one year after the events and the publication of the National Security Strategy and the creation of the Bush Doctrine led to the questioning of the necessity of the Afghanistan intervention.

Although the Afghanistan intervention occurred as a reaction to the events of September 11, the US also had other interests in Afghanistan and its geography. Especially with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the power vacuum in Central Asia plays an important role at this point. According to Brezinski, Eurasia; the Middle East, Caspian Basin and Central Asia are of high importance in terms of energy resources and therefore constitute a conflict area (Brezinski, 1997: 31). Therefore, the US focused on democratic, economic, political and social freedoms in this region and supported them and tried to follow policies in line with its own interests to bring the countries of the region closer to the US. In other words, the target of democratic promotion of the US, NSS is actually a target that was among the policies of the US towards the region before. For this reason, democracy and the

application of democracy used by the US to fight terrorism are not universally accepted, and that's why it is said that the Afghanistan intervention is not just an intervention (Connah, 2020: 78).

Another criticism was towards the US fighting style. Although the purpose of the US's invasion of Afghanistan was to stop the Taliban and al-Qaeda, it was also seen as ensuring peace in Afghanistan. The intervention of the US, far from bringing stability, caused *civilian casualties*, *human rights violations*, increased *drug trade* and an *asymmetrical battlefield* (Connah, 2020: 77; Jones, 2008, 14). In other words, the NSS and the Bush Doctrine, which emerged a year later, were far from being successful in Afghanistan, which was actually a plot application. Although they tried to increase the capacity of the state in the reconstruction process and tried to get the support of the Afghan society, the increase in civilian casualties, the "collateral damage" argument and the ongoing conflicts wore the society and led to the spread of the anti-American perspective (Barry, 2017: 142).

Another issue that was most discussed and still causing the US actions to be questioned was the 'justified reason for using force'. The US had put forward the rhetoric of preemptive warfare as a defense against future terrorist attacks, assuming that it justified the use of force (Connah: 2020: 77). However, this was a subject open to abuse, as can be seen later in the Iraq War, because the US was creating a just cause that it could exert power in any part of the world. In other words, the idea that the war on terror declared by the US was built for the benefit of the US, together with the Bush Doctrine and the preemptive war principle that forms the basis of the NSS (Kaldor, 2013: 182).

According to Khattak, the most disturbing aspect of the NSS was that it was a policy action that changed the containment and deterrence doctrines that the US had been successfully carrying out for almost a century (Khattak, 2011: 165). In other words, the US was presented a new doctrine that had not been tried before and whose success was doubtful. Such a risk could and has damaged the image of the US and its ongoing foreign policy patterns.

One more issue on which the NSS is not thought to be successful is the killing of civilians. The data that emerged from the ongoing Afghanistan intervention and later the Iraq War reveal that civilian casualties have increased significantly. If

these wars are fought for peace and democracy, as it is said in the NSS, why are the innocents the ones who suffer? It reveals the problematic and damaging nature of the military intervention, where the measures taken to alleviate these losses worsen the situation (Connah, 2020: 78). In short the NSS and the Bush Doctrine have been subject to controversy and criticism.

2.3. RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS: NEW CHALLENGES

Post-war reconstruction is a process in which the rulers of the country, the international community, international organizations and high-level institutions such as the UN in particular take place and make a long-term and extraordinary effort by acting synchronized (Misra, 2002: 14). Bush referenced the Marshall Plan a lot in the reconstruction plan after the Afghanistan Intervention (Bush, 2002). The reconstruction process of Afghanistan started in 2002 as a process involving the re-established government of Afghanistan, the US and other foreign governments, international organizations and many non-governmental organizations. The international community started the nation-building through development of a new elected government and a new constitution which are examined below.

2.3.1. Afghan Interim Administration

Afghan Interim Administration, known as the interim administration, was the first administration of Afghanistan after the Taliban. Hamid Karzai was appointed as the head of this interim administration together with the Bonn Conference. However, this was only a six-month provisional authority, appearing to lay the groundwork until the actual transitional government was formed. Interim administration was including Provisional administration; Afghanistan Supreme Court; the Special Independent Commission to call on Afghanistan's Grand Council, the Loya Jirga[14] (Bonn, 2001).

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[14] Afghan National Assembly. An institution with hundreds of years of history (as known since 18th century), where Afghan Tribes and Warlords form their representations. It is valuable in that it provides the one assembly for the representation of different nationalities in Afghanistan.

The most important factor in the conduct of the process in this way was to elect the President and the government that would lead the country to the democratic process in 2004. At the end of six months, there were three candidates seen for the election by the Loya Jirga: ex-King Zahir Shah; Northern Alliance President Burhaneddin Rabbani; and US-linked and supported Hamid Karzai (Gupwell, 2002).

Meanwhile, the coalition forces were still conducting operations against Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. Although the main purpose of the operations was to try to destroy the Al-Qaeda and Taliban presence in Afghanistan as part of the Afghanistan War, they were also a bodyguard to prevent any attack that could affect the Loya Jirga elections. In March 2002, Operation Anaconda, which was organized against al-Qaeda and Taliban forces, was the largest operation in which the US forces participated (Tanner, 2009: 315). Later, under the name of Operation Jacana, four more operations were carried out by the UK and Coalition forces from April to the first weeks of June[15]. Thus, the ground was prepared so that the meeting of the Loya Jirga and the presidential elections would not be adversely affected.

During the six-month period that started on December 22, 2001, there were also changes in the candidates. First of all, after the reactions of the Northern Alliance and Rabbani, former King Zahir Shah announced that he would not be a candidate and started to support Karzai. After Rabbani said that he would not take part in such a race and withdrew from the candidacy, only Karzai, who was supported by the US, remained as a candidate (Grupwell, 2002). Although two more candidates emerged later, they were counted mostly for show[16]. And finally, the election for the head of the interim government took place on 13 June 2002. As expected, Hamid Karzai was re-elected with 83% of the votes and became the chairman of the Afghan Transitional Authority after the Afghan Interim Authority.

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[15] Operation Jacana was a code name for series of Operations carried out by Coalition forces: Four other operations within Operation Jacana: Operation Ptarmigan, Operation Snipe, Operation Condor, Operation Buzzard.

[16] Masooda Jalal, important for she is a first woman candidate of Afghanistan.

2.3.2. Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan

With Hamid Karzai's election as the head of the transitional government and Loya Jirga's election of the Cabinet, the reconstruction process in Afghanistan had officially begun. The main purpose of this transitional administration, which was established and will serve for two years, has been defined as managing the transition period of the country until fair, free and democratic elections are held (Grupwell, 2002). It was also another responsibility of the transitional government to draft a new constitution by convening the Loya Jirga during these two years (Fields and Ahmed, 2011).

In this transitional government to be held for two years, Pashtun and Tajik elements became stronger. While the number of Pashtun ministers in the first six-month transitional authority was 9, this number increased to 13 in the new administration (USCIS, 2003). At the same time, the warlords and the Northern Alliance tried to increase their influence in the administration and influence the Loya Jirga (Guler, 2004: 21). The names Karzai announced as vice president were soldiers who took part in the Northern Alliance. While responsibilities such as foreign affairs, army, police and security were mostly taken by the Northern Alliance and Tajiks, the Pashtuns were given responsibilities such as state administration and economic matters (Kiran, 2012: 110).

Apart from this, another important point in the transitional government is that Karzai was under the influence of the US. Between 2002-2004, it was under pressure to appoint more pro-Western figures. During this period, pro-US figures such as Ashraf Ghani, Juma Mohammedi and Mohammad Wardak were appointed to important positions[17].

2.3.3. New Constitution and Elections

The Loya Jirga held meetings during the transitional government process and met on 13 December 2003 to discuss a draft constitution published in November. As

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[17] Ashraf Ghani as Minister of Finance, Juma Mohammad Mohammadi as Minister for Mines and Industries, Taj Mohammad Wardak as Minister of Interior.

a result of the Loya Jirga, which lasted for about a month, the constitution was approved by the delegates on January 4, 2004[18]. It was later approved by President Karzai, the leader of the Transitional Government. Under the new constitution, the country provided for a directly elected president and two-chamber legislature (Petrov, et al, 2020).

After the constitution was ratified, the next step was to elect the actual government and administrator. First it was announced that the elections would be held in July 2004. However, both the Taliban's reaction to take action and the lack of confidence that there would be a democratic vote caused the elections to be postponed first to September and then to October (Khan, 2004). In the elections held on October 9, 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first president of Afghanistan with a superior majority of 55% (Jay, 2004). The Parliamentary Elections had to be postponed in 2005 due to the insecurity caused by the Taliban and Al-Qaeda threats and some assassinations. Although the results of the Parliamentary elections held on September 18, 2005 were postponed due to fraud allegations, it was announced on November 12 with the involvement of the UN (IRI, 2005). The fact that women were included in the first Parliamentary Elections held after 33 years and that a certain seat was reserved also stood out as an important point.

2.3.4. New Marshall Plan

As a result of decades of internal turmoil, political instability and internal-external wars, Afghanistan had almost fallen into ruins. Stabilization required a reconstruction project covering the whole country. In addition, many conflict elements had to be resolved within the country. In particular, the arms trade, drug trade, and hunger that emerged during the decades-long war, along with the destruction of agriculture, revealed the need for reconstruction (CRS, 2003).

In the framework of the US, this reconstruction has often been referred to as nation-building under the name of the Bush Doctrine. Accordingly, the US has sought to use a flexible, multilateral model supported by an energetic and robust

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[18] First Constitution of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which lasted 2021 by collapse of Afghanistan Government and Taliban took control of Afghanistan.

American policy and programs. It has tried to ensure a large participation of international initiatives, including neighboring countries, and has shaped it in line with its own interests. The US tried to stay away from the conqueror identity not to get the reaction of the society, and tried to show the nation building process in the country in an organic way with the local leaders. (Khalilzad, 2005)

With the Bonn Conference, steps were taken towards democracy and freedom in the reconstruction of the country. With the limitation of the power of al-Qaeda and Taliban elements within the country, the international presence in the country has increased to a great extent, especially since 2002 (Marsden, 2003: 93). With the establishment of the provisional government, initiatives began in order to ensure and finance the reconstruction in other respects as well. Bush called it the Marshall Plan for Afghanistan, saying it was a post-war reconstruction. For this, on the economic front, institutions such as the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) were asked to make plans for reconstruction (CESR, 2002: 30).

First, at the end of November 2001, these three institutions held a three-day conference in Islamabad. It was said at the Conference that international actors were ready for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and that the Conference in general was organized as a preparation for reconstruction (UN News, 2001). In this way, issues such as the establishment of a temporary central monetary authority and the central bank of Afghanistan, helping the Ministry of Finance to establish its basic functions such as income generation and expenditure management, establishing close relations with Afghanistan institutions for institutional developments and the development of economic databases were mentioned (Iqbal, 2001). Soon after, it met in Berlin in December 2001 to organize a donor conference for Afghanistan's immediate and long-term needs. Organized by 16 donors under the name of Afghan Support Group (ASG), the conference focused on Afghan refugees, the reconstruction of returnees, and Afghanistan's development initiatives (The New Humanitarian, 2001). Subsequently, NGO Conference in Tokyo on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan and Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group Conference were held in Brussels on 11-13 December 2001 (CESR, 2002: 30). At the conferences held at the end of 2001, mostly the systematic and planning of Afghanistan's reconstruction was done. While

doing this, an important place was given to social areas (education, health, food), and priorities were given to the ideas that respect women's rights. And preparations have been made for future reconstruction conferences.

The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, also known as Tokyo Conference, was held on 21-22 January 2002. The aim was to address the redevelopment program plans prepared by UNDP, WB and ADB and to receive donation commitments from donor countries for the reconstruction of Afghanistan (Marsden, 2002: 94). In Tokyo, both the Afghanistan Interim Administration and the Preliminary Needs Assessment (PNA) Team presented priority areas for Afghanistan reconstruction[19]. The Interim Administration tried to prioritize issues such as improving administrative capacity and paying salaries. In the PNA report, other priorities were identified as infrastructure improvements such as education, health, sanitation, roads, electricity, telecommunications, as well as rural development issues such as currency reform, food security, and agricultural reforms. Accordingly, 60% of the total funds collected from donors were allocated to humanitarian aid and social activities, while 40% was allocated to reconstruction activities (Marsden, 2002: 94).

Despite the steps taken within the framework of the New Marshal Plan and international funds, the Afghan Government was experiencing difficulties in implementing them. In particular, the aid in the designated areas, called basic aid, did not reach the rural areas. There was a lack of management and control in the provinces and rural areas (Jones, 2008: 22). Therefore, the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), which will later serve in Iraq, was established in order to support the reconstruction throughout the country. The fields of activity of PRTs are reconstruction, security and supporting the central government (Jakobsen, 2005: 11).

The ISAF, which was established with the Bonn Agreement, was also training the Afghan National Security Forces, and was an important part of the reconstruction process. The Afghan Army, which was trained by the US and NATO forces, had a critical place both in the fight against the ongoing Taliban and in the

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[19] International Conference on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan, Tokyo/Japan. See *https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/afghanistan/min0201/index.html#:~:text=The%20International%20Conference%20on%20Reconstruction,other%20representatives%20of%20the%20Administration*

transition of security to the Afghan Army in the continuation of the reconstruction process. As of May 2003, this process started when the Minister of Defense Rumsfeld declared that major combat operations were over and the focus of the US soldiers in Afghanistan was to stabilize the country and take part in the rebuilding process (Loeb, 2003). At the same time, the transition of ISAF's command from UN to NATO as of 2003 strengthened the US command in this process and increased its influence in the reconstruction process[20].

Again, the US established close relations with the Afghan government and Karzai during the reconstruction process. As part of these close relations, Bush appointed Zalmay Khalilzad as ambassador[21]. At the same time, Khalilzad's risk analysis for the oil pipeline known as Unocal during this period shows that the US not only looks after the nation-building process but also interests in bilateral relations (Safa, 2017: 57). Subsequently, they signed bilateral agreements with the Afghan government by improving trade, economic and military relations. In 2005, they announced the strategic partnership of the two countries by publishing a joint statement[22].

Despite all the planning and preparation, Afghanistan faced difficulties due to its structure and complex past. For example, former power holders had problems transitioning to a US model of nation-building; despite the end of the military intervention, the presence of the US and other international institutions was still disturbing the Afghan society; there was lack of training of indigenous personnel in the reconstruction process in Afghanistan; the problem of how reconstruction aids would be implemented damaged international law enforcement and aid forces due to the ongoing dangers… (Danida, 2005: 42). These difficulties were seen from the beginning as obstacles to nation-building in Afghanistan. And they played a role in the failure of the reconstruction and nation-building process, with many more problems to come.

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[20] UNSCR 1510, *http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1510*
[21] Zalmay Khalilzad, Afghan American diplomat. He served as the Special Representative for Afghanistan for the US and helped to peace process between US and Taliban.
[22] Joint Declaration of the United States-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership, 23 May, 2005.

2.3.5. Taliban Resurgence

After the Battle of Tora Bora at the end of 2001 and the Anaconda and Jacana Operations until June 2002, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda were defeated and had to retreat. After that, they started to regroup and reorganize to take action, as they did during the Occupation period of the Soviets (Tanner, 2009: 317). Especially the Taliban, which started to retreat to the southern parts of the country and to the Pakistani borders, began to prepare for a resurgence and started to gather again (Tohid, 2003). These preparations, which started in 2001, started to give their sprouts in 2003 (Ahmed, 2009: 240). The gradual resumption of conflicts in 2003 and some flyers circulating in Afghan camps showed that the Taliban was on the move again (Garamone, 2003). In 2003, the ex-Taliban High Court Chief Justice Abdul Salam's statement that the Taliban was back and Osama bin Laden's re-emergence in 2004, making statements against the US and Bush, increased the fire in the region (Baldauf & Tohid, 2003; Gall, 2004).

From 2003 to 2006, the US and ISAF continued to train Afghan forces while fighting insurgents in the southern and eastern regions. These conflicts, which were at a relatively low level, did not seem very threatening to security. During a three-year period, they succeeded in suppressing the rebel forces with attacks such as Operation Avalanche, Operation Mountain Storm, Operation Lighting Freedom, Operation Battery, Operation Red Wing, Operation Whaler (Kantzman and Thomas, 2017: 23). Beginning in 2005, however, the Taliban began resorting to new tactics of attrition. They started to inflict more casualties on the US forces, especially with their buried bombing and suicide attack tactics. Between 2005 and 2006, suicide attacks increased 400 percent, bombing attacks 100 percent, and armed attacks 300 percent in Afghanistan (Barfield, 2010, as cited in Junta, 2013: 49). By the year 2006, the US had become fully aware that the Taliban forces using the Afghan-Pakistani border and taking advantage there were a security problem[23].

The Iraq War, which has been going on since 2003, also made things even more difficult for the US. The recovery of the Taliban between 2003 and 2006 was

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[23] The Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/926–S/2021/570), see more *https://afghanistan.un.org/en/132548-situation-afghanistan-and-its-implications-international-peace-and-security-report-secretary*

ignored due to the money, military power and interest devoted to the Iraq War. This gave the Taliban more leeway in Afghanistan. Thus, the Taliban was able to gather more support, especially in Southern Afghanistan, where it began to spread.

The resurgence of the Taliban has also begun to undermine the US mission in Afghanistan. The continued increase in violence and civilian casualties, especially during the reconstruction process, led to an increase in anti-American sentiments in Afghan society. As trust in the Americans waned, indigenous people's support and belief in resurrection began to increase. The death of Afghan civilians as a result of the crash of a US vehicle in May 2006 led to anti-American riots in Kabul (Gall, 2006). This was one of the important breaking points in which the nation-building project of the US was interrupted.

One problem with the Taliban's resurgence was the opium industry, which has long been used to fund terrorists. Although opium production was restricted during the Taliban administration, it reached higher levels after the military intervention of the US and especially in 2005-2006 (Junta, 2013: 52). With the smuggled opium and heroin production and the profits from them, the Taliban could fund their own fighters and strengthen their resistance economically. The attitude of the US against this, on the other hand, strengthened the Taliban. Because by trying to destroy the opium production in Southern Afghanistan the US destroyed the livelihoods of Afghan farmers and brought them closer to the Taliban (Bergen, 2002: 190).

At the same time, the newly formed government and promises of rebuilding did not go well in such a situation. The continued accusations of the government about corruption and the failure to deliver the promised aid to the Afghan community have damaged the image of the US. For example, when it came to 2005, only 6% of the people had access to electricity (Junta, 2013: 51). Although there were democratic efforts, constitution and elections, the Karzai administration in Afghan society was not much different from the previous Taliban administration. The Taliban used these government and international failures as a propaganda tool to recruit soldiers and support (Jones, 2010: 151-163).

In the new NSS published in 2006, it is observed that Afghanistan still hasn't managed to be the focus enough and has been overshadowed by the Iraq War. In the

new Strategy the Afghanistan and Iraq War continued to be seen within the scope of the fight against terrorism in general (NSS, 2006). This showed once again that the public support for the Taliban was ignored.

Although the operations carried out by NATO between 2006-2008 were successful in clearing key areas and repelling the Taliban, re-infiltrations could not be prevented (Kantzman and Thomas, 2017: 23). While some Taliban target figures were hit, such as the capture of Mullah Obaidullah Akhun in Pakistan and the murder of Mullah Dadullah in 2007, these were not significant moves to stop the resurgence of the Taliban. The neglect of the US and the illusion that almost won turned into a panic that nearly lost (Junta, 2013: 57). This set the stage for the US to send more forces to the region.

CHAPTER THREE
MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

The US involvement and strategy in Afghanistan has changed over time. The initial aim was to eliminate the terrorist bases, especially Al-Qaeda, to prevent the biggest threat in international terrorism. However, both the Taliban's transformation into an insurgent group and the US's and UN's reconstruction project for making Afghanistan's "failed state" work again changed the purpose of the intervention. At the same time, the fact that the resurgence remained so strong and continued while waiting for an easy war continued to necessitate US participation.

In the reconstruction process of Afghanistan, the investments of the US turned into an economic burden. Plans to develop Afghanistan's economy, develop its military power, and turn it into a working democracy were far from realism. The bribery in Afghanistan, the inadequacy of the resistance despite the training of the military force, and the increasing influence of the insurgent groups made it difficult for the US to continue to intervene. At the same time, the strategies followed, and the destruction experienced caused further questioning of the underlying logic of the continued intervention from the moral side. Thus, the question arose: Why does involvement continued when the US does not have a vital interest and does more harm than benefit, and cannot meet the moral justifications?

In this section, the withdrawal process of the US from Afghanistan is explained and the reasons for this are examined. First, the changing US policy and exit strategy during the Obama era were explained. Afterwards, following a more pragmatic policy during the Trump era and the US withdrawal agreement as a result of the negotiations between the Taliban and the US is examined. It has also been mentioned how a more radical retreat occurred during the Biden era. Finally, the US's intervention in Afghanistan was evaluated as morally compatible with the just war theory, and the reasons for the foreign policy behind the complete withdrawal were examined from a realist point of view.

3.1. OBAMA: NEW AMERICAN STRATEGY

When Obama took office as US president, he inherited the legacy of global war on terror. The ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan created an obligation to form the center of Obama's foreign policy under this legacy. For this reason, of course, the Obama era of the US set out with the goal of resolving these crises and removing US involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq. At the same time, the biggest promises of his presidential campaign and his criticism of the Bush administration were post-9/11 policies and Bush's decisions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Another problem Obama inherited when he took office was domestic economic problems. The US's economic situation, which was in its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, also lost more resources in the swamp of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, was another challenge for Obama. The economic power of the US was the main factor in continuing to be involved in global competition, maintaining its military superiority, its diplomatic strength, and ensuring national security (NSS, 2010, 9). Therefore, it is fair to say that domestic issues are also an important part of Obama's agenda to mitigate the impact of the global economic crisis and to revive the American economy.

In one of Obama's election speeches on June 15, 2008, Washington D.C., he outlined five strategies he would pursue during his Presidency: (1) responsibly end the war in Iraq; (2) ending the war against Al-Qaeda; (3) prevent terrorists and rogue states access to all nuclear weapons and materials; (4) ensuring energy security and supply; (5) rebuilding alliances against the challenges of the new century. (Indurthy, 2011: 14).

Obama announced that he would be more selective in the use and preference of interventionism and preventive diplomacy in his new foreign policy behavior, and he wanted to re-establish the solvency in order to finance these strategies (Larrabee, 2009: 2). He also wanted the US to change its long-term military involvement and intervention in the Middle East and focus on the Asia-Pacific region on trade and investment (Unger, 2016). Thus, the US would be able to regain the 'primacy' that it had since the end of the Cold War and maintain the US's claim on global leadership (Obama, 2007). Obama seemed to shift to a more realist line by placing more

emphasis on economic and security developments, as the US did during the Cold War. However, he also stood against the prisoner and torture practices in the Guantanamo and tried to signal that he would return the US to "just" policies in line with the law and morality. The continuation of the war in Afghanistan and the increase in the influence of the Taliban would cause this promise not to be fulfilled (Unger, 2016).

The Arab Spring, which broke out at the end of 2010, started to harm the interests of the US in North Africa and the Middle East, although it was getting more and more violent. The crisis, which took its place on the foreign policy agenda in an important way, caused the US to intervene in Libya through NATO and resulted in the death of Gaddafi. The Syrian Civil War, which emerged with the successive events and the Arab Spring's leap into Syria, made the situation even more dangerous for the Middle East, while creating an opportunity for terrorism and resulted in ISIS being active in the region as a critical terrorist group. Even if Obama did not want to be deeply involved in the Syrian Civil War within the scope of the war against terrorism, which the US is currently carrying out, he had to allocate resources by organizing operations within the scope of the fight against ISIS (Nikolaenko, 2019: 55).

As of 2013, the increasing tension between Russia and Ukraine and the Ukraine Crisis that broke out was another foreign policy issue for the Obama era. The annexation of Crimea created the most serious crisis after the Cold War for the relations between Russia and the US, which are already strained due to the Syrian issue. The US and some G7 countries started to take an anti-Russian stance and they applied some economic, military and diplomatic sanctions (Holland and Mason, 2014). This later led to an increase in the conflict of interest between Russia and the US in the Syrian Civil War. At the same time, it would not be wrong to say that it was the beginning of the US's sanctioning attitude in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War.

In terms of returning to the Asia-Pacific, Obama wanted to both balance the global rise of China and catch an economic upward trend again. Just one month after the presidential term began, Secretary of State Clinton's comprehensive Asian trip was aimed this (Landler, 2009). At the same time, efforts were made to improve

relations with China. However, China's claims in Taiwan and the South China Sea continued to hinder the development of relations with the US on the political side (Christensen, 2019: 75). Nevertheless, the US continued its economic initiatives in the Asia Pacific region and a free trade agreement was signed called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) (Nikolaenko, 2019: 81).

Expressing that he is very serious about nuclear weapons and access to these weapons, Obama started to look for ways to prevent the production and supply of nuclear weapons, especially through Iran. First, Obama tried diplomatic and moderate ways and when he could not get what he wanted from his talks with Iran, he preferred to resort to other ways. With the UNSC Resolution 1929, Iran's trade in nuclear technologies was limited by the UN member states in military trade. In addition, the US signed the "The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010" to increase the scope of the sanctions on Iran[24].

The Afghanistan and Iraq Wars remained the most important issue on the foreign policy agenda of the Obama era. He started to take important steps towards withdrawing from Iraq, which he saw as a "wrong war". It also paved the way for a gradual withdrawal from Iraq (Tilghman, 2016). His main aim was to completely eliminate the American presence in Iraq and focus on the Afghanistan intervention, which he deemed more reasonable. Although his rhetoric in the presidential campaign and his actions after taking office were consistent in line with his "new strategy", the war and conditions that have been going on for about seven years have pushed Obama to act more pragmatically, perhaps in a way he never wanted from the very beginning. Which, from the very beginning, emphasized the importance of Afghanistan within the scope of the fight against terrorism, and his discourses that the real war should be in Afghanistan were criticized a lot, mostly because he analogy the Afghan War as "good war" (Landler, 2017).

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[24] See detailed at: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-111publ195/pdf/PLAW-111publ195.pdf

3.1.1. Obama's Original Strategy of Removal

When Obama took office in 2009, he said that he was going to make policy changes towards Afghanistan. This change can be seen in the 2010 NSS, which was published a year after he took office. Removal of all al-Qaeda and Taliban forces from Afghanistan and Pakistan was as a very important goal (NSS, 2010: 19-21). However, according to Junta (2013) the NSS did not include the discourse of reconstruction of Afghanistan among the main goals which stands out as one of the most important differences from the Bush era. Referring to negligence after the Iraq War, Obama shifted his policy focus back to Afghanistan. As soon as he took office, he said that the Afghanistan mission was a high priority and that the effort of the US should be reduced (Kantzman and Thomas, 2017: 24). But it was obvious that reducing US effort and pulling back the US was difficult. Therefore, Obama tried to build his Afghanistan strategy on gradual, deliberate, and controlled withdrawal (Larrabe, 2009: 8).

Of course, determining Obama's strategy was not easy. Because first, what he learned before he took office and what he learned about the crisis after he took office were not exactly same. Although he foretold that the intervention in Afghanistan would be more important for his administration, both the economic crisis of the US and the Pentagon's recommendations on the military presence in the region put Obama under great pressure (Hybel, 2014). Before deciding on his new strategy in Afghanistan, Obama wanted to have full knowledge of all the information, plans, options and justifications for the intervention and the ongoing war. He believed that it would be pointless to send more troops until the plan in Afghanistan was completely clear.

Obama's meetings with the National Security Council focused on several options. (1) The first was to decide on the increase in troops after the situation in the region was fully investigated and finalized. However, the risk of worsening the situation while waiting or the lack of conclusive results of the research could result in the US being late. (2) Another option was to completely suppress the Taliban's insurgency by sending troops to the region at a time, not gradually. But in doing so, if it was not completely successful, it could result in a great failure and resource

expenditure. And even if this action succeeded, not having a definitive strategy for the aftermath could be another problem. (3) Another option was to take control of the situation in the region by gradually sending troops, reducing concerns. In the meantime, research on the situation would yield results and save time to structure the NSS. But it would also make the US hesitant, question the confidence in its decisions. (4) The last option would be to build up considerable troops in the region to ensure security, but the failure of the option, although it is not much different from the second option, could jeopardize the upcoming Afghan government elections (Hybel, 2014).

Obama's real desire was an exit plan (Woodward, 2010: 156). To ensure the withdrawal in Afghanistan, first of all, security and stability had to be ensured. In order to ensure security in Afghanistan, Obama adopted the doctrine of counterinsurgency. This strategy, which was seen as successful during the Bush period in Iraq, was not effective enough in the fight against the Taliban due to the high expenditure of resources on the Iraq War (Obama, 2009). For this reason, Obama saw Iraq as one of the problems of the failure of Bush's Afghanistan policy. In addition, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda safe havens created on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the continuation of corruption, drug trade, insufficient security forces and an undeveloped economy, despite the election of a democratic government by the people were the reasons why Bush's Afghanistan policy was accused of failure by Obama (idib).

Accordingly, Obama was aware of the necessity of troop increase and said that troop increase was necessary to bring the war to a successful conclusion (NBC News, 2009). He also thought that he would have created a time for himself to evaluate and change his decisions in the near future. And the subsequent development of the decisions to be made in accordance with the Afghanistan strategy in 2009 supported this idea.

When Obama took office, there were 37,000 US soldiers and 32,000 NATO forces in Afghanistan (Witte, 2021; Jacobson, 2010: 602). In addition, in the spring, the US announced that they would send 17,000 soldiers to Afghanistan (Hodge, 2009). Then, Obama continued the radical changes and appointed General McChrystal, who ran the counterinsurgency in Iraq. The strategy based on more

soldiers continued with McChrystal taking command. In his 2009 West Point speech, he announced that 30,000 more soldiers would be sent to Afghanistan (Obama, 2009). In 2011, the number of US troops in Afghanistan reached 100,000, three times the Bush-era numbers[25].

Obama's first target on the way to withdrawal was determined to destroy Al-Qaeda's safe havens in Pakistan, to take control of the Af-Pak border, and to stop the Taliban crossing into Afghanistan (O'hanloni 2016: 3). In order to do all this, the US had to develop a stricter standard than the Bush era and raise the struggle to the next level. Eikenberry said that the transfer should also be included in the plan defined as clean, hold and build (Junta, 2013: 60). Accordingly, Afghanistan had to be completely cleansed from elements of the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This could only be achieved with the use of more force. At the same time, Afghan forces needed to be trained to actively participate in this struggle and to hold the post-US region. For this, extra soldiers were needed. In other words, the most important element for the US to realize its counterinsurgency policy in Afghanistan was military power.

Another goal of Obama was that the trained Afghan forces gradually should take responsibility for security in Afghanistan. Thus, the security vacuum that the US was afraid of while gradually withdrawing from Afghanistan would not occur and the Afghan State would be able to provide security in the country. This was grounded in the 2010 NATO Lisbon Summit (NATO, 2010). The Lisbon Summit was the starting point for the gradual transfer of security forces to Afghan forces (Reynolds, 2010). As a result of the summit, which Karzai also attended, the members agreed to transition of military operations and security responsibilities until 2014. This was the transfer part. In other words, the US wanted to get out of the business by giving the responsibility to Afghanistan forces. In short for Obama, the main problem to be solved in Afghanistan was how to get out of there (Junta, 2013: 59).

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[25] According to graphics that shows numbers of the US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. Numbers increased since Obama took the office till death of Osama bin Ladin. See detailed numbers at : *http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/06/22/world/asia/american-forces-in-afghanistan-and-iraq.html*

3.1.2. From ''Good War'' to the concept ''Afghan Good Enough''

In the statements he made at the beginning of his presidential term, Obama always stated that the ultimate goal was to withdraw responsibly from Iraq and Afghanistan. It would not be wrong to explain what he means by this responsible withdrawal as fulfilling the objectives of the interventions and leaving behind a better region and country than it found. However, while Obama called the Iraq War as a Bush's "bad war", he saw the importance of the situation in Afghanistan and the "good war" worth fighting. The troubles he experienced during his presidency and the Afghanistan intervention, which he saw as a just war that could achieve success, transformed this thought over time (Landler, 2017).

The US intervention in Afghanistan was moving away from its intended goals, causing America to lose its way even more. Even the structures once built under the restructuring did not function functionally, and the rift between the Karzai government and Obama led to more corruption and problems with the Afghan administration. The steps taken to solve the problem were further reversing the crisis with the behavior of other actors. At this point, Afghanistan's "good war" was not progressing as Obama wanted.

The continued effectiveness of the Taliban and the Haqqani Network could not be defeated despite more American soldiers and Obama's strategy, and they also gained an advantage in winning the war of political attrition (Cordesman, 2012). The cooperation between Pakistan and the US turned into more bribery aid. Obama's efforts to bring Pakistan to his side in the war in Afghanistan could not go beyond harming the resources of the US, and Pakistan was only ostensible stance. Also, the Obama administration did not want to stay in Afghanistan and continue the reconstruction/nation-building project after winning the war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In this direction, the main goal began to take shape as helping the Afghan government to ensure the competence to continue functionally. A practical strategy that will work for Afghanistan to continue, namely "Afghan good enough" (Lubold, 2011).

The real question for the Obama administration in Afghanistan was whether to block al-Qaeda and stop Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist base or turn

Afghanistan into a European democracy (Landler, 2017). But given the realities of the war and the situation in Afghanistan, it was clear that Afghanistan could not be a Denmark. For Obama and his administration, the counterinsurgency campaign seemed a more accurate option. But as Rhodes, then Deputy National Security Adviser, said, even if counterinsurgency succeeds and war is won, the creation of a political culture or nation-building are not things an army can achieve (Walt, 2018:76).

At such a point, the transition to the concept of "good enough", as Cordesman (2012) called it, seemed much better than the illusions of nation-building or reconstruction in Afghanistan. This was consistent with Obama making a "transition" to such a mindset when looking for an exit strategy. In this direction, creating an economic and effective Afghan army, cooperating with local forces and actors, strengthening Afghan institutions and "hide, protect and support" from the "clean, create and hold" tactic seemed to be a strategy that could work for Afghanistan (Cordesman, 2010, 2012).

3.1.3. The Surge and Death of Usama bin Laden

At the end of 2009, Obama's Afghanistan surge began. In fact, this surge was the first step of retreat. This was a take it or leave it situation for the US. Either they would be successful thanks to the strategy they would follow for two years, and the transition would be achieved in a way they expected, or Afghanistan would be abandoned by concluding how expensive it was to stay in Afghanistan and that this situation was far from success (SIGAR, 2021: 30). It should be underlined that Obama was not trying to establish a perfect nation-state, he wanted to develop a solid exit strategy (Woodward, 2010: 271).

Between 2009, when the surge began, and 2010, US reconstruction spending increased by 50 percent. And in the following year, funding of US troops and reconstruction projects was now more than double the maximum attainable GDP of the Afghan state (SIGAR, 2021: 31). The very low contribution of such large inflows of money to the reconstruction process raised the question marks for the Karzai administration. Government corruption, which has been a problem for many years,

was one of the things that bothered Obama. Obama warned Karzai about this corruption during his first visit to Afghanistan (Witte, 2021). However, according to the words of Rangin Spanta, Afghan National Security Advisor of the time, "corruption was not the only problem of the system of governance, the problem was the system of governance itself" (SIGAR, 2016: 4). In 2010, the tension between the Karzai administration and the Obama administration increased when Karzai's administration accused the US of meddling in its internal affairs and said that he could join the Taliban if necessary (Acet and Doğan, 2017: 69).

Continuing operations under the new strategy generally continued in the southern regions where the Taliban is strong. The attack on Marjah at the beginning of 2010 was followed by the Kandahar attacks. At the same time, US military losses were increasing. At the beginning of 2010, there were twice as many deaths as in 2009. This was also due to the lack of coordination between the US and Afghan forces which were working together under the counterinsurgency, but the real problem was that Afghanistan was a swamp. General McChrystal, who was responsible for Afghanistan operations, criticized the Obama administration in an interview with The Rolling Stone (Hasting, 2010). He was replaced by General Patraeus, another person who had worked in Iraq. Patraeus' statements were in line with Obama's strategy and seemed focused on reducing losses. Counterinsurgency was a strategy advocated by Patraeus, as in McChrystal, and he wanted the troops to be brought to Afghanistan as much as possible, not to withdraw (Junta, 2013: 63). In addition, after McChrystal was dismissed, opposition to counterinsurgency began to increase in the US society due to the emergence of some documents related to the Afghanistan War and the security breach[26] (Witte, 2021).

While the surge was continuing, one of the most important events for the Afghanistan War took place in the spring of 2011. On May 1, 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed by American forces in his safe harbor in Abbottabad, Pakistan. This has further fueled the questions of whether we should continue the war after the death of the key figure of Al-Qaeda, the perpetrator of the September 11 Events and

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[26] Leak of war documents called the Afghanistan War Diary. These leaked documents were released to public by WikiLeaks in 2010. The leak of more than 75,000 documents included information about the War in Afghanistan and U.S. strategies, the deaths of civilians, Taliban attack and several countries thought to be involved in the insurgency.

the responsible for the Afghanistan War. As a result, Obama announced a timetable for the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. According to this, the US would withdraw 33,000 soldiers by the summer of 2012 and thus the surge would come to an end. In addition, he said that in 2014, the responsibility for security will pass to Afghan forces (Garamone, 2011).

As a result, the US government often funded programs that were inappropriate or inflamed the conflict and that the Afghan government could not sustain. Since the beginning of the war, the US has faced many economic problems such as close to two thousand military casualties, 444 billion dollars in expenditures, a deficit in the US budget and unemployment in the domestic affairs in the decade since the war began (CFR, 2021). As a result of these, the agreement that would lead to an exit now at least had hopes of exiting Afghanistan without further losses.

3.1.4. Bonn Conference II

Ten years after the first conference, where the war and the future of Afghanistan were first discussed, the parties came together again in Bonn to plan the withdrawal process of the US. Germany hosted the conference held on December 5, 2011, while Afghanistan was the chairman. While coming to the second Bonn conference, what was expected from the conference was to confirm the commitment to Afghanistan security and development, to establish a long-term strategic partnership between the US and Afghanistan, to talk about the adequacy of Afghan forces to take security responsibility (Fields and Ahmed, 2011: 24). At the conference attended by more than 100 parties the conclusion of the Afghan War, the transfer of security responsibility to the State of Afghanistan and its scheduling until 2014 were discussed. The purpose of the Afghan Government at the conference was to ensure the continuation of international aid and engagement within the country until 2014. The US, on the other hand, showed its own economic problems and said that corruption in Afghanistan puts an economic pressure on them. Mentioning the previous commitments, the US emphasized that the principle of mutual accountability should exist between the US and Afghanistan (Safi, 2011).

The realization of the promises and mutual commitments made in Bonn was not very possible in the ongoing process. The Karzai administration continued to point out the reason for the corruption in the ongoing process as the international community. In 2012, the video broadcast of the treatment of the US soldiers against the dead Afghans also increased the tension. Again in 2012, the news that American soldiers were burning the Qur'an led to the intensification of civil and military protests (Witte, 2021). To solve these problems and to continue their long-term cooperation, Afghanistan and the US made two different agreements. The first was an agreement to transfer the detainees held by the US to a place under Afghan control within six months (Nordland, 2012). Another was the transfer of some of the US special operations in Afghanistan to the Afghan forces. The Afghan forces now also took responsibility for the night raids carried out by the US against Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders since 2009 (Al-Jazeera, 2012). The improvement created by these agreements also laid the groundwork for the US-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement. With this agreement, it was tried to create a long-term environment in which relations would continue after the US withdrew from Afghanistan and that the US was committed to its assistance to the Afghan state (Sweet, 2012). In addition, the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) was signed to determine the terms of the long-term engagement of the US in Afghanistan. However, this long-term partnership, which was tried to be created, was not approved by Karzai, despite Loya Jirga's acceptance, as it would increase Afghanistan's dependence on the US and make its effects felt until the full withdrawal of the US (Thomas, 2019: 7).

With the death of Osama bin Laden and the subsequent Bonn Conference, the US started to take the first steps of withdrawal. The number of soldiers, which reached 100,000, would be reduced to 90,000 during the 2011 and reduced to 68,000 at the end of 2012. In addition, it was announced by Obama that the total US soldiers would decrease to 34,000 by 2014 (Kantzman and Thomas, 2017: 25). Other countries also began to withdraw their troops, complying with the new commitments in Bonn, and the France-Dutch-Canada ended combat missions.

3.1.5. Secret Talks Between Taliban and the US (2008-2012)

US communication and negotiations with the Taliban may actually be the beginning of the Mujahideen movement and the Soviet Invasion. However, both with the end of the Soviet invasion and the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the US interest in the region decreased, and its communication with regional actors was also erratic. In the 1990s, contacts with the Taliban were mostly through sources in Afghanistan and through access to them through some companies (Sheikh and Greenwood, 2013:13). There was a relationship based on the security of the resources in the region in the negotiations, which took place mostly over the oil companies. With the 9/11 events, the direct contact with the Taliban was made by the ultimatum issued by the US regarding al-Qaeda and bin Laden. Bush (2003), said, "... You can't talk to them, you can't negotiate with them, you must find them..." which shows that the US did not want to make any contact during the Bush era.

Under Obama, the attitude toward the Taliban was not like during Bush. He was signaling that he would take steps towards at least a meeting with the Taliban in a moderate way (Cooper and Stolberg, 2009). After all, Obama's main request was an exit strategy, and a possible reconciliation with the Taliban would be an important step towards exiting Afghanistan. Although the counterinsurgency plan continued, both the US efforts to undermine the Taliban and the weak steps taken by Mullah Omar, created a window of opportunity for negotiations (Sheikh and Greenwood, 2013:14).

The first contacts between the Taliban and the US took place through the German foreign intelligence service. Progress was made thanks to the meetings held with Mullah Omar's representatives. Accordingly, meetings took place, first in Doha and then in Munich. Secret talks between US representatives and Taliban representatives began in Munich in November 2010. For two years, contacts between US and Taliban representatives continued in Munich and Doha. Mullah Omar's representatives have requested the opening of a permanent representative in Qatar. US and Afghan government representatives have imposed a requirement that the Taliban stay away from international terrorism in any way. Other issues of the talks were more about prisoner exchanges. A specific agreement was reached on Bowe

Bergdahl's release in exchange for the five Taliban detainees at Guantanamo (Wörmer, 2012:4). However, the new US demands for the release of detainees have irritated the Taliban, and congressional discomfort has caused negotiations to be suspended (Borger, 2012).

For the Afghan government, negotiations between the US and the Taliban were also important. At that time, the Afghan government was trying to communicate with Hazb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) and Taliban representatives, both through Saudi initiatives and contacts of the EU and the UN (Sheikh and Greenwood, 2013:2-3). In terms of its own negotiations and the expectation of the US-Taliban contact, the Afghan government's main wish was to end the armed struggle with the insurgent groups and to ensure that groups such as HIG and Taliban took place in the elections and joined the system. However, the Afghan government's requests were not accepted during this period as they would have been later.

For the US, the situation was parallel to the wishes of the Afghan government. The US saw the Taliban and other rebel groups abandoning the armed struggle and submitting to the new Afghanistan's constitution and system as one of the main conditions in the negotiations. However, since it was also known that this would not be easy, it was desired to develop relations with agreements and contacts at other points until it reached to that stage. While the Taliban had no desire to recognize the Afghan government or constitution, they also wanted the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. Yet there was no guarantee that the Taliban will lay down arms even if the US withdraws completely, and the Afghan government's inability to stand up to the Taliban and other rebel groups showed that this demand of the Taliban would not be met soon for that time.

3.1.6. Transfer of Security Responsibility

The withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan determined at the 2010 Lisbon Summit began in 2011. The planning of a gradual withdrawal by Afghanistan was split into tranches. Firstly, on March 22, 2011, Karzai determined the Afghan provinces according to operational, political and economic issues with JANIB (Joint Afghan NATO Intequal Board). Later, on 27 November 2011, the

provinces and districts where the second transition would take place were separated according to the issues in the first group and transferred to the responsibilities of the Afghan forces. On May 13, 2012, in the third phase, he announced the transition process of the area covering two-thirds of the country, and this was the beginning of the full transition in each state. On October 31, 2012, it was announced that the remaining regions would enter the transition process and the whole process related to the transition was defined. On June 18, 2013, Karzai announced the start of the fifth and final phase. With the implementation of this decision, 11 provinces in the country would be under the control of Afghan security forces (NATO, 2020).

Creating a safe transition for the Afghan forces has been a problematic process. One of the unanswered questions was whether the US/NATO forces would remain as trainers or advisers after ISAF/NATO forces ended their duties in 2014. The Karzai administration's rejection to signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement was one of the main factors causing problems in this regard. At the same time, the problems that the Karzai administration has been experiencing for years brought with it the necessity of establishing a more effective administration in terms of ensuring the transition and its continuation. With the new administration in Afghanistan, the commitments made since the Tokyo Conference could be fulfilled and administrative obstacles in front of Afghanistan could be removed after the transition period (Cordesman, 2014). With the election of Ashraf Ghani as president in 2014, a more docile government took over the administration of Afghanistan. Ghani's signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement as soon as he took office also showed that the administrative problem was resolved in favor of the US (Cordesman, 2014).

Obama presented a timeline after announcing the withdrawal of troops in 2014. Accordingly, in 2015, 9,800 US soldiers would stay in Afghanistan under the name of Resolute Support Mission (RSM) to train Afghan forces. Some of this group would also go on to conduct some operations against al-Qaeda remnants (CFR, 2021). By the end of 2016, its military strength would decrease to 5000 and Bagram Airport would be used as a base. In the process after 2016, the US military forces would pass under the authority of the US Embassy, and their next responsibilities would be to protect the US bases, to ensure the Foreign Military Sales process in Afghanistan, and to train Afghan forces for the use of these weapons (Kantzman and

Thomas, 2017: 26; Holland, 2014). With the resolution of post-transition commitments with BSA, the combat missions of the US and NATO were officially ended on 28 December 2014. However, a force of close to 13,000 soldiers remained in Afghanistan to train and advise the Afghan troops and to protect the US presence in the region (Witte, 2021). The ISAF was replaced by RSM as of January 1, 2015. The RSM is defined as a combat mission established to provide advice and training on long-term security in the country under the BSA between Afghanistan and the US[27]. In short at the end of 2014, US air power was reduced, as ISAF transferred its mission to the RSM, and PRTs were transferred to the Afghan forces.

With the plan prepared by Obama, the preparation of the withdrawal from 2009 and the gradual implementation of the first withdrawal plan seemed to have been relatively successful. This was the first time that the US believed that it would withdraw from Afghanistan. Despite the troubles he had in Afghanistan with the legacy of the Bush era, Obama's plan was to withdraw, and he seemed to have succeeded. However, it was clear that there would be problems in the sequel. Because the withdrawal process, which started in 2011, in the tenth year of the war, may actually be completed ten years from then, with the vice president of the Obama era Joe Biden becoming president in 2021, in a way that the US never wanted ten years ago.

3.2. TRUMP'S AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY: PRINCIPLED REALISM

As of January 2017, Donald Trump became the 45th President of the US. He had to face many threats and problems left from the periods of previous presidents. Trump's foreign policy was unpredictable and unbalanced (Brands, 2019, Bennhold, 2020). Unlike in the previous period, he began to take a stance that preferred to focus on personal relations with other countries rather than the international agreements (Amanpour, 2016). He considered that pursuing multilateral policies limited the US and placed it under some obligations, which put the US in a difficult position in economic, social, military or global contexts (Kiyici, 2021:51). Many times, he

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[27] See more at https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/30/statement-president-signing-bilateral-security-agreement-and-nato-status.

mentioned that, particularly about NATO, US commitments are being abused by European states and other Middle East allies, and has created controversy over its financing (Trump, 2019, Kaufman, 2017:263). He described NATO as an "obsolote" alliance (Masters and Hunt, 2017).

Calling his approach "principled realism", Trump first set out to devise a foreign policy on American rhetoric (Nakamura and Philip, 2017). In line with this rhetoric, he found international commitments inefficient in the interests of the US. Trump's "principled realism" advocated an opinion aimed at miniaturizing the importance of international organizations when there are no mutual interests in the international arena or if there is no balancing act (Chifu and Frunzeti, 2018:8). Trump has tried to eliminate the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Paris Climate Agreement and many UN-related commitments (Bugos, 2019, Hersher, 2020, Glass, 2019). At the same time, his serious rhetoric on burden-sharing on NATO was an important issue for understanding the Trump's foreign policy view (Tarpaulin, 2018:162).

Trump's "America First" rhetoric has a realist view that puts national interests first. He also did not shy away from praising populist and neo-nationalist rhetoric by describing himself as a nationalist (Cummings, 2018, Carrothers and Brown, 2018). However, due to the confusing different policies he pursued, he could not be described as a traditional realist or as a liberal and created his own pattern of foreign policy (Anton, 2019). And, while he shares his isolationist views that the US focus should be more on domestic problems, he has not pursued moves to ignore US foreign goals and interests (Sestanovich, 2018). Rather than being a symbol of justice, power or peace in a global police or international order, he wanted to get rid of these burdens of global leadership (Kaufman, 264). Although Trump argued before and after the election that there should be a protectionist and isolationist US foreign policy, global dynamics, and relations with countries such as Russia, China, Iran, Syria, North Korea and Afghanistan in the interests of the US should be said that Trump's isolationist rhetoric does not coincide with reality (Ari, 2020:62). For example, in order to balance the growing influence of China and Russia in the international arena, it has tried to maintain the military and economic 'primacy' of the US by focusing on relations with these countries and countries alike. He has imposed

travel bans on seven Muslim countries in the fight against terrorism in the Middle East[28]. He also withdrew from the Iran Nuclear Agreement by imposing sanctions against Iran in order to increase its influence in the Middle East and especially in the Gulf (Landler, 2018). North Korea, on the other hand, has pursued an aggressive policy of developing its nuclear arsenal, but Trump has sought to build close ties with Kim Jong-un as part of his policy of denuclearization in South-East Asia (Bennett and Kim, 2020). And in doing so, he chose a tougher, sanctions-oriented path, removing Obama's soft power policy from being a priority. He used economic pressure to achieve his foreign policy goals (Hilsenrath and Norman, 2020). From a realist point of view, Trump's priority appears to be the interest of the US rather than relations of friendship or hostility (Ari, 2020: 63, Bjornson, 2016).

Trump has made the fight against terrorism, the first priority of US foreign policy. For Trump, the challenge was to fight against terrorism on two different sides when he took office (Addicott, 2020:8). As the long struggle with Taliban continued in Afghanistan, the threat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria was also causing resources and policies to divest. Accordingly, he stressed that defeating ISIS and other radical Islamist terrorist groups is the top priority of the US (Ari, 2020:61).

As part of the fight against terrorism, consistent with the rhetoric of "principled realism," Trump wanted to avoid costly military interventions that have long occupied a huge part of US economy (Baemon, 2017). For this reason, he also opposed further implementation of neo-conservative policies such as imposing US power on other states at gunpoint or trying to move democracy to other countries through methods such as state building[29] (Baemon, 2017: 8, Addicott, 2020:9). For example, the Trump administration, which was content to hit only a military base in response to Assad's use of chemical weapons in the Syrian crisis, did not welcome the idea of a military intervention in Syria and was therefore criticized for its inflammatory views on Assad's actions (Ari, 2020:64).

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[28] Trump's Executive Order 13769, labeled as ''Muslim ban'' by most. About travel restrictions on travel to Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Yemen. With Executive Order 13780 and President Proclamation 9645 more countries such as Chad, North Korea, Venezuela, Nigeria, Myanmar, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Sudan and Tanzania added to travel ban list. Later some countries removed from the lists.

[29] See full speech at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/21/world/asia/trump-speech-afghanistan.html Access: 06.05.2022.

Unlike the Taliban, ISIS has had difficulty surviving and being funded as an organization that threatens the interests of many more powers in the region. The fact that ISIS has lost a lot of power since 2017 and has been defeated in most ranks has enabled the US to turn its focus more on Afghanistan. Since his election rhetoric, Trump, like Obama, advocated the necessity of withdrawing from Afghanistan, and, like his predecessor, decided to order military reinforcements and started his Afghanistan policy by showing that he would act as the conditions required (Elliott, 2017).

3.2.1. Trump's desire to End the War in Afghanistan

One of Trump's promises during the election campaign was US withdrawal from Afghanistan. He was widely critical and planned for a full withdrawal, when he became the president (Ranade, 2017:1). After taking office, the situation has moved away from being the case, because the complex nature of the Afghanistan problem made it difficult to create workable solutions. However, withdrawal strategy continued to evolve throughout the Trump era.

On August 21, 2017, Trump announced the Afghanistan policy. The center of his strategy was "the transition from a time-based approach to a conditions-based approach" (Trump, 2017). With his rhetoric, Trump pointed to the failure of the Obama-era planned retreat tactic. He also believed that plans should be made more discreet and faster by creating a more flexible American policy (Trump, 2017). This did not say definitively about withdrawing from Afghanistan but indicated that withdrawal was not the right option at the time and would put US interests at risk (Calamur, 2017). A month after the strategy was announced, it approved the deployment of more than 3,000 more troops to Afghanistan, bringing the total number of US troops to more than 14,000 (Ward, 2017, Nakamura and Phillip, 2017).

Another important element of the strategy was the integration of diplomatic, economic and military powers towards a successful redefined outcome (Ranade, 2017: 2, Caro and Hehn, 2017). Trump's goal was not to build a nation in Afghanistan: "We are not nation-building again. We are killing terrorists." Increasing

the number of troops in Afghanistan was also supportive. While he was sending the message to the Taliban that he would not just leave Afghanistan, he also thought the Afghan government couldn't face the Taliban. As of 2018, the Taliban controlled 4% of the country, but its physical presence was over 60% (Sonmez et al, 2020:70). "If we left precipitously right now, I don't believe they would be able to successfully defend their country", McKenzie[30] said in 2018, means that in fact the Afghan government had no chance against the Taliban (Gibbons-Neff and Mashal, 2018). So, the purpose of Trump's new involvement was to strengthen his hand before possible negotiations with the Taliban, which refused to negotiate with the Afghan Government, began (Qazi, 2019). The complete waste of what the US has spent over the past 20 years could be seen as a huge failure for the US and the Trump administrations.

3.2.2. Influence of Regional Actors

Another important element for the strategy was to focus on the influence of regional powers, which were important in the crisis. Pakistan still plays a crucial role in the crisis and has often been accused by the US of supporting the Taliban and al-Qaeda under the phrase "safe haven". Trump agreed with those accusations, saying Pakistan would not remain silent in the face of safe havens for the Taliban and other terrorist organizations (France 24, 2017). And in this context, he tried to put pressure on Pakistan not to help the Taliban with his statements that US support and assistance to Pakistan would be limited and even ended (Byman, 2017, Sen, 2017).

It is very interesting that he is seeking a strategic partnership with India in Afghanistan in the region. Although this is seen as a balancing act on Pakistan, it is extremely important that India gives more than 2 billion supports to the Afghan government for sectors such as security, infrastructure, reconstruction and education (Munir and Shafiq, 2017:41, Ranade, 2017:7). Trump also wants to balance China's influence in the region after India wants to increase its economic influence in Afghanistan (Ratan, 2019:16).

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[30] General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr. During 2020-2021 he was a leader of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

China, which has had a significant influence in the region against Trump's initiatives in Pakistan and India, has also not remained silent. China, which is mostly in contact with the Afghan government, has frequently shown on various platforms that it stands with Pakistan to balance its regional rival India while evaluating opportunities for its own interests (The Hindu, 2017, Tribune, 2018, The Wire, 2019). China, which is troubled by the Muslim Uighur population, did not want any Islamic movements to spread to its territory (Ratan, 2019:11). They also wanted an end to the conflict in the region and security as part of the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) investment (Zhenhong, 2018).

Russia, on the other hand, continued to maintain good relations with the Taliban for a way to end the crisis in Afghanistan in its favor while seeking a greater role in the region (Rowlatt, 2018). Thus, they would be able to become an effective force in Afghanistan in a possible Taliban win and increase their strength in the region (Isachenkov, 2021). This could prevent the threat of IS from spreading to Central Asia. It would also be able to secure its own sphere of influence by striking down the hegemony the US is trying to establish in Central Asia (Blank, 2017). That is why Russia was in contact with the Taliban and local warlords while maintaining relations with the Afghan government (Gurganus, 2018).

Iran, which has been providing arms and funds to the Taliban for many years, also continued to support the Taliban movement against the Afghan government (Stancati, 2015). In response to the new US strategy to move to peace talks, Iran continued to side with the Afghan Taliban, fearing a possible post-crisis American presence in Afghanistan (Majidyar, 2017).

Trump's new Afghanistan policy after he became president was greeted as unpredictable as any other foreign policy decision. This Afghanistan policy by Trump, who has pledged to be more realist under American policy first and has criticized Afghan participation, does not coincide with his words and commitments (Carter, 2017). Walt (2017) interpreted this new Trump's strategy more as delaying the acceptance of defeat and avoiding a possible failure in his presidency. On the other hand, Trump's attempt to run his Afghanistan strategy away from the support of other Western powers meant that US obligations would increase. This raised greater

doubts in Congress about Trump's strategy and whether this war, which is an economic burden on the US, will end (Landay, 2018).

3.2.3. US involvement in Direct Peace Talks with Taliban under Trump

America's goals in the Trump era in Afghanistan have changed. Restructuring or nation-building was no longer a goal, but even a project to avoid. Trump's goal was to crush al-Qaeda, prevent the Taliban from taking over Afghanistan and prevent terrorist attacks against the US (Dobbins et al, 2019:2). Trump's ultimate goal was to leave Afghanistan, eliminating threats. Trump, who has endorsed more troop involvement in 2017, hoped military effort could create a favorable environment for a political solution. However, the exact objectives and conditions of the new US military effort in Afghanistan were not specific (Tariq, 2020:104). While the process is underway, US efforts to negotiate with the Taliban and the peace process initiated from July 2018 can be seen as the result of a policy shift towards achieving the ultimate goal of the Trump administration (Khokhar et al, 2021:44).

After the suicide bombing in Lashkargah in early 2018, the Afghan people carried out a civil action under the name "Helmand Peace Convoy"[31] (Archiwal, 2020). The march also led to ceasefire talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. In June 2018, on the occasion of the Muslim Holy Eid al-Fitr, the two sides signed a short ceasefire, sending a message that they could at least meet (Reuters, 2018). The Afghan government favored a ceasefire and a US prolonged ceasefire, but the Taliban did not want to compromise its strong stance.

The developments after Trump implemented his new Afghanistan strategy, and the lack of military influence in particular, showed that the US needs a new approach. During this period, he began to strive for direct negotiations with the Taliban (Thomas, 2020:2). Accordingly, the US-Taliban talks took place in Doha, where the Taliban previously had representation (Shah and Nordland, 2018). Zalmay Khalilzad played an important role in the negotiations. And here the US and the

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[31] Also known as People's Peace Movement. Non-violent resistance group created after suicide car bomb attack in Lashkargah in 2018. Calls military forces to ceasefire and peace process.

Taliban talked about the framework of peace and agreed to continue negotiations (Mashal, 2019).

Khalilzad's appointment as special representative for Afghanistan peace talks in September 2018 positively influenced and accelerated the talks (Khan, 2018). In Qatar in October, talks between the Taliban and the US continued in Russia in November, leading to a significant move to reach an agreement (BBC, 2018). Although bilateral talks have progressed, the Afghan government requested by the US has not been included. The Taliban in no way wanted to make a deal with a pro-American Afghan government (Palgham, 2019). Karzai and the Taliban later held talks in Russia, but this was not an official meeting and the Afghan government was not involved (NDTV, 2019).

As the talks continued, Khalilzad announced in March 2019 that the principles for a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban had been agreed upon (Tariq, 2020:105). The draft of this agreement was on the withdrawal of American troops and NATO from Afghanistan and the Taliban's severing of ties with terrorist groups (BBC, 2019, Gaouette, 2019). He also announced that negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government would begin in terms of a political settlement process within Afghanistan, adding that an important path had been taken (Thomas, 2020:3). Accordingly, the number of talks between the Taliban and the US increased rapidly, but the Afghan government remained outside. As peace talks neared their conclusion, reports emerged that the US was also preparing to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan (Lamothe et al, 2019).

In September 2019, with the killing of US soldiers and 11 others in an attack in Kabul, Trump announced that he was halting peace talks (Stewart and Lange, 2019). However, it did not take long for these talks to be interrupted. Although the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, it said it wanted to continue peace talks and was still eager for peace (Sirat, 2019). Meanwhile, Khalilzad sought communication with the Taliban, asking for further talks. At the same time, Karzai tried to show goodwill in negotiations with the Taliban by releasing three key detained Taliban members instead of two NATO personnel who were captured (Tariq, 2020:105). Promising for future talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, this event is also a significant development for peace talks with the US.

And peace talks between the US and the Taliban resumed in December 2019 (Al Jazeera, 2019).

3.2.4. Doha Agreement and Intra Afghan Talks in Qatar

February 2020 was a significant development in the peace talks. First, in the first weeks of February, US and Taliban officials reached an agreement to reduce attacks against Afghan Government Forces (Finnegan and Agha, 2020). This agreement came into force on 22 February and there have been significant reductions in attacks across Afghanistan (Mashal, 2020). Taking advantage of this opportunity, US and Taliban representatives met again in Doha and signed the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan agreement, known as the Doha Agreement, on February 29, 2020. The agreement was based on mutual commitments for the US and the Taliban and was seen as an important step towards peace in Afghanistan.

The first part of the agreement includes US commitments to the Taliban. It covers the ceasefire between the Taliban and the US and the withdrawal of US troops. Accordingly, within 135 days of the agreement's signed, the number of US forces will be reduced to 8,600, and all forces will be withdrawn completely within the next 9.5 months, although the first part of the agreement also included provisions for a mutual prisoner exchange between the Afghan government and the Taliban and the lifting of international sanctions against the Taliban. (Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, 2020)

The second part of the agreement covers the Taliban's commitments to the US. Accordingly, the Taliban has acknowledged that it will not host, assist, or cooperate with any group or individuals in Afghanistan that would threaten the security of the US. In addition, the Taliban undertakes that asylum seekers, visas, passports, and other legal documents will be checked to consider the security of the US. (Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, 2020)

The third part of the agreement is related to future commitments. It calls for recognition and ratification of the agreement by the UN Security Council. There is also a promise to develop positive relations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban in the future. While pledging to contribute to these relations and cooperate

economically in the US, it affirms that it will not interfere in intra-Afghan talks, dialogue, and agreement (Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan, 2020)

After 19 years, the US has achieved a victory for Trump to end the endless war in Afghanistan. The Trump administration, which has tried to act pragmatically and says it is pursuing a realist policy in the interests of the US, has promised to move away from nation-building and "defeat terrorism". But there were question marks over the commitments of this agreement (Addicott, 2020:11). It would be more difficult for the Taliban in particular to keep its word and for the intra-Afghan talks to succeed after the US left the equation. This was exemplification by trump's rapid withdrawal of US troops and the disruption of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban by the Taliban (Azizian, 2021:21).

Although the agreement between the US and the Taliban was reached, the commitments between the Taliban and the Afghan government were very difficult to achieve. After the agreement, intra-Afghan talks were supposed to start in March (Thomas, 2020:3). However, both the Taliban and the Afghan government were challenging the implementation of the Doha Agreement's commitments. However, the US agreement with the Taliban to withdraw its troops has made the Taliban more reckless against the Afghan government.

First of all, the controversial Afghanistan Presidential election in September 2019 created a painful situation for the Government in Kabul, complicating Ghani's position (Thomas, 2021a: 8). At the same time, delays in prisoner exchanges in the Taliban-US peace deal were also causing congestion in intra-Afghan talks. In addition, the Afghan government said that prisoner exchange was a commitment of the US, not theirs, saying that this could not be a condition for the start of negotiations and that a change of 5,000 to 1,000 would not be fair (BBC, 2020). The Taliban, on the other hand, took this with great anger and started their operations again, attempting a strategy of intimidation against the Afghan government, escalating the violence (Shalizi et al, 2020).

In response to the escalating Taliban attacks against Afghan Security Forces since early March, the US responded to Taliban forces by conducting an air campaign for the first time since the peace deal (Rahim and Mashal, 2020). To improve relations and reduce tensions, Ghani began to put forward a gradual prisoner

exchange, firstly releasing 1,500 Taliban prisoners (Shalizi, 2020). Even if the Taliban were uneasy about it, he gradually began to release prisoners, and as the fighting continued, the prisoner exchange was fully completed in August (Gul, 2020).

The other obstacle to peace talks is the re-escalation of fighting between Taliban and Afghan forces after the US announced it would withdraw. While the re-firing of attacks was difficult for Afghan forces lacking the support of US troops, the US ability to conduct airstrikes only increased the Taliban's appetite for operations against Afghan forces and areas dominated by the Afghan government (Tariq, 2020:106).

In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic affected the talks, as well as intra-Afghan peace talks as a reason for disrupting the US withdrawal timetable (Gibbons-Neff and Barnes, 2020). In particular, the Taliban's delay in withdrawing the US and its allies from Afghanistan was met with inconvenient. But Trump's desire for to continue withdrawal despite the pandemic and the start of intra-Afghan talks from September have all lessened those concerns (Lee and Kube, 2020).

Intra-Afghan peace talks could only begin in September. The purpose of the Afghan Government was to reduce Taliban violence and attacks across the country so that negotiations could be made healthier (Brenner and Wallin, 2021:2). The Taliban, on the other hand, wanted to decide on the structure of the Afghan state and secure its own position before any ceasefire could be reached (Putz, 2021). But the intra-Afghan talks are not progressing as quickly as expected, and although talks continue until 2021, the Taliban have raised questions about whether they are using it as a distraction, waiting for American and allied forces to withdraw from the country (Al Jazeera, 2021a, Khan, 2021a). The introduction of the Biden era in 2021 has also raised uncertainty about the intra-Afghan talks and what the US future in Afghanistan will bring.

3.3. BIDEN'S STRATEGY: LEAST GOOD OPTION IN AFGHANISTAN

By 2021, Trump's presidency was over, and Democrat Joe Biden, who had previously served as Obama's vice president, took office as the 46th President of the US. He was particularly critical of Trump's policies during the campaign, showing that he had a very different perspective on most areas than Trump before he became president while making anti-Trump policy promises (Martin and Burns, 2020).

The first impressions of the Biden era were to ensure that, unlike Trump, the US became a multilateral actor again. He had a more international, alliance-minded and multilateral view of Trump's individual and unilateral foreign policy stance, which is mostly based on national interests (NPR, 2021). However, in his presidential speech in 2021, he again drew attention to this point of view, adding that the solution to Covid-19 and the Afghanistan crisis was on his agenda (NPR,2021).

In President Biden's presidential speech, he also sought to base his foreign policy priorities and policies on his presidency. Biden's goal was to fully withdraw from Afghanistan, and his goal was to shift priority in American foreign policy to Russia and China (Varshney, 2021, Laderman, 2021). Accordingly, he said he would stay away from nation-building efforts by focusing on ending the 20-year war in Afghanistan (Shear and Tankeresly, 2021). However, by focusing on "over the horizon" capacities, the rhetoric that the future counter-terrorism policy would focus more on satellites, drones and unmanned vehicles indicated that the US military was focused on eliminating the burden on other resources and reducing casualties (Varshney, 2021, Biden, 2021a). But when the efficiency of this policy was revealed and in the ongoing process, it was widely criticized (Brunstetter, 2021). Biden also signaled that soft policy practices involving economic and diplomatic approaches would be preferred over military and hard policies while continuing to prioritize democracy and human rights in American foreign policy under his administration (Varshney, 2021).

In line with these signals, Biden began his first acts after taking office. First, he re-joined the Paris Climate Agreement, which Trump unilaterally abandoned (Milman, 2021). He also announced that he was canceling the XL Keystone

Pipeline[32] project (Arvin, 2021). Biden announced he was halting trump's Mexico wall project by opposing it (AP News, 2021). Since the Covid-19 Pandemic is one of the most important parts of US agenda, it has issued a number of orders on vaccines and set targets for the US within the scope of the pandemic (White House, 2021a).

In foreign policy, Biden wanted to improve relations with Europe in particular and sought to renew the importance of NATO. The US has previously begun withdrawing military forces in different regions in the name of vital national interest, starting with Afghanistan (Varshney, 2021). However, the forces in Japan and South Korea would continue to remain. Because the forces here were important to China in Biden's new balancing act. Biden did not think the military presence in Afghanistan was important to Russia, China or the US itself. In fact, he believed that when Osama bin Laden was killed, this war should end, and he was not afraid to mention it in his campaign promises (Miller, 2021:37).

Afghanistan, on the other hand, began as the Biden administration's biggest test. Biden's belief that he could not control Afghanistan in any way, military, diplomatic, economic or international, led him to the decision to withdraw completely, with the idea that the US could not benefit from it. Of course, Biden's view and his views have been criticized by other scholars, officials and countries. For some problem was not "withdrawal" but "how to withdrawal" (Varshney, 2021). For example, while the withdrawal of US troops and personnel has been welcomed by the public, the loneliness of Afghans who have been cooperating with the US for years against the Taliban also illustrates the political reality there. His withdrawal from Afghanistan alone with a unilateral decision to paint a picture of an internationalist foreign policy and revive old alliances also presents a contradiction for these revived alliances.

Finally, the disregard for all the investments in Afghanistan and the fact that it has left the Afghan government alone in its fight against the Taliban also raises questions about Afghanistan's future and what kind of policy the US will pursue in the event of a Taliban victory. From this point of view, as Varshney (2021) said,

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[32] The Keystone Pipeline System is an oil pipeline system in Canada and US. The Keystone XL pipeline extension, proposed by TransCanada in 2008, was initially designed to transport the planet's dirtiest fossil fuel, tar sands oil, to market—and fast.

there is no complete answer to what and how America's policy will be, only doubts about its plans and strategies.

3.3.1. Withdrawal of Forces: "End of the Forever War"

Biden's new foreign policy plan generally seemed to be very different from what Trump did. However, some policies appeared to continue. One of them was Trump's uneasy withdrawal from Afghanistan. Biden continued the withdrawal and intra-Afghan talks that have already started. Accordingly, Ghani's announcement on March 6, 2021, that peace talks with the Taliban would be a case for forming a democratic government seemed like an important development for the US to leave (Shalizi and Greenfield, 2021).

The statements that emerged in the days that continued to do so, in a letter written by Secretary of State Blinken, and in April by Biden himself, supported the complete withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan. Blinken's letter also stated US plans to withdraw from Afghanistan even if a possible intra-Afghan peace had not been achieved and expressed concern that Afghanistan would fall into Taliban hands very quickly (Blinken, 2021). Even making this clear made it clear that they thought that the US exit from Afghanistan would be in almost no way in the best interest of the Afghan government.

On April 14, 2021, Biden announced that American forces remaining in Afghanistan would withdraw on September 11, 2021, in tribute to the 9/11 events, demonstrating that the US would withdraw from Afghanistan regardless (Satia, 2021). By July, almost 90 percent of the withdrawal of American forces had been completed (US Central Command, 2021). It also stepped-up efforts by the Afghan government to reach a peace deal with the Taliban and steps towards forming a joint government (Al Jazeera, 2021b).

But the intra-Afghan talks did not continue as expected. With the encouragement of the US withdrawal, the Taliban increased attacks against Afghan forces, which it considered more vulnerable, but also increased its dominance in areas of Afghanistan. The fact that McKenzie, the commander of the region, was concerned about the inadequacy of Afghan forces against the Taliban and that he

stood against a complete withdrawal was due to the Taliban's position (McKenzie, 2021). But the insistence of the Biden administration and Biden's statements that Afghan forces could stand up to the Taliban indicated that a complete withdrawal would continue (Gould, 2021) which has created some problems. For example, American troops hand over Bagram Air Base[33] to Afghan forces, leaving them alone against the Taliban (Risch, 2022:7). At the same time, support for Afghan forces has begun to be cut. As a reflection of this, it evolved towards the Taliban's attack on the capital in August 2021.

In August, Taliban violence spread throughout Afghanistan provinces. Starting on August 6, Nimroz and then Sheberghan provinces were occupied by the Taliban, respectively. Sar-e Pol, Kunduz and Takhar regions continued. The invasion of Samangan, Baghlan and Ghazni also prompted Afghan forces and Afghan authorities to quickly flee to Kabul. By August 14 and 15, with the fall of Herat, Kandahar and Helmand, the Taliban had taken control of all major provinces (Gajic and Rajic, 2021:109). With the fall of Kabul on August 15th and President Ghani's escape, the Afghan government disbanded, and the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan (Seir et al, 2021).

The Taliban's victory over Afghan forces before the US forces fully withdrawal was unexpected, according to Biden, and he continued to advocate full withdrawal. (BBC, 2021). Biden criticized Afghan forces claiming they did not fight enough and argued that US troops should not die for the war of others (Watson, 2021). Accordingly, to evacuate all remaining American troops, Afghan allies and a limited number of Afghan civilians, Biden decided to send additional troops to the region (Gajic and Rajic, 2021:220, Carvajal and Vazquez, 2021). Although 170 people, including 13 US soldiers, were killed in a suicide attack on August 26[34], Biden called the fallen soldiers 'heroes', and added the decisive withdrawal would never stop (Seyler, 2022).

The 20-year war in Afghanistan is now completely over for the US after the last American plane took off from Afghanistan on August 31. All American troops

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[33] Bargham Air Base was the largest US military base in Afghanistan. US and NATO forces conducted larger operation towards this base.
[34] Suicide attack during evacuation from Afghanistan at Hamid Karzai Airport. 183 people were killed and 13 of them was American soldiers.

from Afghanistan left Afghanistan to the Taliban, hoping they would never return this territory of Central Asia. Although Biden's decision has been criticized both within the US and internationally as an abandonment. However, he has been successful in story of withdrawal since Obama and has been "winner" by ending it.

3.3.2. Biden's Pragmatic Realism

Biden's new post-Trump View of American foreign policy emerged closer to a more multilateral, more liberal view and became known as a liberal internationalist (Paripani, 2020), which is why the policies he pursued and the American leadership he was trying to undertake supported it. But to say that Biden is just a liberal internationalist would be more reductive and unrealistic. According to Slaughter (2021) rhetoric Biden had something for everyone:

On relations with the West and the Transatlantic alliance, for example, Biden was at a different point from Trump's realism. He explained that he put diplomacy at the center of his foreign policy with the rhetoric of *"America is back"* (Biden, 2021b). In this respect, Biden has tried to define the US as its place in the new world in order to repair NATO relations, restore its former dignity to international institutions and treaties, prioritize human rights, take a stance against autocratic regimes, change approaches to weaker and weaker countries, promote soft policy tools and prioritize both current and global crises such as pandemics and climate change (Wright, 2020, Biden, 2021b). These views and efforts after taking office have shown that at some point, he was liberal internationalist and even globalist. However, at the point of ending the war in Afghanistan, he followed a policy that did not conform to the "liberal internationalist" propositions of restoring the region according to US values, creating a democratic Afghanistan, or acting with its allies in the interests of a common view and interests when withdrawing. (Shifrinson and Wertheim, 2021).

As for global competition, Biden preferred a realist view rather than a liberal internationalist. He tried to show that he was in a utilitarian grip, especially by going to balance power against China and Russia, and with the new intensity he would give to these countries in terms of international competition (Lewis and Pamuk, 2021).

Although he was in a rhetoric that sought to glorify democracy by staying away from Trump's relationship with autocratic leaders (Wright, 2020), he also offered a changing, adaptable and "pragmatist" realism that sought to preserve US power and supremacy and to protect American interests in a liberally competitive world (Shifrinson and Wertheim, 2021).

Biden's understanding of foreign policy, which can be considered volatile, adaptive and pragmatist depending on internal and external circumstances, and his current form, has also been seen since he entered the Senate in 1973. He opposed the deployment of more troops on the grounds that it did not serve the interests of the US, advocating withdrawal in line with the state of the Vietnam War against a more moderate stance within the conjuncture of the Cold War (Naylor, 2007). He voted against Reagan's military campaign against the Soviets (May, 2022). He again opposed sending troops to the region during the Gulf war (Richter and Levey, 2008). In the Bosnian Crisis, he changed policy and advocated military intervention (Gordon, 2008). He then supported the interventions of Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of the 9/11 events, thinking it was important for the national security of the US (Crowley, 2009). However, he did not stand by the idea of building any nations in either Afghanistan or Iraq and continued to express his opinions against the ongoing operations there.

Biden's sometimes moderate, sometimes liberal internationalist, sometimes globalist and democracy promoter, and sometimes anti-nation-building stance suggests that he has not a fixed foreign policy but a pragmatic foreign policy. The only thing Biden has in common with the different ideas put forward in these different events has been Biden's consistent and pragmatic stance that puts US national security first (Shifrinson and Wertheim, 2021). Of course, when we read through his rhetoric after becoming president, it is quite possible to think that the US is turning to a multilateral system that promotes liberal and democracy. However, it would not be wrong to say that the rhetoric and the attitudes we have seen in the short period so far are more utilitarian, pragmatist and somewhat realist, which puts the national security and security interests of the US first.

In the Afghanistan case, it was the most obvious example of Biden's pragmatic realism. Biden, who has been much more involved in this since the Obama

era, thought that even if the involvement in Afghanistan could not be victorious for the US in any way, it would not serve American interests (Miller, 2021:38). The strategy of eliminating the Taliban also obliged America to prepare and restructure a post-Taliban Afghanistan. But two decades of war have shown that while this imperative required a lot of time, resources and dedication, it was completely futile when the Taliban did not disappear. So according to Biden, the mission in Afghanistan should never have been a nation-building (Biden, 2021c).

And a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan wasn't just Biden's plan. Since Obama's election campaign, the US has been looking for ways to withdraw from Afghanistan. But the situation in Afghanistan has increased turnout like a swamp, and the Obama-Trump administrations have failed to show exactly Biden's resolve. However, Biden made the decision to end this intervention by claiming that he had only two options, either more troops or a complete withdrawal, choosing that he pragmatically thought it was more beneficial for the US (Frigerio et al, 2022:17, Sen, 2022:93).

In terms of the situation in Afghanistan, their actions and objectives since the US joined the region have been further apart. Of course, it would not be fair to say that the Afghan government and security forces are completely futile at this point. However, it has emerged that it is extremely far from the point of qualification with the complete withdrawal of the US. For this reason, Biden saw no difference between withdrawing from the country completely after a few years and withdrawing immediately (Frigerio et al, 2022:18). Based on this, a complete and rapid withdrawal was highly compatible with Biden's pragmatic realism.

From an international perspective, the view that US global adversaries are taking advantage of America's situation reflects another pragmatic reality that is decisive in Biden's move (Biden, 2021b). Therefore, although the decision to withdraw completely contradicts liberal internationalist views on the points of human rights, democracy, or world leadership, it is obligatory from a realist point of view.

In addition, the new situation with the withdrawal of from Afghanistan may be more beneficial for the US when viewed in terms of opportunities. For example, at the point where the Taliban are now an international actor, it will be much less costly and easier for the US to pressure and control them (Biden, 2021d). In addition,

the US may have a better advantage in establishing dialogue and cooperation with the Taliban. And the US hand will be stronger against other threats such as ISIS-K[35] in Afghanistan, and perhaps there may be a chance of cooperation against the common threat (Frigerio et al, 2022:18).

Of course, the US had major problems in achieving the purpose of the Afghan intervention but had succeeded in eliminating Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, which it considered the real threat. And the Taliban dominance that would emerge from the withdrawal was also seen as tolerable by Biden (Miller, 2022:42) However, when it comes to what withdrawal brings and what staying in Afghanistan takes away from the US, withdrawal is much more beneficial, much more logical, and much easier to fit into Biden's pragmatist reality.

3.3.3. Future Prospects of the Afghanistan Conflict

The end of the two-decades war in Afghanistan and the Taliban's return to Kabul have led to a shift in the balance in the region and the need for actors to plan carefully according to this change. New agreements, new cooperation or new conflicts may also emerge, especially in the changing conjuncture of the powers that influence the region such as China, Pakistan, India, Iran, Russia. However, for the US, which has lost its bases in Afghanistan, finding new allies for control of the region could become a more important strategy. But looking at the situation in general cannot be exactly enough to understand the different interests and different aspirations of all countries from this new situation.

For Pakistan, which is considered a regional actor and perhaps always a key figure in the Afghanistan crisis, the Taliban's capture of Afghanistan and the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, of course, creates many and options and obstacles. Pakistan was one of the three countries that recognized it when the Taliban first came to power in Afghanistan, and neighborly relations with Afghanistan have consistently negatively affected Pakistan since the Taliban de-empowered it in 2001, leaving Pakistan facing too many problems (Khan and Syed,

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[35] Islamic State – Khorasan Province knowns as ISIS-K. Affiliate of IS in South Asia and Central Asia. Especially has been active in Afghanistan.

2021:457). The most important of these is due to the Durand Line[36], which forms the border with Afghanistan. However, the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) remains a significant security threat to Pakistan, and the TTP's ties with the Taliban affect relations between Pakistan and the Taliban (Rafiq, 2022).

It will be the creation of a stabilization in Afghanistan, which will serve Pakistan's wishes and interests. For Pakistan's security, the situation in Afghanistan is an important variable. For this reason, Pakistan began to try to become a partner for Afghanistan in order to establish a permanent and inclusive government in Afghanistan (Khan, 2021b). It also took care to keep its relations with the Taliban relatively friendly and positive in order to prevent the formation of a pro-Indian government in Kabul (Thomas, 2021b: 46). This was another indication that Pakistan is trying to increase its regional power in South and Central Asia and gain an edge over India (Perley, 2021).

In terms of Pakistan's internal security, terrorist organizations in Afghanistan, such as al-Qaeda, ISIS-K and TTP, posed a threat. The Taliban's need for Pakistan to recognition and develop new relations also gives Pakistan an edge in relations. That is why Pakistan is supporting the new Emirate of Afghanistan internationally and working to reduce the influence of the TTP and other terrorist organizations in Pakistan (Khan and Syed, 2021:458). The fact that at the end of 2021 made references to the Taliban's good relations with Pakistan, but the TTP's announcement that it was not part of the Taliban shows that Pakistan's efforts have been successful for now (Dawn, 2021, Pipa, 2021).

Another problem for Pakistan is the Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban. The flow of Afghan citizens who feared the Taliban after the US withdrawal or who had previously been in contact with the US to the surrounding countries could become even more problematic in an Afghan civil war that could arise later (Mashal al al, 2021).

For India, which is trying to pay more attention to the region, especially with the 21st Century, the situation was different from Pakistan's, but there were also points of a resemble due to ties between the two countries and some common

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[36] The Durand Line is a border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Region has high elevation and bounded by mountains. Refers as one of the most dangerous borders in the world because of terrorist activities. It also caused territorial disputes between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

problems. Although it shares a small border with Afghanistan, the Kashmir issue and the Taliban flagged religious extremism in Afghanistan affect India just like Pakistan's TTP (Jan, 2020: 262). Security and stability in Afghanistan is vital to India's Kashmir issue due to the relationship of influential terrorist organizations in India such as Lashkar-e Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Haqqani Network with the Taliban and Afghanistan (Thomas, 2021b:54). This also preoccupies relations with India and Pakistan, but thanks to relations between Pakistan and the Taliban, the balance in Kashmir shifts in favor of Pakistan and intimidates India (Kothari, 2020:112).

Afghanistan's prominence in Indian foreign policy has also emerged with US intervention and an effort to take control of the region. The US, which wants to use India and its investments in Afghanistan to balance Pakistan in particular, has revealed India's interest in the region. However, Afghanistan has become more important to India in terms of a balancing policy against Pakistan and China gaining influence and power in Central Asia (Patnaik, 2016:127). The fact that the Taliban are an effective force in Afghanistan cannot be considered a positive development by India. Although ensuring stability and security is a positive development, in terms of cooperation with the Afghan government and the US, the Taliban seems to prefer its relationship with Pakistan, China and Russia to its relationship with India (Dubey, 2018, Khan and Syed, 2021:462). At the same time, his investments in Afghanistan and his assistance to the former government may be in some way wasted by the complete withdrawal of the US from the region. The Taliban's alliance with India's rival China internationally and its new investments in the region appear to weaken India's influence in Afghanistan and Pakistan and across Central Asia (D'Souza, 2021).

For China, the situation in Afghanistan could be one of the turning points in becoming the next global hegemon. In particular, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan under regional control and US encirclement policies could be highlighted as a positive development for China. Because already, US participation in Japan, South Korea and Guam was seen as a threat to China's security policies (Maan, 2022:6). But the Taliban's coming to power also posed a danger to China (Thomas, 2021b:48). For China, which is already experiencing problems in the

Xinjiang-Uighur region, separatist movements were revived by the activation of groups such as ETIM/the Turkestan Islamist Party, while the Taliban's victory could provide fuel for these movements (Ahrari, 2000:659).

Ensuring security and stability in the region is a necessity for China's economic and military interests in the region. Stability is needed in Afghanistan, especially for the security of China's investments in terms of access to and use of natural resources in Afghanistan after the US leaves. That is why China has always taken care to keep its communication with the Taliban open (Maan, 2022:9). In principle, he tried to stay away from domestic issues in Afghanistan and did not want the crisis to spill over into the Uighur issue. Accordingly, they also held bilateral meetings with the Taliban and announced that they would act in mutual interest (MOFAPRC, 2021, Wenting and Yunyi, 2021). Subsequently, the Taliban's move to expulsion of Uighur militants from Afghanistan was an example of what was discussed in this meeting (Wee and Xiao, 2021, Standish, 2021).

After taking control of Afghanistan, the Taliban developed ties with China economically, making it its most important ally. China's technology is especially important to the Taliban in extracting underground resources and minerals (Horowitz, 2021). Security and stability in Afghanistan are also important for the One Belt One Road[37] project, but the Taliban's involvement could also be an important variable for the development of bilateral relations (Marsden, 2021).

For Russia, it will be one of the countries with the greatest interest in ensuring security and stability in the region. Russia is concerned about the Taliban for spread of radical Islam, separatism and terrorism, not only in Afghanistan but also in the entire region. To prevent this Russian, try to improve its relations with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Khan and Syed, 2021: 460). Furthermore, for Russia, which was unhappy with the US presence in Afghanistan from the very beginning, the complete withdrawal of the US was an opportunity to fill the power vacuum in Afghanistan (Thomas, 2021b:50).

The failure of the US in Afghanistan and the frustration of Western nation-building, which was tried with intervention, also benefited Russia in terms of the

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[37] One Belt One Road initiative now known as The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a global infrastructure plan developed by China in 2013 and includes more than 100 countries and international organization. Aims economic development and inter-regional connectivity.

balance of power in the region and perceived it as a signal of the failure of 'pax Americana' (Stepanova, 2022:138). Russia has attempted to balance the US and its partner India by cooperating with China and Pakistan to fill the power vacuum (Cura, 2021). Not only that, but it aims to develop good relations with the Taliban to curb the Taliban's support for militants in other countries in Central Asia, such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and to ensure the security of its Central Asian allies (The Guardian, 2021).

Another interest in Russia in Afghanistan for the Taliban to come to power may be the opium trade (Landay, 2021). Especially during the war, the opium trade, which constituted the largest source of income for the Taliban, led to the entry of large quantities of illegal opium into the Central Asian Republics and through these countries to Russia (Aliyev, 2020). With new cooperation and relations with the Taliban, Russia also hopes to prevent this trade (Stepanova, 2022:140).

The US exit from Afghanistan may also start to limit Russia's military participation, which has been facilitated by the 9/11 attacks. While the intervention of South Ossetia, the control of the Abkhazian Republics, the annexation of Crimea and its military presence in Syria are relatively easy, their new participation may no longer be so easily met (Tierney, 2021:72). Especially with the Ukraine crisis continuing since 2014, it seems likely that the US, which has lost power in Central Asia, will try to be more effective in Eastern Europe in Ukraine as part of balancing and containing Russia.

From the Taliban's point of view, they are carefully trying to balance their relationship with all these actors. First, efforts to ensure stability and balance in Afghanistan, as well as the prevention of a possible civil war before it even begins, will be the priority of the Taliban both in terms of internal affairs and the relations it will establish outside. Because the Taliban's dominance in Afghanistan will play an important role in the search for new allies and in the effort to gain strength internationally. It is very important that the Taliban provide this for recognition as a legitimate government (Khan and Syed, 2021:461).

From a regional point of view, cooperation and allies are important for the legal recognition of the Taliban. For this reason, the relations Taliban established began to be based on mutual interest. Their closer ties with Pakistan, as well as their

approach to major anti-US forces in the region such as China and Russia, are a foreign policy priority. However, while the Taliban also sought representations globally, it wanted to represent Afghanistan at the UN and began to strive to establish a consulate in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2021, Al Jazeera, 2021c).

Economically, the development and financing of Afghanistan is also important to the Taliban. Trying to fund itself illegally throughout insurgent (opium) seems unlikely after becoming the authority of Afghanistan. For this reason, the continuation and security of relations and investments with China will continue to be one of the priorities of the Taliban (Seckin, 2021). However, by choosing its side in the Uighur crisis as China, Taliban will prefer not to scratch this issue if cooperation continues. Not only that, but the Taliban has also been obliged to fulfill some commitments to improve its relations with Pakistan, China, and Russia. These can be considered as abstaining from Pakistani relations with the TTP, not provoking militants within other Central Asia, not threatening the security of the Central Asian Republics, and avoiding the relations it has established with terrorism during the 20-year war. (Yousaf and Jabarkhail, 2021)

A complete US withdrawal from Afghanistan could be seen as a weakening of America's strength and presence in Central Asia. Of course, for the US and Biden, getting rid of commitments such as military presence in Afghanistan, the fight against the Taliban and support for the Afghan government is seen as a success, but it has weakened America's interests in Central Asia and the region, while paving the way for rivals such as China-Russia to benefit from it (Ahmadi et al, 2021). In addition, this benefit will cause not only Afghanistan, but also China to be more audacious in the Taiwan crisis and Russia's Ukraine crisis. Which may not be entirely related to the escalating Ukraine-Russia tensions in the first months of 2022 and Russia's operation in Ukraine.

For the US, which has lost power in Central Asia, different policy options may arise. Since taking office, Biden has changed the balance of power in Central Asia against himself, damaging his image, despite saying he would pay more attention to global competition and focus more on Russia-China (Anderson, 2021). Instead, his interest in the Middle East and his move towards reviving relations with NATO allies may be indicative of his efforts to reassess himself.

It is likely for Biden to focus specifically on the Gulf region to regain diminished confidence in the Middle East (Harvey, 2021, Mazzuca and Alexander, 2022). Kagan (2021) sees this as an opportunity to renew US engagement in the Middle East and to improve diplomatic relations in this region. Accordingly, he explained Biden's short-term Middle East policy as human security, conflict resolution, Arab-Israeli relations, and America's military presence in the region (Domingo, 2021:432). Still, Biden remains timid about any involvement in the Middle East (Haass, 2021).

In the case of NATO, Biden did not continue to clash with allies, unlike Trump, although he dismissed Afghanistan as pursuing a policy in the event of a withdrawal (Haass, 2021). Instead, he went on to say that he would revive NATO and improve relations with Atlantic allies. NATO can become a priority of the US, especially with the latest developments between Ukraine and Russia. With Russia's operation in Ukraine, it is also possible to revive NATO, which is in crisis (Guyer, 2022).

From a Central Asian and Afghan perspective, a complete US exit could also mean a retreat from American interventionism. At the same time, in the balance of power between Russia, China and America, in the eyes of other states, it may have put America in a less reliable position (Domingo, 2021:431). And in the equation dominated by the Pakistan-China-Russia trio in Eurasian geography, it may be possible in the future that India will move away from American views in terms of protecting its interests in the region. In other words, the US end of "endless war" is an indication that it has also moved away from its interests and interests in Central Asia, and perhaps given up.

3.4. ASSESSING US OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES IN AFGHANISTAN

After examining the US Afghanistan intervention and the entire involvement process, the difficulty and eventual realization of the complete withdrawal process is an important milestone. This milestone is important both for military humanitarian interventionism and for the new foreign policy transformation of the US. The intervention, which lasted 20 years, was both the longest humanitarian military

intervention and a very important event that occupied the US foreign policy agenda. Complete withdrawal will gain more importance when new developments in these two issues are examined. In below section, US decision to intervene in Afghanistan and after 20 years to withdraw from Afghanistan will be evaluated in terms theories.

3.4.1. Evaluation of Afghanistan Intervention in terms of Just War theory

After the events of the 9/11 War in Afghanistan and US Operation Enduring Freedom, has been discussed in all areas. Realists, liberals, social constructivists, as well as lawyers, ethicists, economists judged the intervention so much that was almost uncountable. The war in Afghanistan has also set an important example of just war theory.

Since the 9/11 events and the start of the war in Afghanistan, the strategies and objectives of the US have changed. There are quite differences between the dynamics and decisions of the time of the war and the continuation of the war and the dynamics in which the complete withdrawal took place in 2021. This has led to differences in the evaluations made from the point of view of just war theory. Therefore, when looking at the changing strategies and facts, it will be easier to look at what differences this causes for the criteria of just war. At the same time, the war in Afghanistan is a very suitable example for both regional and global powers to evaluate the criteria for just war as it has become a sphere of influence to achieve different objectives (Dorn, 2011:243).

3.4.1.1. Jus Ad Bellum

The main event behind the initiation of the US intervention in Afghanistan is the 9/11 and the US response to these attacks under self-defense. The purpose of the intervention in Afghanistan by then-President Bush was initially described as responding to 9/11 attacks and punishing those who carried out, preventing future terrorist attacks (Dorn, 2011:245). According to the Just War Theory, this is also

legally seen as part of *Just Cause* (Fixdal and Smith, 2005:295). But America's policy shifts after the intervention has caused problems under *just war*.

Bush's stance on the Taliban and the terrorist group Al-Qaeda, and his shifting the balance of a country towards eliminating a terrorist organization, undermined the just cause of the US (Bush, 2001a). Bush's efforts to legalize his actions with the concept of war on terror have also sparked a new controversy among just war theorists. First of all, although there is no global definition of terror and terrorism, there is no consensus on whether terrorist groups or terrorist actors are "legitimate target" (Williamson, 2009:35, Alm, 2021:20). While right-leaning war theorists like Orend may see terrorist groups and their sponsors as a legitimate target, for those who, like Walzer, are more upbeat, the answer is unclear (Vorobej, 2009:47).

After the American intervention in Afghanistan, their objectives began to change. Deciding to continue its participation in Afghanistan in order to ensure regional security and stability, the US began to strive for the reconstruction of Afghanistan (Thistlewaite and Katulis, 2009). These efforts, which can be summarized as developing Afghanistan economically, helping to form a democratic and stable government, ensuring that people have access to their rights, protecting civilians from regional conflicts and ensuring Afghanistan's security, can be acceptable justifications under the concept of just cause. However, other questions will arise about the sole purpose of the US to develop Afghanistan. As a result, a pro-American Afghan regime rather than a Taliban regime is also seen as a strategic target for US interests in Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia. This undermines US just cause for Afghanistan's restructuring.

With the Taliban regaining power, the US began to lose its way (Thistlewaite and Katulis, 2009). After defeating al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the US began reconstruction of the Afghan government, and with the new war against the Taliban, it began to pursue a policy of preventing the Taliban from recapturing Afghanistan. Especially with the death of al-Qaeda leader bin Laden in 2011, the real purpose of the intervention, which reached its original purpose, began to be questioned more and further away from just cause. The Taliban's control of Afghanistan, along with

the withdrawal in 2021, demonstrates a great deal of frustration and failure that the US has been trying to do for 20 years.

It is not wrong to say that the legality of the Afghan intervention according to international law is more blurred (Vorobej, 2009:49). Today, the highest authority that determines and approves the fairness or compliance of any war with international law is the UN and the Security Council (Cole, 2002:38). And according to Article 51 of the UN Charter, a UN member state has the right to respond to violence inflicted on it in self-defense, but this right is not limitless. (UN Chartes, article 51). On September 12, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1368, recognizing the right to self-defense against terrorism. Yet this did not mean that the US had the right to conduct military operations on Afghan territory (Dolan, 2005:88). It is fair to say that there is a validity under the right authority, if not entirely. However, without a decision to attack Afghanistan, the US began bombing Kabul, and Resolution 1378 was adopted after the Taliban fled Kabul (Dorn, 2011:249). This Resolution did not include any content related to the use of force in Chapter VII.

The UN's involvement with ISAF has further increased compliance with the concept of right authority, which began with the defeat of Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. Unlike the US operation, ISAF was established with Resolution 1386 in accordance with Chapter VII and began to serve as a security provider. With NATO's command, ISAF had duties such as ensuring security in Afghanistan, protecting civilians and training Afghan forces, as well as his commitment to the highest authority and his legality. But American operations, increased participation in Afghanistan under Obama, and the conflicts until a complete withdrawal took place have been steps taken by the US as individuals rather than UN and NATO resolutions. Which is that under Biden, a complete withdrawal was carried out, and the fact that the US acted more independently without consulting NATO allies was more unethical in Afghanistan than the right authority.

Understanding the US intention to intervene in Afghanistan is a more difficult benchmark. Because setting intentions may not always reflect an honest reality. The US intention to legalize intervention in Afghanistan has taken a humanitarian view and has made it a mission to protect innocents and civilians against the Taliban

regime (Alm, 2021:21). This is explained by the livelihoods and hunger of the Afghan people under the Taliban, the destruction of women's rights, the suppression of religious criteria and the execution of even the government's own people with a repressive regime, and American intervention also seems acceptable in the right intention section of their commitments that American intervention will bring prosperity, peace and peace to the country and end the violence (Bush, 2001b).

The Taliban's failure to become a whole state between 1996 and 2001, its inability to meet economic and social qualifications, the dissatisfaction and suffering of the majority of the population, human and women's rights abuses constituted a legality to intervene in Afghanistan under the right intention (Vorobej, 2008:52). At this point, trying to reinvest the state for humanitarian reasons was also seen as a right intention to prevent it from being used as a superior to terrorists (Dorn, 2011:246).

At the same time, the US has put the international arena in a compulsion. Bush's discourse that "either you are with us or with terrorists" has made the right intention criteria problematic (Bush, 2001b). And it is important to remember that the main purpose and intention is to prevent the use of Afghanistan by terrorists. Nevertheless, for some scholars, even if humanitarian intentions are secondary, according to the just war theory, the fact that America's intentions are selfish and self-interested, regardless of this, the presence of humanitarian reasons accepts that this is counted as a right intention (Alm, 2021: 31).

So, was the Afghanistan intervention the only and last resort to respond to the 9/11? Although, different theorists may try to answer differently, the course of the situation cannot be changed. In the days after the attack, the US blamed al-Qaeda for the attack and sent the Taliban an ultimatum without any talks or agreements (Bush, 2001b). In this ultimatum, the US demanded the closure of all terrorist camps in Afghanistan and the handover of all connected leaders (Osama bin Laden). And in recognition of the failure to meet the demands, US made a clear threat by declaring that the Taliban would pay for it.

The US has not attempted to engage in a meeting with the Taliban, which de facto holds the Afghanistan authority. The Taliban, in turn, did not fully comply with the US ultimatum, but said that they wanted to meet and negotiate with the US. A

third country and an Islamic court stipulated the extradition of Osama bin Laden (Frantz, 2001). However, the Bush administration avoided these talks and took a more aggressive stance, launching Operation Enduring Freedom. At this point, it is obvious that the negotiations have become difficult due to the fact that the Taliban is not a de facto government, but it is fair to say that the negotiations have not taken place in any environment and that the US has not tried enough options in terms of sanctions. So maybe we can say that the US did not use intervention as a first option, but it is also clear that it did not apply as a last resort.

In the 20-year war, it was mostly not the last resort for the US to resort to violence. For example, Taliban representatives were not called at the first Bonn Conference, then instead of agreeing to eliminate the Taliban within Afghanistan, and refused diplomatic negotiations (Dorn, 2011:251). Under Obama, more international talks began and diplomatic routes were resorted to, which Bush refused to consider. Talks were also tried through Pakistan, secretly meeting with Taliban leaders, and thus looking for alternative routes (Thistlethwaite and Katullis, 2009). Which with the Taliban's growing influence, forced US control of Afghanistan into Taliban talks and reached its peak under Trump.

As for probability of success and proportionality, we can say that there is a huge imbalance, because as of 2001, the US was economically, militarily, and politically the most, powerful, the most capable and most developed country in the world. At this point, a war with the Taliban and al-Qaeda was seen as a good chance of success (Leaning, 2002:354). But the lack of dominance in the region, the lack of allies in the area and the unexpected resistance of al-Qaeda-Taliban forces showed that the chances of winning this war were not so easy. Accordingly, more troops were constantly sent to the Bush and then Obama era against the Taliban, resulting in huge expenditures, losses, and casualties for the US.

It has not been so easy to raise humanitarian standards, maintain dominance in Afghanistan and achieve reconstruction. Of course, there have been improvements in human standards (UNDP, 2009, Rawa News, 2009), but still this rise was not significant. Many domestic reasons, especially corruption in the Afghan government, erratic attitudes of warlords, and the illegal opium trade, also emerged as reasons that stood in the way of development (Dorn, 2011:248). Accordingly, there was no

proportionality in the expenditure of resources. At the same time, the lives at risk and the fact that the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is worse than before, in line with the intention of the US, suggests that the criteria of proportionality are far from met.

3.4.1.2. Jus In Bello

The US assessment about the conduct of the war also does not seem very positive. When we make an assessment between the warring parties within the scope of proportionality of means: despite the high technology and weapons that the US and allied forces have; the Taliban forces mostly had weapons and equipment from the era of the Old-Soviet occupation, as well as more guerrilla equipment (Dorn, 2011:252). Given the number of fighters, the Taliban's initial numbers were lower, but continued to grow during the surge period, but far fewer than the US, the allied forces and the Afghan National Army. According to some data from 2014, the total number of Afghan forces and ISAF troops was more than 400,000, while the Taliban forces were not fully known, but not more than 100,000 (Dawi, 2014). Nevertheless, this imbalance in powers did not mean disproportionate force. Because the coalition forces in particular needed the technology and forces to defend civilians (Dorn, 2011:252). But the use of this technology, drone strikes and civilian casualties under the name 'collateral damage' raised other questions about the how just the war is (Thistletwaite and Katulis, 2009).

The US was trying to "win the hearts and minds" of the Afghan people in the direction of bringing peace, peace and stability to Afghanistan. However, increased civilian casualties and 'collateral damage' prevented this (Barry, 2017:142). While it was already being debated whether the war complied with jus ad bellum, the fact that the intervention also undermined the jus in bello criteria contradicted the moral arguments of just war theory (Connah, 2021:75). 14,000 between 2006 and 2013, between 2016 and 2017, 4,653 Afghan civilians were killed, (Knickmeyer, 2021, Downes and Monten, 2013: 91, Institute for Economic & Peace, 2018:12). While the US is expected to reduce the number of civilians killed by the Taliban and terror

groups, its negative contribution to that number, especially because of airstrikes, was one example of the war against the proportionality criteria.

US strategies for defeating the Taliban and other terrorist organizations were also a problematic point for Just War. For example, torture of key figures to gather intelligence, night raids by Afghan security forces with US intelligence, mistreatment of prisoners by Afghan forces do not comply with international law, human rights and jus in bello principles (Petty, 2011; Connah, 2021:76).

Furthermore, the US failure during the war to defend and protect women's rights under Right Intentions is one example of the failure of both jus ad bellum and jus in bello principles by the US. Even if there has been an improvement in women's rights under the Afghan government as part of the reconstruction, 20 years of war and domestic instability have caused more women to suffer (Connah, 2021:76). Both suicide bombings by the Taliban and US drone and airstrikes within the scope of counterterrorism have resulted in the deaths of mostly women and children (UNAMA, 2019:10). Furthermore, the fact that the Islamic Emirate, which was established with the end of the war, caused more restrictions under the name of 'sharia' made the situation the same as before the war.

Increased civilian casualties in Afghanistan could also mean more forces are needed to stop the Taliban. However, with the strategies pursued by the US and its allies, it became very difficult to distinguish between those who died due to terrorist attacks and those who died as a result of intervention as the civilian casualties increased (Connah, 2021:78). This is problematic for US military humanitarian intervention. While the number of casualties was expected to come down and terrorist activities to decrease, the opposite has happened, and situation turned into "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it" as Carter (2018) quoted it. Which proves the civilians killed by US strikes in Kunduz in 2018 (UNAMA, 2019:41). According to jus in bello principles, these strategies resulting from intervention do not correspond to the theory of just war.

All this situation has led to further questioning of the purpose and tactics of the Afghan intervention. Although the US cited one of the objectives of its intervention in Afghanistan as endangering the lives of the Taliban and terrorist civilians, the path it took during the intervention led to more deaths and increased

mistrust in Afghanistan. In this case, the US did not fully observe the criteria of discrimination or proportionality with the strategies it followed, and problems arose in the compliance of the jus in bello principle.

3.4.1.3. Jus Post Bellum

The American intervention in Afghanistan and the subsequent reconstruction process can be evaluated within the scope of jus post bellum. However, the fact that the crisis in Afghanistan has not been fully resolved for two decades and the continuing conflict has emerged as an obstacle to jus post bellum. According to Ledwidge (2013:263), the focus must be on ending the current state of war, conflict or crisis, followed by improvement, configuration and infrastructure work, for jus post bellum to work. However, the ongoing conflict situation in Afghanistan and the inability of the Afghan government to be effective at certain points cause both reconstruction and development efforts to be not efficient enough.

The US and allied states were responsible for the jus post bellum in Afghanistan. Accordingly, it is obvious that efforts and developments have been made in education, infrastructure, health services, house reconstruction, anti-corruption efforts, employment resources, training of local forces, funds for security and government, counter-terrorism and measures against illegal opium trafficking, and more (Carati, 2015: 202, SIGAR, 2019:43, Connah, 2021: 81). However, reconstruction efforts have not been very effective, both because of the Taliban's resistance and because the US prioritizes the defeat of the Taliban over the establishment of jus post bellum.

US military-based strategies for achieving humanitarian objectives in Afghanistan also did not help with postwar reconstruction (Rotberg, 2004: 97 as cited in Connah, 2021:80). Instead, it can be said that a mutual understanding of Afghan society by focusing on its socio-cultural background can be more efficient during the reconstruction. Thus, it can also be said that engaging with the Taliban and other separatist groups, jointly and going through the peace process that requires minimal use of violence, will benefit the Afghan people, the international community and the US more. However, the inconsistency of the plan has also led to the

unsuccessful management of the jus post bellum process, with the US constantly sending more troops to Afghanistan, putting its strategy on a military basis, and prolonging the process too far against the rhetoric of withdrawal (Carati, 2015:213).

3.4.2. Declining National Interest and Realism in Afghanistan

Over the past two decades in Afghanistan, the causes and necessity of war have become more uncertain, but with the sudden withdrawal, the process has become more questionable. Reasons such as eliminating al-Qaeda at the beginning of the war, preventing terrorist organizations from being defeated, bringing democracy to Afghanistan, ensuring women's rights, and creating a livable world for children and civilians seemed to provide just cause for intervention. However, with their failure, the failure of the US to balance power in Central and South Asia, the effort to ensure access and security to valuable resources in the region, the effort to create a pro-American government and the desire to maintain a military presence in the region, as the realists call it, the failure of what can be considered as "national interest" and the fact that it does not matter to the US In the "vital interest" point, it is a good way to explain the changing strategies in Afghanistan and the complete withdrawal offers perspective.

Over the course of two decades, US spending and changing plans, especially in Afghanistan, began to harm US national interests. After Bin Laden's death in 2011, the ongoing war began to damage the US presence, even though it seemed to have achieved its original goal (Biden, 2021e). The US used more than $1 trillion over the two decades from 2002 to 2022 for Afghan security forces (Brown University, 2022). This expenditure provided training, weapons and ammunition, other combat equipment and technologies for over 300,000 Afghan soldiers and police (Tian, 2021). However, the inefficient and unsuccessful structure of the Afghan army, the influence of the warlords within the country and the conflicts of interest of other actors within the country have led to the inefficiency of the money spent (Sen, 2022:91). The fall of Kabul before the US full withdrawal from Afghanistan was complete, and with the Taliban taking control of Afghanistan in less

than a month, it was another example of unrequited spending and a major damage to the already low national interest of the US in Afghanistan.

US plans for Afghanistan to use its resources were also unsuccessful. Even before the intervention, the Taliban were blocking and damaging a pipeline project and investments for Central Asian oil reserves under the Unocal (Martin, 2001). With the government of Hamid Karzai established after the intervention, the US began to gain access to Central Asian mineral reserves and natural resources (Imran, 2019:58). The Taliban's surge led to greater US involvement in the region. American forces establishing more bases in the region under the BSA have also begun to do more to maintain access to energy resources (NATO, 2014, Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement, 2012, Security and Defense Cooperative Agreement, 2014). However, this was met with harsher condemnation by the Taliban and continued to provoke the group. After the Taliban began to control the country, the US has difficulty to have access over the energy sources.

The US has not only funded military budget of Afghans to build their own forces, within the scope of reconstruction, it has also funded Afghanistan to ensure economic developments, establish democratic governance, form a stable government and build infrastructures such as health and education (White House, 2021b). At the same time the US has combated against especially in the Middle East, thus the address of the global war against terrorism was not only Afghanistan (Biden, 2021e; 2021a). Yet to continue to fund Afghanistan was not economically and politically in America's national interest anymore.

At the time of the intervention, the US was in a unique position as the world's largest, most powerful and influential dominant force. It also affected his actions and policy strategies. So, in an unrivaled, unipolar world, the new threats to the US were rogue states, global terrorism, and failed states. In the new order, which America maintained primacy, it used soft and hard powers under the name of "liberal international order" to control and look after its own interests (Latham, 2021). Al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks were also a strategy against this order of the US, and under the circumstances of the period, the US response was based on the dynamics of the period. However, during the war, US involvement in the Middle East and Central

Asia advantaged the emergence of China and Russia as stronger and more effective forces (Pihl, 2021:25).

The weakening of the US fight against global terrorism and its intervention in Afghanistan has also jeopardized the US role as the only superpower, with China rapidly rising as a global power. Which Biden didn't hesitate to say in his remarks is that China's rise and global competition should be emphasized (Biden, 2021e). For this reason, it has been announced that it will be in the interest of the US in a new global competitive environment to withdraw from Afghanistan and stop the funds and resources spent there. In doing so, however, the power vacuum created in Afghanistan will be filled by Russia and especially China, but it will also cause the US to lose power in Central and South Asia (Trofimov and Page, 2021).

It would be in the greater interest of the Taliban to take over again in Afghanistan. Latham (2021) was saying from a realistic perspective that withdrawing from Afghanistan was not a disaster. According to him, while the strategic importance of Eastern Europe or the Gulf region has increased during the new period of global competition, that the Taliban sovereign Afghanistan will benefit the US by causing problems for regional and global rivals such as Russia, China and Iran. Russia and Iran financed the Taliban while the US remained in Afghanistan, forcing them to spend more of the US resources (Malkasian, 2021:428). The US could have used the same against its global rivals.

Relations with Pakistan had also become more difficult to stay in Afghanistan, with the US changing strategy and involving India. This has led to the development of relations between Pakistan and the Taliban against the US (Pihl, 2021:27). In the process, Trump used financial aid to Pakistan as a leverage in relations, but had not got what he wanted. Nevertheless, Pakistan played an important role in the US and Taliban peace talks, and by using it to its advantage, it was able to turn the supremacy in Afghanistan to its side in the Indian competition (Malkasian, 2021:429). This meant that with the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, India, which could see itself as its own ally, could not fill the power vacuum.

In terms of security, US priorities in Afghanistan and elsewhere have changed, but in some ways, they have been struggling. Counter-terrorism was becoming both costly, especially in Afghanistan, which has become a much more

unstable region since the Taliban's insurgence began. In addition, due to civilian casualties and the unending nature of the war, it has gradually reduced public confidence in US participation and the Afghan government (Pihl, 2021:28). This led them to think that the Taliban's victory, despite the repressive and martial law of the pre-intervention Taliban era, would save them from all this violence and destruction, causing the US to lose its advantage on the ground (Malkasian, 2021:418).

Finally, with the change in US foreign policy, the change of vision reduced the importance of Afghanistan in line with the new plans. The role of human rights and moral values, American ideals, American interventionism in US foreign policy under the liberal international order decreased (Posner, 2021). Of course, under the US intervention in Afghanistan, not only these reasons, but also its desire to adopt the American system, ideals and institutions from all countries as the only hegemony. However, with the failure of the intervention option of military intervention to achieve this, it has raised some questions about the preference of non-interventions to achieve national interests (Posner, 2021).

The economic and global impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has erupted since 2020, have affected involvement in Afghanistan and the acceleration of the withdrawal process. In particular, the fact that the losses from the terrorist attack remained much less than the pandemic, as well as the emergence of a serious economic crisis, tested the necessity of involvement in Afghanistan (Malkasian, 2021:448). American interests in Afghanistan decreased compared to other issues on the agenda during the period when the economic burden of Afghanistan funding on the US could be used for Covid-19 and the national interests of the US were newly defined (Pihl, 2021:25).

A complete US withdrawal could be seen as a win, as the strategy shifts in Afghanistan and the necessity and objectives of intervention in Afghanistan become more profitable for US interests. However, the justification and ethical considerations of the intervention are questioned in terms of the legacy it leaves behind, also in terms of the interests and gains of the US. Less than a year after the withdrawal, it may not be enough to understand how the recent complete withdrawal from Afghanistan has affected and what it will bring under new US foreign policy

strategies, thus it will be more accurate to reevaluate the withdrawal in the coming years.

CONCLUSION

The September 11 attacks were recorded in history as one of the turning points and most important breaking moments in terms of feeling terror danger at the highest level in the US and the consequences it caused globally. The fact that the danger of terrorism became concrete after the attacks and that even a country like the US was exposed to such violence within its own territory revealed the necessity of an international response against terrorism. It is considered that terrorism posed a threat to Western norms such as democracy, human rights, and freedom. But the most important part for the US was that it was attacked while dominating the international arena as the only superpower after the Cold War. After the attacks, national security was at the top of the agenda for the US.

The US developed a new security framework by emphasizing the concept of 'Self Defense'. The UN resolution and NATO decision tell us that there is no unlawful intervention in terms of legal authority. However, it has led to the questioning of the legality of war, in some unethical events caused by the intervening forces and especially the operations and strategies carried out by the US. In this regard the first chapter 1 presented the definition and history of the Just War Theory.

The concept of just war, was shaped through abstract and relative concepts such as glory and honor, started to be based on certain principles with the Christian culture that developed during the Greek and Roman period. The ethical obligations that people had to comply with during fighting are developed, with examples from the Bible of medieval theologians. In particular, St Augustine and Aquinas revealed the first principles of just and legitimate warfare. With Augustine and Aquinas, the first principles of just and legitimate war are formed. Later, it became more secular and religious foundations were removed and tried to be placed on legal foundations. However, the validity of the rules of international law and the lack of organs that control it led to the idea of just war only as an ethical and moral concept. As of the 20th century, the idea of establishing an international supervisory manager with the idea of the League of Nations was seriously involved in international law. And for the first time, the first example of the Briand Kellog Pact with the limitation of the use of force was formed. At the moment, the regulation of the use of force through

Charter and institutions of the UN, which is still valid, has enabled the just war to have an environment to be evaluated within a legal framework.

The formation and legality of the concept of humanitarian military intervention emerged as a practice defined as just warfare within this framework. Particularly, interventionism in the Cold War period started to form the first examples of humanitarian military intervention. However, the fact that the two superpowers have used as a tool to apply power and influence in the global competition explains that the legality and justness of humanitarian military interventions is a controversial concept. Crises in many regions such as South Africa, Rhodesia, Korea, and Vietnam emerged as the application areas of the concept of humanitarian military intervention. With the end of the Cold War, the dynamics of humanitarian military intervention also changed and became more haphazard and episodic under US hegemony. The intervention in Iraq was more related to the national interests of the US, while regions with no vital interests such as Rwanda and Somalia were bypassed. This revealed the impression of humanitarian military intervention as a tool used by states to achieve their national interests rather than just war theory and moral values.

9/11 was the event that opened a completely different door to humanitarian intervention. The attacks and the Afghanistan intervention, which started with Bush's declaration of the global war against terrorism, created new debates about the redefinition of the concept of "terrorism" and its place in international law. While a common definition of terrorism was not yet in place, the rules and justness of the war against terrorism were a bigger question mark. Although just war theorists have published articles and books on this subject, it is obvious that it is difficult to place the war against terrorism in a legal framework and to judge its justness. For this reason, it is important to evaluate different regions and crises correctly, not the same in every war against terrorism. In evaluating the legality of the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan, it is necessary to know the dynamics here, to understand its importance for the US, and to have a good knowledge of Afghanistan's past which is full of interventions. Thus, the question of whether the US intervention in Afghanistan a just war or a tool is used to achieve its national interests is evaluated.

Afghanistan, which has been between power games since the 19th century, was tried to be used, dominated, and even exposed to interventions by the great powers of the period. It has been exposed to foreign interventions for two centuries, including England, Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union, and finally the US. The invasion of the Soviets was the event that opened the door to the events of 9/11. The Soviets' interest in Afghanistan since the 1970s and the effort to control it turned into a military intervention in 1979. The resistance against this intervention led to the organization of mujahideen groups that would form the basis of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. The Soviet invasion, which lasted almost a decade, turned into a war of resistance between the Mujahideen and Soviet forces. The US, after losing its most important ally in the region, Iran, in 1979, did not want Afghanistan to enter the pro-Soviet regime. In this direction, the policy followed by the US in Afghanistan has been on the side of the mujahideen due to the Cold War. And especially the weapon support had a critical role in the success of the mujahideen against the Soviets.

The end of the Soviet invasion did not point to the end of the crisis for Afghanistan. Both the struggle between the different Mujahideen groups in the region and the Soviets weapons left in the country caused over-armament, instability and lack of security in the country. However, the Taliban, who stood by the Mujahideen groups during the struggle for power, became the main power in Afghanistan when most of them began to control the regions in Afghanistan towards the end of the 90s. At the same time, they continued their activities in Afghanistan thanks to their relations with the Taliban in Al-Qaeda, which was organized by the merger of the Mujahideen from different countries during the Soviet invasion. And in the 90s, they began to take their anti -US actions. The attacks on American troops in Somalia and Saudi Arabia started with the attacks on the World Trade Center in 1993 and continued. On September 11, 2001, the actions that constitute the starting point of the thesis took place and the main reason for the intervention of Afghanistan was formed.

Especially after the attacks, the first reaction of the US to the Taliban and the subsequent intervention formed the beginning of the global war against terrorism in the Bush era. With the evolution of the mujahideen groups it supported during the Soviet Invasion, the new situation in Afghanistan and Al-Qaeda started to pose a

danger to the US. The US intervention in Afghanistan and the War in Afghanistan began with the emergence of the Bush Doctrine, the US had waged a global war against terrorism. However, with the Iraq intervention Bush started to make military actions without waiting for UN resolutions on the right to enter the war. This can be seen as the beginning of Bush's "pre-emptive war" strategy.

The intervention that started with the aim of preventing global terrorism, preventing terrorist organization, and destroying terrorist bases in Afghanistan gained a much different dimension with the UN's involvement and reconstruction strategy. The new aim was to reconstruct the "failed" Afghan state and create a democratic state within the framework of Western norms. Under the name of "Reconstruction of Afghanistan", a nation-building project was started with the role of the US and the UN. The new state of Afghanistan was founded by taking steps towards the provisional government and the constitution. With the first democratic elections held in 2005, the reconstruction was progressing as desired. Economic development was also aimed within the framework of the Bonn Conference, The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan and the New Marshall Plan. In addition, within the framework of ISAF, it was desired to eliminate the vulnerability by training Afghan forces. However, there were still local obstacles to the realization of all this. The lack of centralization in Afghanistan, its demographic structure and local power centers under the guise of warlords were the things that made it difficult for the whole process to progress successfully.

The beginning of the Taliban resurgence, on the other hand, was the beginning of a process that was wearing out for its intervention and its aims. The reorganized Taliban forces and local supporters, in addition to their attacks on the Afghan government and US-Allied forces under the name of insurgency, also changed the way of the intervention. The intervention, which was already controversial compared to a just war, became more difficult in terms of the strategy of the intervention with the increase in civilian deaths. In line with the interests of the US, the increase in material and military losses and the inability to achieve the intended goals led to more questioning of the necessity of the intervention. With President Obama's coming to office, the idea of withdrawing from Afghanistan became the American top foreign policy agenda.

First, Obama's new strategy and foreign policy priorities were evaluated. Inheriting the global war and the Afghanistan-Iraq interventions from the Bush era, Obama's main goal was to end the intervention in these two regions. However, he considered the war in Afghanistan rather than Iraq as a more just and good war. He saw the Iraq War as a burden and a bad war and aimed to remove the crisis thereby spending the resources allocated for the war in Iraq on Afghanistan. At the same time, although the Afghanistan war was seen as a "good war", it not only did not serve the vital interests of the US in line with realist interests, but also gave an advantage to its rivals such as Russia and China in the global competitive environment. Obama, who wanted to both increase the US activity in the international arena and maintain its global leadership wanted to end the Afghanistan intervention as soon as possible. However, the situation in Afghanistan was not as optimistic as Obama had expected. The reconstruction was not fruitful, the Taliban resistance stronger than expected. But at the same time, the US economy was not suitable for transferring more resources to Afghanistan due to the severe crisis it was experiencing.

Obama's new strategy was to increase the level of troops against the Taliban and other rebel groups in the region, to ensure security and to bring the Afghan government to a level where it can defend itself. Accordingly, it increased military involvement in Afghanistan and operations against terrorist targets. It can also be said that it achieved relative success with the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011. In order to turn this relative success into a greater success, the first serious steps were taken towards the withdrawal by determining the US withdrawal plan from Afghanistan with the Bonn Conference II, and the planned withdrawal of the US troops began.

In the Trump era, the goal was not different from the Obama era. Calling his foreign policy strategy principled realism, Trump wanted the involvement in Afghanistan to end and a focus on global competition, especially China-oriented. Trump, who wanted to follow a more pragmatic policy, wanted to act according to the circumstances. The withdrawal that started during the Obama era also made his job relatively easy. However, conditions were not conducive to a full retreat. The overwhelming superiority of the Taliban and insurgent groups over Afghan

government forces and increasing control in Afghanistan showed that the Afghan government was not ready for a complete US withdrawal. For this, the strategy of sending more soldiers to the region continued in the first years of Trump. Far from the idea of nation-building like Obama, Trump's main goal was to complete the withdrawal without jeopardizing the petty interests of the US. Trump, who used diplomatic relations for this, started direct talks with the Taliban after a long time and tried to agree on a realistic withdrawal. Although this did not please the Afghan government, Trump, within the framework of his pragmatic realistic policy, wanted to end this intervention as soon as possible, because of there are no further US interests in Afghanistan and intervention was a huge burden on the economy. These efforts, which concluded with the Doha Agreement, actually showed that the US had ended the intervention idea.

Biden, on the other hand, was more radical. He saw the complete withdrawal as a foreign policy priority and wanted the US to return to its global leadership role as soon as possible. Thus, it would be easier to compete with Russia and China, and it would be able to avoid some disadvantages due to its presence in Afghanistan. Although the intra-Afghan talks after Doha did not go as expected and the control of the Taliban in Afghanistan during the intervention period was at its peak, Biden did not give up on the idea of withdrawal. The completion of the full withdrawal within 9 months of taking office has been the subject of criticism from both his allies and some inside the US. Still, Biden thought that withdrawal from Afghanistan would only be like this, and he earned sort of "success". Thus, while the intervention that lasted for 20 years came to an end, the reasons and necessities of the intervention failed.

Of course, the Afghanistan War did not concern only the US and Afghanistan. Both during the duration of the intervention and the dynamics created by the War in Afghanistan were global. The participation of regional powers such as Pakistan in the war and the post-war Afghanistan situation were important. However, the end of US involvement in Afghanistan was of greater importance in terms of the international balance of power, with global great powers such as China, India and Russia. While Russia can benefit more from the difficult situation of the US in Afghanistan, they will have to review their own interventionism especially in

Ukraine after the intervention that has now ended. At the same time, greater US interest in the global power race may reveal a tougher competition for China. While the partnership between India and the US may become tangible in Afghanistan, the withdrawal of the US from the region and the unilateral decision of withdrawing from Afghanistan makes the future of this cooperation curious.

While analyzing the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the research evaluated the necessity and continuity of the intervention from two extremes within the scope of just war theory and realist perspective. Thus, the rationale behind the US continued intervention has been examined from ethical and realist perspectives. The fact that the process has become so complicated, costly and long despite the withdrawal, especially during the Obama era, has caused US interests and gains in the region to become blurred. At the same time, the fact that the purpose of the intervention in Afghanistan has become blurred and nothing change but destruction compared to 20 years ago, shows that the justness of this intervention is very doubtful. Thus, the intervention became a tangible and valuable example for the reassessment of the concept of both just warfare and, in connection with, humanitarian military intervention.

The ethical and realistic logic behind the continuation of the US intervention in Afghanistan has been questioned. In particular, the beginning, continuation and end of war, as an important example for humanitarian military intervention and just war theory, provided a good evaluation point for the concepts of *jus ad bellum, jus in bello* and *jus post bellum*. From a realist point of view, leaving aside ethical concerns, the continuation and eventual withdrawal of this intervention by the US offers a good realist review window on what the 20-year process has gained and lost for the US. This is why, in Chapter 3, the intervention is evaluated from these two perspectives.

This thesis, aimed to evaluate the whole process of intervention from the beginning to the withdrawal. It examined the US role and activities in Afghanistan. The analytical framework used in this thesis based on just theory has raised questions on the causes and necessity of war. With recent withdrawal, US policy has become more questionable.   However, it may be early to evaluate whether the US cannot

shape the situation in Afghanistan according to what they want within their new foreign policy strategies.

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