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INTRODUCTION

In recent years there have been rising concerns among both scholars and the international community about the spread of American neocolonialism - a new form of imperialism - that is believed to have a solid stand in the Middle East states. American neocolonialism is yet a new phenomenon in international relations, and it requires more attention and theorization efforts; however, it can already pose a real threat to democracy and maintaining the balance of power in the world. Neocolonialism can be disguised as striving for assistance and cooperation, so the true interest behind such concepts as American foreign aid is in question.

This paper is going to limit its scope to the foreign aid relations of the US with the Middle East countries, more specifically to the three major cases that manifest such relations – Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan. The Middle East is the region that allocates one of the greatest amounts of foreign aid from the United States based on the data from the U.S. Foreign assistance (ForeignAssistance.gov) Afghanistan and Israel have been on top of the charts as the countries receiving the highest amount of U.S. foreign aid (“Dashboard” section) and Iraq has also been in the top 10 of those charts (ForeignAssistance.gov, “Dashboard” section). Postcolonial and critical theory scholars argue that such foreign aid relations might assist the establishment of American neocolonial rule in the Middle East by producing and reproducing dependency relations in the form of aid dependency in the countries that are still "young" and struggling with state-building and nation-building efforts.

Consequently, the **issue of foreign aid** and its role in the international system is more important than ever before. Debates concerning the place of foreign assistance in international politics continue and draw even more scholars as well as international community members, politicians, and even journalists.

This paper **aims** to find commonalities and distinctions between cases of foreign aid relations of the U.S. with Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan through a neocolonialist paradigm.

The main **research questions** are: *how neocolonialism is manifested in foreign aid relations between the USA and the Middle East states, namely Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan, and what are the common and distinctive traits of these manifestations in the three cases?*

Research tasks:

- 1) Outline theoretical and methodological research frameworks of the study.
- 2) Conceptualize the American national interests behind its foreign aid relations with other states.
- 3) Characterize the historical-political situation in Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan.
- 4) Define common and distinctive features of the U.S. foreign aid relations by comparing cases of Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan.
- 5) Examine and outline the dominant narratives of the American government on the foreign aid relations with the Middle East.

Foreign aid relations of the USA and Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan; narratives of the U.S. foreign aid are **research's subject** and **object** is the concept of the U.S. foreign aid.

Relevance and contribution – this paper brings a neocolonial theoretical lens to the study of foreign aid. Also, this paper will integrate combined methodology into the study of international relations.

Research Design, Theory, and Methodology:

This work employs qualitative research methods, which include comparative analysis, discourse analysis, qualitative document analysis, case study, and literature review. This work will apply the constructivist theory of international relations. In addition to the constructivist approach, this research is derived from post- and neocolonialist theories.

The main **data** used for this research can be categorized as follows:

- official documents, reports, statements, and publications of the U.S. presidents and their administrations;
- national security strategies of U.S. foreign policy and international aid;
- official data sets, statistics and strategies of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

In addition to primary data, this research will rely on secondary data obtained through a literature review. The above-mentioned categories of data, which will be further examined in the third chapter, allow for a comprehensive analysis of the issue of U.S. foreign aid in the context of the Middle East. Chronologically, the study is limited to the years 2001-2021 – the years of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) or as we know it now – War on Terror.

Literature and sources - Scholars such as Morgenthau, Lancaster, Smith, and Liska have studied the concept of foreign aid. Different theoretical schools have varying perspectives on foreign aid - realists view it as a means of exerting political influence, Marxists and postmodernists see it as a tool for exploiting and spreading capitalism, constructivists analyze it in terms of social norms and institutions, and liberals see it as a manifestation of cooperation and mutual aid between countries for the sake of peace (Lancaster, 2007). However, previous research has not explored foreign aid through the lens of post- and neocolonialism or the power dynamics between neo-imperial and formally independent states.

Structure - The research paper comprises an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion with the main part occupying 48 of the total 60 pages. The bibliography consists of 72 sources. The first, second, and third chapters are subdivided into four, five, and three subsections, respectively, each including a chapter summary.

CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Theoretical Foundations of foreign aid studies

What is the Middle East?

The concept of the Middle East refers to the member-states of the League of Arab States together with Israel, Turkey, and Iran (Schwedler, 2013). The idea of the Middle East, which refers to a region predominantly inhabited by Muslims, is a Western construct that emerged in the 19th century, around the same time as the first wave of Arab invasions and the rise of the three largest Muslim empires. (Keddie, 1973). Although the Middle East has distinct cultural and geographical features, it is still an artificial construct that may not always have practical relevance (Keddie, 1973). Nonetheless, it still exists and includes member-states of the Arab League, such as Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

What is foreign aid?

Foreign aid is a relatively new phenomenon in international relations and foreign policy studies that emerged just after World War II. Nevertheless, now this phenomenon has developed into a norm in interstate relations. According to the definitions of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the concept of foreign aid which is also called official development assistance pertains to the financial or material aid offered to low-income nations by advanced capitalist countries, multilateral agencies, or official organizations (“Official development assistance” section). This support aims to enhance the welfare or economy of recipient countries and can be allocated to either non-state actors or local governments, inclusive of humanitarian aid and debt relief. As distinct from loans or private investments, foreign aid must encompass a non-repayable portion granted as a subsidy. Despite its positive intentions, the act of providing aid is not unidirectional, as beneficiaries frequently need to repay a proportion of the assistance received.

Foreign aid may serve various purposes which can be economic, diplomatic, military, etc (Lancaster, 2007). As for the different types of foreign aid, the assistance can come as financial loans or providing free vaccines, funding research, etc (Lancaster, 2007). From the examples, it is confirmed that foreign aid involves multiple actors on different levels from international organizations like the World Bank and non-governmental organizations to even governments of nation-states.

Foreign aid relations are the relations between the giver and the receiver of foreign aid. This study will later analyze the nature of such relationships and the interests behind them for both the donor and the recipient sides.

Of course, the primary goal and meaning of foreign aid is a subject of discussion among the theorists of various schools of thought. The following paragraphs of this paper will elaborate more on different perceptions of foreign aid among theorists of international relations.

What is foreign aid in a realist school of thought?

Nation-states are the central actors of international relations for theorists. So only states have the power and capacity to form, change and break international relations with other states. Foreign aid relations are no exception to this rule. Realists share the Hobbesian worldview where security and survival are the main, if not the only, priorities for actors. As the only considered actors in realism are nation-states, national security, and survival are what keeps this world and international relations together. Getting back to the concept of foreign aid, realists do not include variables that are connected to economic or humanitarian concerns in their analysis. Consequently, for realists foreign aid is an instrument that more powerful states can utilize to survive, ensure their national security and in the end become more powerful. Neo-realists share a similar approach to foreign aid, but they pay more attention to the economic potential and development of the recipient countries, as this affects the global balance of power (Schraeder, Hook & Taylor, 1998).

What is foreign aid in a liberal school of thought?

The liberals challenge almost every one of the realist arguments regarding the basics of understanding foreign aid (Schraeder, Hook & Taylor, 1998). Liberal school is optimistic about human nature and it takes into analysis multiple actors on different levels. So for liberals, international relations are not about a constant struggle for power and survival, but about the desire and necessity for cooperation and peaceful coexistence (Schraeder, Hook & Taylor, 1998). They see economic development, globalization, and interdependence as building blocks for a sustainable future (Findley, 2018). For the liberal school, foreign aid is a manifestation of the human and therefore states' need to help each other and solve problems collectively (Lancaster, 2007). According to liberalism, the provision of foreign aid should be carried out through international institutions that promote economic development, sustainability, and democratization in less developed countries (Lancaster, 2007).

What is foreign aid for a constructivist school of thought?

According to a constructivist school, foreign aid is a norm that has developed in intrastate relations (Lancaster, 2007). This norm stands on the notion that wealthy states should assist the poor ones to improve their quality of life (Lancaster, 2007). Professor Lumsdaine argues that foreign aid cannot be explained solely on the basis of the political and economic interests of donor countries (1993). For constructivists, the emergence of the foreign aid phenomenon was a response to global poverty, and it is based on moral principles of equality, peace, and justice for all (Lumsdaine, 1993).

What is foreign aid for economic structuralists?

For Marxists and other dependency theory scholars, foreign aid is an instrument similar to the realist approach. Foreign aid through a Marxist paradigm is a tool to be utilized by capitalist states in order to control and exploit poorer developing countries (Hayter & Watson, 1985). Economic structuralists see foreign aid as a system of exporting goods and services from donor countries and importing raw materials from recipient countries (Lancaster, 2007). From this perspective, foreign aid is a form of exploitation

that maintains or sometimes even further expands the economic inequality between rich and poor countries (Lancaster, 2007).

Foreign aid in post- and neocolonialist paradigms

Postcolonialism and neocolonialism are relatively new theories of international relations, so even their very definitions are still evolving and may vary. This paper refers to postcolonialism as a system of relationships between former colonies that became new independent states and their former metropolises. Postcolonialists argue that despite the formal end of direct control, colonial structures can transform into modern power relations (Wilkins, 2017). Postcolonialism has also other names like "imperialism without colonies" and "colonialism without colonies" (McClintock, 1992:89) For postcolonialist scholars foreign aid is a manifestation of the colonial tradition of international relations and a tool with which former metropolises control their former colonies (Nkrumah, 1966).

Neocolonialism in this paper refers to the relationships between formally independent states and neo-imperial actors, such as the US. Neocolonialist theorists argue that neo-imperial regimes use cultural and economic levers, as well as globalization, to spread their influence on other countries and regions (Nkrumah, 1966). For post- and neocolonial theorists, power is not viewed through the lens of the state in the realist sense but rather as control over knowledge and representation (Nkrumah, 1966).

1.2 Research Methodology

Qualitative methods are widely used in International Relations due to their ability to effectively study intricate and sporadic phenomena, which are central to the subfield. Thus, the complexity and unstructured nature of these phenomena are best studied using qualitative research methods, leading to their increased prominence in International Relations (Bennett & Elman, 2007). That said, this paper will follow the general science trend by applying qualitative document analysis. The main purpose of document research is to review documents by identifying and documenting similarities, variances, and

patterns and then organizing and categorizing findings into themes and case examples (Labuschagne, 2003). Qualitative Document Analysis, which evaluates both printed and digital documents (Bowen, 2009). Similar to other qualitative methods, document analysis necessitates thorough scrutiny of data and its interpretation to "elicit meaning and develop empirical knowledge" (Bowen, 2009:45). Scholars claim documents are "social facts" that are systematically generated and shared between societal groups (Bowen, 2009).

Document analysis is a valuable method for researchers as it allows the evaluation of a variety of sources like national strategies, press releases, archives, etc. This method offers a functional solution for scholars seeking to synthesize, evaluate, and organize a great amount of data from a variety of sources (Labuschagne, 2003). Additionally, document analysis in combination with other methods enables the triangulation of data, which can be particularly useful for conducting case study research (Bowen, 2009). Despite potential drawbacks such as data overload and selectivity, the accessibility, efficiency, and consistency of document analysis make it a valuable tool for researchers in the social sciences seeking to generate empirical knowledge, according to Bowen (2009).

Also, this paper will apply discourse analysis methodology to its research. The use of discourse analysis in this research serves as both a theoretical basis for neo-colonialism and as a method of analysis. Language, as a material aspect of social reality, is a central focus of discourse analysis in both theory and methodology (Larsen, 2018). As such, this research employs discourse analysis to explore how language interacts with social context, shaping and constraining social processes, influencing the creation and transmission of knowledge, and impacting actors' actions, among other things (Larsen, 2018).

This study draws on the three central dimensions of discourse analysis identified by Milliken: representation, behavioral practice, and change of practices (1999). The first dimension involves understanding how language constructs meaning as "systems of representation," while the second dimension recognizes that discourse generates subjects

and objects that create contexts where certain actions are possible or impossible (Milliken, 1999). Finally, the third dimension acknowledges that discourse is variable and dependent on historical development (Milliken, 1999). Therefore, discourse analysis should consider practice change and alternatives to dominant practices and meanings while also examining efforts to stabilize and support dominant practices (Milliken, 1999). In sum, this research demonstrates how discourse analysis offers a powerful tool for analyzing international relations by examining the role of language in shaping social processes, power dynamics, and historical developments.

This paper also employs the method of case study analysis, the essence of which is investigating a particular phenomenon during a specific time interval with specific boundaries (Gerring, 2007). However, this definition may not be applicable to all phenomena in nature, such as institutions or political parties, which have merely “conceptual and analytical boundaries” (Slater, 2008:402). The case study method provides a valuable tool for researchers to investigate specific instances and gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under examination (Stake, 2008). The case study is a research method that centers around a specific individual case and is not bound by a single research paradigm.

This method involves three key issues related to ontology, methodology, and epistemology, including the importance of defining clear spatial and temporal boundaries for the case, the lack of consensus on the specificity and ultimate goal of case studies as a method, and the use of different types of data and theories of international relations in case study analysis (May, 2011). Despite its classification as a qualitative research method, case studies are not limited to a single research paradigm and can provide valuable insights into complex phenomena (Willis, 2014). Therefore, the case study method should be considered as a useful and flexible tool for conducting empirical research and generating new knowledge.

The typology of case study methods is immense, so it is vital to choose the best fit for the particular research paradigm. In the example of this paper will be used the most-similar case comparison, which is based on the Mill’s “method of difference” (2011). The core principle of which in the study of international relations is using process tracing to

determine that the independent variable of interest differs between the cases while influencing their outcomes (Bennett & Elman, 2007). However, these inter-case differences are not causally connected to the variation in end results (Bennett & Elman, 2007). Process tracing involves deductive study of events and sequences within a case together with inductive one.

The advantages of using the case study method lie in its practical convenience in the field of international relations. The case study serves as a "theory-building function" and a "theory-testing function," according to Eckstein (2000:136). Furthermore, the case study method can incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, resulting in a more comprehensive and profound investigation. Despite its benefits, due to Maoz the case study method has drawbacks, including the lack of documentation of the approach to data collection, management, and processing, which can lead to unsubstantiated generalizations (2002). In addition, some positivists criticize the subjectivity and interpretation of the results of case studies. Nevertheless, considering the advantages and disadvantages of the case study method, it remains a promising approach to conducting in-depth research, as it helps researchers overcome the dichotomy between excessive generalization and particularism, as well as between quantitative and qualitative methods, according to Tim May (2011). Thus, this study will employ the case study method to analyze the United States' international aid in the Middle East.

This paper will use case study method to perform comparative analysis of the 3 cases of foreign aid relations between the USA and Middle East states of Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan. The objective of conducting a comparative analysis is to identify similarities and differences among the units of analysis. According to Sonja Drobnič, it is challenging to assume that there actually exists any study in the social sciences that does not involve comparison (2014). Comparative analysis framework can be utilized to identify the internal and external factors affecting the development of foreign aid relations between analyzed states. Comparative analysis would be not only relevant but also useful for conducting analysis in international relations as it offers comprehensive and strategic approach to understanding foreign aid and its relations between states.

1.3 Conceptualization of American national interests behind its foreign aid relations with other states

According to Robert Pakenham, the national interests are not something that could be measured objectively and empirically, but a normative reflection of the political preferences of particular individuals and groups of individuals (1973:325).

Researchers identify at least three main groups of American national interests in the Middle East region and other developing countries. The first interest is a moral one, it can also be called ideological interest. The second is an interest in security and power and the third one in an interest in economic prosperity. The U.S. moral interest is rooted in the belief that the nation could not possibly uphold its liberal ideals while other poorer countries suffer (1973). That brings us back to the concept of foreign aid, which is used as a means of fulfilling and justification of U.S. obligation to help those in need and aligning its actions with its declared values. That's why foreign aid is so deeply incorporated into American foreign policy strategies because the absence of it could become an ideological threat that would undermine the legitimacy of the US's liberal ideals on the whole.

From the point of view of the security and economic angle foreign aid can be considered not only a way to restrain radicalization and the spread of communist ideas, but also a means of promoting long-term economic and security national interests for the United States. As the logic goes, the leaders of the countries on the receiving end of the aid will be more favorably disposed towards the United States and its liberal ideals. Economic interest lays in liberal prospects of creating mutually beneficial interdependence that allows American businesses to sell more products and invest in the recipient countries' economies (Pakenham, 1973:330). Thus, foreign aid can be seen as a strategic investment that helps the US to advance its geopolitical and economic goals, while also promoting stability and prosperity in the developing states. Therefore, foreign aid ideally can be mutually beneficial tool that helps both the recipients and the donor countries.

The linkages between the interests of the United States and those of recipient countries is complex. Perspectives on the degree of intersection between these interests vary widely, with liberals seeing them as mutually converging towards development, while realists argue that they are fundamentally at odds (Packenham, 1973). And constructivists recognize that the degree of intersection is influenced by a range of factors, including the ideas, beliefs, and governmental actions on both sides (Packenham, 1973). Ultimately, understanding the complex interplay between the national interests requires a nuanced and multifaceted approach that takes into account a range of perspectives and factors.

So, the Middle East has been a focal point of American policy for decades across different administrations, yet neither American interests in the region nor the region itself have seen positive outcomes. Despite the desire to shift focus away from the Middle East after numerous exhausting interventions and futile excessive development assistance, ongoing issues arising from the security concerns in the region will continue to impact USA national interests. The main issue now is whether persisting with established policies reliant on the use of military force, threat-based and neocolonial strategies will yield better results in the future (RAND Corporation, 2021). American aid to the Middle East states is one of the pillars of current USA policy in the region, so this paper will focus on foreign aid relations between the U.S. and Middle East states that receive the most attention from States through the years: Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan. Overall, the evolution of foreign aid reflects changing global priorities and shifting power dynamics between donor and recipient countries.

National interest of the USA understanding is core to understanding its foreign aid policies towards developing states like those in the Middle East region. Therefore, the US's engagement with the Middle East is driven not only by its pursuit of security and economic gains but also by its commitment to promoting moral values and maintaining its ideological legitimacy internally and globally.

CHAPTER 2. POLITICAL-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The USA national interests in the Middle East

Kwame Nkrumah is considered the father of the neocolonial theory of international relations. This research paper uses neocolonialism as a framework to analyze the case of foreign aid relations between the United States and the Middle East states. Nkrumah's views on American neo-colonialism and imperialism in African countries, which are relevant to the broader discussion of neocolonialism and imperialism in postcolonial and neocolonial theories. He notes that American financial institutions dominate the fiscal sector new independent states in Africa and Asia (Nkrumah, 1966:61) and it is through these institutions, the United States can influence all other aspects of life in these countries, that way promoting its own national interests. According to Nkrumah, it is due to such system of foreign aid that U.S. neocolonialism has acquired its hegemony (Nkrumah, 1966:61). Like other post- and neo-colonial theorists, Nkrumah raises important questions and problems of American neo-colonialism and imperialism, but he focuses more on the experience and cases of African countries, paying minimal attention to other countries that have found themselves in a similar situation of dependence (1966). This research will focus specifically on the experience of Middle East and Afghanistan, Israel and Iraq in particular.

While the United States has provided substantial economic and military aid to the Middle East states, the extent to which this assistance contributes to the advancement of recipients' development goals or serves Washington's geopolitical interests is still unclear (Zimmermann, 2017). Although those interests happen to be so significant as to outweigh the rest of U.S. regional interests combined.

The greatest impetus to the boost of foreign aid to the Middle East were 9/11 attacks and following war on terror. According to Lancaster, after 9/11 the aid flows to the Middle East states “quadrupled” (Lancaster, 2007:7). As sustaining peace in the region involved international security concerns Middle East in the years following 2001 received more than half of total U.S. military aid globally (RAND Corporation, 2021). U.S. force

presence in the region deploys more than 50,000 troops not to mention Afghanistan (RAND Corporation, 2021). However, the initial purpose of U.S. aid to Middle East countries was claimed to be diplomatic peace-making (Lancaster, 2007).

American foreign aid failed at achieving its goals and building a fundament for longstanding policies in the region because it prioritized helping those who were on “their side,” just because they were on “their side”. Such aid incentives didn’t perform and provided the help necessary for the governments and their people. Another problem that arisen with such foreign aid policy was that its structure failed to adapt to new conditions and changes both regionally and globally (RAND Corporation, 2021).

From realist, neocolonial and Marxist points of view the highest goal of the U.S. in the Middle East is to secure its primacy in the region and defeat the enemies (terrorists). Excessive focus of the USA on addressing the Al-Qaeda threat in Afghanistan and Iraq and also safeguarding Israel's power in the region has led to neglect of other significant regional and global threats. Moreover, the American reliance on military means to exert power, which has been a hallmark of U.S. Middle East policy under various administrations, has only exacerbated, rather than mitigated, conflicts in the region (RAND Corporation, 2021)

The USA foreign policy in the Middle East region can be explained by using the argumentation of Fleischman, though his words were dedicated to the U.S. policies in the so called Third World in general (2004). He argues that foreign aid triggers transnationalised class fraction of capital in the recipient states that leads to the displacement of local middle class, which is simultaneously being proletarianised and transformed into cheap labor for new export-oriented industries (Fleischman, 2004). This process is consistent with overall global trends and is resulting in a decline in living standards for people. This transnationalised class formation is creating new orientations for local, transnationally tied capital, delinking the national middle and working classes from traditional national development. Ultimately, this is conferring economic and political benefits to transnational capital, while enhancing USA hegemony and power in general (Fleischman, 2004). As for the role of foreign aid it can be used as a tool to implement foreign policies and may also create conditions that could lead to future

interventions (Challand, 2014). Hanieh (2013) even argue that foreign aid is a form of neocolonialism and imperialism.

In the past, American national interests in the Middle East have mainly focused on safeguarding their own hegemony, oil resources, and protecting Israel (RAND Corporation, 2021). However, recent global developments indicate that these priorities are no longer as crucial as they once were. While the US has been successful in pursuing these interests, some scholars argue that the effectiveness and soundness of continuing to prioritize them should be re-examined and re-evaluated (Brands, 2019).

Although foreign aid has been occasionally discussed, these debates have only touched the surface of the complex issues at stake. Following the democratic uprisings in the Arab Spring in 2011, there was a moment of hope for profound change and promises by the Western allies to support democratic movements through development assistance. However, less than a year later, the theme of aid lost relevance, possibly due to the more pessimistic mood that surrounded current analyses of the uprisings. In January 2014, the Obama Administration announced decreases in the budget for pro-democracy assistance in Arab Spring countries, and with the conflict in Syria escalating into a humanitarian crisis and the emergence of the Islamic State, innovative ideas for distributing aid or creating an "Arab Marshall Plan" have been replaced with standard loans from the World Bank and IMF, and military aid from the USA (RAND Corporation, 2021). This raises questions about the effectiveness and appropriateness of traditional approaches to foreign aid in the Middle East and highlights the need for new strategies that address the root causes of instability in the region (Challand, 2014).

2.2 Analysis of the development of the USA relations with Iraq

Iraq's history dates back to ancient times, with the region being part of various empires, such as the Persian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Its colonial legacy persisted when in the 20th century, Iraq experienced significant involvement from West, particularly from Europe and the United States. In the outcome of the World War I, Iraq became a British mandate territory (Tripp, 2001). And even though Iraq gained

independence in 1932, Britain maintained Iraq's political and economic development under its influence. In the 1950s, Iraq's decision to nationalize its oil industry led to tensions with the Western allies, including its de-jure former metropole and the new actor – the USA (Tripp, 2001).

After that tensions were only rising and in 1963 the Ba'ath Party came to power because of the military coup d'état (Tripp, 2001). Later Saddam Hussein became de-facto leader of Iraq. Throughout the next years Iraq found itself involved in various conflicts starting from war with Iran, the invasion of Kuwait which all led to the Gulf War and harsh sanctions against Iraq. And as for more recent events that are of interest for this research, in year of 2003 the USA led an invasion of Iraq justifying it with concerns over Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. The conflict turned into a fullscale war soon enough resulting in Saddam Hussein's ousting, but also increasing political instability and violence in the region. Overall, Iraq's relations with the global west has been complicated and marked by colonialism, postcolonialism, military interventions, occupation and also as this thesis argues - neocolonialism.

This research will further concern itself with analysis of the consequences that the War on Terror had on Iraq and Iraq relations with the USA since the 2003 invasion. In fact, scholars argue that American "imperial and neocolonial logic" behind the invasion of Iraq has been exposed and condemned globally from the very beginning (Hamilakis, 2009:4). Edward Said in his preface to his study called *Orientalism* 2003 edition pointed out that *Orientalism* brings up the issue of whether imperialism has truly come to an end (2003). As history is always tends to repeat itself, however this repetition is often to become a tragedy. The War on Terror together with 2003 invasion of Iraq are the arguments to support Edward Said's concern (Hamilakis, 2009).

The issue of the fundament on which the USA was building its relations with the Middle East states is a complex one, involving historical and political context, ethical and ideological considerations. The Iraq War of 2003 was perceived worldwide as illegal and it was actually based on the fabricated evidence (Hamilakis, 2009). The 2003 invasion together with ongoing war on terror was just a part of a neocolonial and neoimperialist project that aimed to secure U.S. global dominance by appropriating world resources,

sideling the United Nations and imposing economic hegemony in the region (Hamilakis, 2009). War on terror and “protection” of the America from so called unknown other served as pretext (Hamilakis, 2009). The ethical conundrums associated with these interventions, therefore, raise important questions about the role of external powers in shaping global politics and economies, as well as the challenges of promoting peace, justice, and democracy in the face of such complex and contested issues.

Another argument in support of the catastrophic impact of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and its imperialist and neocolonial roots extends far beyond the political and economic consequences of the war. In addition to the estimated 1.2 million civilian deaths and four million displaced persons, the invasion has caused immense cultural, environmental, and humanitarian damage (Hamilakis, 2009). The use of brutalities, torture and terror practices in places like Abu Ghraib and similar facilities, have had devastating consequences on the state of Iraq and its people (Hamilakis, 2009). The magnitude of this destruction raises serious ethical questions about the responsibility of external powers in promoting or impeding humanitarian crises, the cultural preservation of vulnerable communities, and the protection of human rights in times of conflict.

Some theorists argue that the USA-Iraq war was an extremely important momentum for the U.S. geopolitical direction and raising imperialism over the next years till now (Agnew, 2004).

The war on Iraq has exposed the internal conflict between the American moral values and ideology of a republic and its pursuit of global power through imperialism and neocolonialism (Agnew, 2004). For instance, while the USA benefited from the world order it helped to create after World War II through recruiting allies and establishing international institutions, the Bush administration's imperial strategy after 9/11 marked a departure from multilateralism (Agnew, 2004).

The aftermath of the Iraq war, including the loss of allies and the rise of anti-American sentiment, has raised questions about the effectiveness and ethics of the American foreign policy and global order overall. As Paul Starr (2003) has argued, the war may not have made the US safer from terrorism, but it has reinforced the belief among its enemies that nuclear weapons are necessary to deter American aggression. The US

must confront this dilemma and reconcile its republican ideals with its pursuit of global power in an increasingly interconnected and uncertain world.

2.3 Analysis of the development of the USA relations with Israel

The United States has a long-standing history of interests in the Middle East, including containing Soviet expansion, ensuring access to petroleum resources, promoting democracy and market economies, and maintaining communication and trade (Clyde, 1990). Israel's strategic location and military and intelligence capabilities were seen as beneficial to containing Soviet expansion. However, while the U.S. maintained friendly ties with Israel, this relationship did not necessarily serve other U.S. interests in the region. As U.S. relations with Arab nations grew in significance, the U.S. sought to balance its commitment to Israel with its other regional commitments and interests.

The history of Israel is marked by its establishment as a Jewish state in 1948, following the end of British colonial rule in Palestinian territory. Since then, Israel has maintained a close relationship with the United States, with the US providing significant military and economic aid to Israel throughout the decades. This support has raised international concerns regarding the legitimacy of such actions of Israel as occupation of Palestinian territories and continuous violations of international law and human rights (Sharp, 2023).

The longstanding relationship between the USA and Israel is characterized by strong bilateral ties, which are rooted in shared democratic values, common strategic objectives in the Middle East, and historical connections dating back to U.S. support for the creation of Israel in 1948 (Sharp, 2023). The U.S. has been the largest provider of foreign assistance to Israel since World War II (Sharp, 2023). The aid has played a significant role in reinforcing this partnership, and both U.S. officials and lawmakers have considered Israel a key ally in the region.

During the Cold War, the United States needed Israel as an ally to serve as a buffer state between spreading Soviet influence and raising Arab nationalism, thus helping the States to pursue and secure its national interests in the region (Fleischman, 2004:309).

Israel's role as a major US ally in the Middle East provided it with unique advantages. This partnership enabled Israel to expand its export-led growth project significantly, thanks in part to the opening of new markets in Europe, particularly in former Eastern-bloc countries and many non-aligned states (Ehrlich 2002:55–56).

The Western powers, particularly the United States, in Israel created a model state that embodies and disseminates their values and ideals. This state inherited their imperialistic aspirations and ideas, which are based on a supposed moral imperative to civilize and spread Western notions of political and social order of the the European nation-state. Such neocolonization is driven by a spread Western values and way of life.

United States support for Israel can, therefore, be seen as an effort to secure a regional balance of power favorable to U.S. geostrategic interests. Over time, the United States became increasingly convinced of Israel's willingness to do its bidding in the region.

The assistance provided by the United States to Israel can be interpreted as a move to maintain a favorable balance of power in the region that aligns with U.S. geostrategic goals and national interests. As time went on, the United States became more confident that Israel would carry out its objectives in the region.

The connections between Israel and the United States extend beyond visible diplomatic, economic, and military ties. These ties are bolstered by personal and cultural connections, such as the large number of Israelis with close relatives in the United States and the unique permission for Americans to hold public office in Israel while retaining their American citizenship (Bard & Pipes, 1997). The intertwined nature of Middle Eastern politics and American life reinforces the enduring nature of these connections and provides a stable context that withstands the impact of changing political climates.

2.4 Analysis of the development of the USA relations with Afghanistan

The historical experiences of Afghanistan can be viewed as both post-imperial and post-colonial. As the successor of the Durrani Empire, Afghanistan was caught in a "buffer zone" between two empires, the Russian and the British, until its official

independence in 1919 (Katzman & Thomas, 2017:1). From then until 1979, Afghanistan enjoyed a period of independence and prosperity under the monarchy, until it became a "buffer" again between the US and USSR (Katzman & Thomas, 2017). The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to a confrontation with the US, which provided military aid to anti-communist Islamist rebels (Lancaster, 2007). This aid can be considered the first instance of U.S. foreign aid to Afghanistan. This complex history suggests that Afghanistan has long been a pawn in the geopolitical machinations of world powers, and the US involvement in Afghanistan is part of a larger pattern of pursuing strategic interests through foreign aid and intervention.

The United States' provision of economic and military aid to Afghan mujahedeen during the Soviet occupation was critical in their ability to hold their ground, and ultimately led to the withdrawal of the Soviet forces (Kuperman, 1999). However, once the US achieved its objective, it almost entirely ceased providing any form of aid to Afghanistan, despite the dire economic and political instability that persisted in the country (Katzman & Thomas, 2017). This approach can be explained through both a realist and neo-colonialist lens, where the US acted in its national interest to eliminate the threat posed by Soviet influence, and subsequently, any aid that did not serve its military objectives was deemed unnecessary. Conversely, neo-colonialism posits that US aid to Afghanistan would be detrimental to its interests as it would provide resources and autonomy for the country to rebuild independently, which would contradict American influence. Despite the end of the Soviet occupation, Afghanistan's economy and political situation remain fragile, with little support from the US (Katzman & Thomas, 2017).

This history of political instability and external influence in Afghanistan paved the way for the formation of the Taliban in 1993-1994, which subsequently gained control of the country from 1996 to 2001 (Katzman & Thomas, 2017). Despite the Clinton administration's lack of official recognition, they employed various methods to try and influence the Taliban, who were providing shelter to the leadership of Al-Qaeda. Meanwhile, a group of anti-Taliban individuals and officials joined together to form the "Northern Alliance" in opposition to the Taliban regime (Katzman & Thomas, 2017).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the United States declared war on the Taliban in Afghanistan, which resulted in the launch of the military operation "Enduring Freedom." Prior to this event, the Bush administration had maintained a policy of economic pressure on the Taliban but refrained from providing military assistance to the Northern Alliance (Katzman & Thomas, 2017). The US-led military intervention finally led to the overthrow of the Taliban regime in December 2001 (Katzman & Thomas, 2017). While the cessation of major combat operations was announced in 2003, the conflict in Afghanistan has continued to this day, with the US involvement gradually decreasing in recent years (Katzman & Thomas, 2017). Therefore, the 9/11 attacks marked a turning point in US foreign policy towards Afghanistan, leading to direct military intervention against the Taliban regime.

After the success of the military operation, the US and international partners (such as the UN, EU member states, etc.) began nation- and state-building. According to Dodge, in the eyes of the international community, Afghanistan needed a new order and a new system that had to be created and established from the outside (2013).

Some of the main stages of this new system building were:

- The Bonn Conference in 2001 and the agreement signed there, which set the vector for the institutionalization of human rights norms and institutions in Afghanistan.
- The establishment in 2002 of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, whose main function was to promote awareness among the population regarding women's rights and to counter domestic violence.
- The creation in 2002 of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), whose main functions are conflict resolution on the ground, disarmament, and involvement of actors at all levels in state building.
- The 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan, which equalized the rights of women and men.
- The holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

- The Bonn Conference, or "Bonn+10" in 2011, which was held on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Bonn Conference and aimed to summarize the main achievements of the new Afghan government (Piotrowski, 2011).

- The 2012 Strategic Partnership Agreement between the US and Afghanistan.

- The formation of the National Unity Government in 2014.

- Participation in international and regional initiatives, forums, and organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

- The creation of local and international initiative groups and holding of conferences focusing on post-Taliban Afghanistan, such as the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA), the "Regional Working Group" in 2011, and the "International Contact Group".

- The 2020 Doha Agreement between the US and Afghanistan

Unfortunately, the scope of this work does not allow for a comprehensive list of all the key stages of Afghanistan's nation-building and development.

CHAPTER 3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USA FOREIGN AID RELATIONS WITH IRAQ, ISRAEL, AND AFGHANISTAN

3.1 Positioning of the USA foreign aid relations with Iraq, Israel and Afghanistan.

The nature of foreign aid relations between the United States and Middle Eastern nations is impacted by several factors, including political situation and geography, the stability of the region, efforts to combat terrorism, peacemaking and nation-building initiatives and others.

Since the end of the World War II, the Middle Eastern states together with North African have received about 351 billion of US dollars in foreign aid from the United States of America. Through the following years the region of Middle East received the highest portion of region specific assistance compared to other regions (Sharp, Humud & Collins, 2021). The significant amount of the assistance is allocated in Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan (Sharp, Humud & Collins, 2021).

The United States' foreign policy strategy in Afghanistan, Israel and Iraq has been driven by its desire to expand its power and influence in the Middle East. This approach is consistent with the idea of Western democracy and liberalism. However, realists and post (neo)colonialists argue that the primary goal of such a policy is the expansion of power through all available means, including international aid. Various documents, such as National Security Strategies, State Department's Transformational Diplomacy Initiative, Quadrennial Defense Reviews, and USAID Fragile States Strategies, provide evidence for this foreign policy strategy (Keane, 2016). Therefore, this chapter will conduct discourse analysis together with qualitative document analysis of the mentioned documents in order to discover dominant narratives of the US foreign aid in the Middle East and compare rhetoric and policy of the US foreign aid relations with Israel, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, or The Bush Doctrine

“9/11 changed everything” – this phrase and the synonymous expressions are reiterated multiple times in the text. Furthermore, they are also repeated in official speeches, statements, and documents of the 41st President of the United States, George Bush's administration. For instance, Vice President Cheney used the same expression in his well-known post-9/11 interview (2003). It is important to commence precisely with "9/11 changed everything" as it serves as the starting point for a significantly broader discourse primarily related to U.S. policies regarding Middle East and foreign aid. It also outlines America's strategic goals and post-9/11 plans on the international stage.

Why, then, did the "9/11 events change everything"? Firstly, the existence of the so-called Bush Doctrine directly responded to the nation's September attacks. Secondly, 9/11 instigated chaos and fear within American society and the international community, which provided fertile ground for implementing radical changes in the political structure of the United States, an opportunity seized by the administration of the president Bush. In other words, the events of 9/11 did indeed change everything, and these changes are evident in the rhetoric, as observed particularly in the 2002 Strategy:

“The events of September 11, 2001, fundamentally changed the context for relations between the United States and other main centers of global power, and opened vast, new opportunities” (The White House, 2002).

The prominent emphasis on "changes" and the consequential positive connotation of "opening new possibilities" primarily for the United States. Understood within the context of this analysis, new possibilities encompass a range of factors. These include the potential utilization of armed intervention as a preventive instrument against hostile countries and other actors. Furthermore, another significant aspect of these new possibilities is the dissemination of ideological influence and the promotion of the American way of life and values beyond the borders of the United States. By employing a critical discourse analysis approach, this research aims to unravel the underlying

ideological foundations and power dynamics inherent in the discourse surrounding the perceived transformative impact of the events discussed:

“We will also wage a war of ideas to win the battle against international terrorism.” (The White House, 2002).

The text employs direct and explicit references, using terms such as "terrorists," "tyrants," and "enemies of civilization," to address countries in the Middle East. Furthermore, the focus shifts towards portraying Afghanistan as a fragile or even dysfunctional state, establishing a direct link between its condition and the national interests of the United States. This discourse construct reflects a deliberate framing strategy that serves to shape perceptions and justify specific actions in the region. By analyzing these linguistic choices and their implications, this study aims to expose the discursive mechanisms employed to influence public opinion and advance geopolitical objectives in the Middle East.

“The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states” (The White House, 2002).

The narratives of foreign assistance permeate the entire text, with nearly two sections of the strategy dedicated to them. The terms "aid" and "support" are used interchangeably to denote foreign assistance. However, the term "support" is more frequently employed than "aid" throughout the text. Considering this linguistic choice alongside the overall message and tone of the text, the emphasis on support rather than comprehensive aid implies a narrative promoted by the United States that it will not provide all-encompassing assistance that deeply impacts all aspects of life. Another significant implicit message conveyed is that such "support" will come at a cost and will demand loyalty from recipients, both ideologically and politically. By conducting a discourse analysis, this research aims to uncover the underlying motives and power dynamics embedded within the discourse of foreign assistance, shedding light on the

expectations and implications associated with the United States' narrative of support in international contexts.

“America will help nations that need our assistance in combating terror. And America will hold to account nations that are compromised by terror, including those who harbor terrorists — because the allies of terror are the enemies of civilization” (The White House, 2002).

“Where governments have implemented real policy changes, we will provide significant new levels of assistance” (The White House, 2002).

Scholars, including Daalder and Lindsey, argue that Bush and his administration revolutionized U.S. foreign policy with their doctrine (2005). According to them, the primary goal of the 2002 strategy was to change the status quo of the international system by seeking so-called "transformative actors" on the international stage (Daalder & Lindsay, 2005). Bush's national strategy consistently emphasizes the narratives of the importance of the War on Terrorism and the legitimization of a foreign policy that is fundamentally based on projecting American military power and strength (Keane, 2016).

Unfortunately, when examining U.S. policy in Afghanistan, Iraq and other Middle East states researchers conclude that America failed to understand the complexities of the each concrete situation and was unable to effectively implement its rhetoric into concrete actions (Girardet, 2011). In addition to the immediate setbacks resulting from these political miscalculations had long-term negative consequences for both the United States and the Middle East region. Some researchers even consider the Bush doctrine and its unsuccessful implementation as one of the contributing factors to the collapse of any attempts by the U.S. to build a "new" peaceful and stable Middle East nowadays. Through a discourse analysis, this study aims to critically examine the Bush administration's foreign policy doctrine and its implications for the U.S.'s engagement in the Middle East, shedding light on the inherent challenges and shortcomings in understanding and implementing effective strategies in complex conflict situations.

It is not surprising that the era of Bush's presidency, particularly after the events of 9/11, is considered the apex of imperialism and post-(neo)colonial tendencies in U.S.

foreign policy, with the Bush doctrine serving as a manifesto of this new imperialism and colonialism (Tremblay, 2004). Through an analysis of historical and theoretical perspectives, this study aims to examine the implications of the Bush administration's policies within the framework of imperialism and post-colonialism, shedding light on the underlying power dynamics, geopolitical interests, and discourses that shaped U.S. foreign policy during this period.

State Department's Transformational Diplomacy Initiative

Transformational Diplomacy refers to a diplomatic initiative led by Condoleezza Rice, the former Secretary of State of the US. This section will examine the proposal put forward by Rice in her speech at Georgetown University on January 18, 2006, where she outlines her vision for restructuring American foreign policy, referred to as "Transformational Diplomacy." Rice's initiative corresponds and further deepens Bush's Doctrine, her "Transformational Diplomacy" can be basically addressed as one of the pillars of the US foreign policy and foreign aid policy especially of the Bush era. Condoleezza herself praises President Bush and his new approach to American security and foreign policy. These rhetoric can be easily detected throughout her speech:

“President Bush laid out a vision that now leads America into the world” (Rice, 2006)

“President Bush has outlined the historic calling of our time” (Rice, 2006)

Price uses such words as “America” and “lead” multiple times through the entire speech. The States in her discourse come as a real hero that this world needs, an entity that encompasses in itself more values and potential than any other nation-state. The US are the only ones who can change this world:

“To achieve this bold mission, America needs equally bold diplomacy, a diplomacy that not only reports about the world as it is, but seeks to change the world itself” (Rice, 2006).

“We must begin to lay the diplomatic foundations to secure a future of freedom for all people” (Rice, 2006).

Moreover, together with the world leader meaning America gets another – “an exemple of proper diversity” and practically the force that is even able to decide where is the right and wrong side of world politics:

“We on the right side of freedom's divide have a responsibility to help all people who find themselves on the wrong side of that divide”(Rice, 2006).

“America stands as a tremendous example of what can happen with people of diverse backgrounds, ethnic groups, religions “(Rice, 2006).

In her “Transformational diplomacy” Rice sets the scene for the new world order that was inspired by Bush and his War on Terror. In her speech one can trace apart from the role of the USA as the one and only world leader in all and every aspect, that she endangers the whole concept of sovereignty of state in relation to weaker and poorer states such as those of the Middle East region for example:

“Since its creation more than 350 years ago, the modern state system has rested on the concept of sovereignty. It was always assumed that every state could control and direct the threats emerging from its territory...However, these old assumptions no longer hold” (Rice, 2006).

Another pillar of the new world order that Rice lays before us in her speech is the role of the military in foreign policy and diplomatic initiatives. Throughout the text she underlines with exact same phrases that military campaigns are just as important as diplomatic means and that literally diplomacy should walk arm in arm with military:

“So to advance transformational diplomacy we are empowering our diplomats to work more jointly with our men and women in uniform.”(Rice, 2006)

“Working together not only to take the fight to the enemy but also to combat the ideology of hatred” (Rice, 2006).

The Middle East states and other developing countries that were once called the “Third World” are regarded by Rice using expressions such as a “failed state” or a

“violent state”, also “enemy” and “tyranny” further building and deepening the narrative of so called good us versus so called evil them. Actually, the meaning behind so called them is blurry just like the borders of such “enemy” states. The others are mortal enemies of America, but who are they, not Rice neither Bush and his administration can give the valid answer to this question:

“Our Reconstruction and Stabilization Office must be able to help a failed state to exercise responsible sovereignty and to prevent its territory from becoming a source of global instability, as Afghanistan was in 2001” (Rice, 2006).

USAID Fragile States Strategy

The Fragile States Strategy not only provides generalized explanations and situational descriptions but also outlines concrete steps to be taken. It encompasses a strategic element that shifts the policy's primary focus from establishing stability and asserting American power to ensuring security and prosperity. The narratives of aggression and military dominance by the United States recede into the background. However, it is widely acknowledged among researchers that the practical implementation of the declared objectives falls short of expectations (Jenkins, 2017).

The strategy introduces the concept of “fragile states”. The growing discussion surrounding this concept has influenced the spread of a fresh approach to foreign policy, which intertwines security and development. Kofi Annan's reinterpretation of security risks post-9/11 highlights the consequences of framing fragile states as a matter of security. (Barakat & Larson, 2014).

“Fragile states” are reinforced to be the most important security threat for the USA:

“There is perhaps no more urgent matter facing USAID than fragile states” (USAID, 2005)

“Stabilization and development of fragile states—a central component of our national security strategy.” (USAID, 2005)

This strategy highlights the importance of responsible governance, sustainable development, and long-term perspectives. It avoids manipulative techniques such as creating contrasts between "us" and "them," or distinguishing between "friends" and "enemies." Instead, the focus is on promoting development rather than merely providing assistance, as observed in the Bush strategy. The term "change" plays a significant role in this strategy and in the broader discourse of the U.S. government, typically conveying positive connotations associated with democratization and liberalization of regimes previously characterized as authoritarian or undemocratic from an American standpoint:

“The September 11 events prompted a reassessment of the role of development which, along with diplomacy and defense, is now recognized as a core U.S. national security objective” (USAID, 2005)

The existing understandings and frameworks of fragile states in conflict-affected areas can be exploited by international donor governments for purposes beyond reconstruction and state-building. Firstly, although lacking a clear definition, donors use the concept of fragile states to simplify and generalize the analysis of complex historical-political backgrounds like Afghanistan. Secondly, current models of fragile statehood fail to consider local contexts and do not pay the necessary attention to the role of international intervention in sustaining fragility. This is especially evident in Afghanistan, Iraq and other Middle Eastern nations, where the stabilization efforts were reinforced by the military and the evaluation of “fragility” did not include it which resulted in even more instability and insecurity (Barakat & Larson, 2014).

“The decision to engage will be based upon a country’s importance to U.S. foreign policy” (USAID, 2005).

The US government, due to a new strategy, increased foreign assistance to Middle Eastern countries and achieved some military successes. However, the strategy did not bring about the significant changes it had promised. Presidents during the War on Terror, namely Bush, Obama, and Trump, pursued a policy based on the belief that transitioning to democracy and a market economy would stabilize the Middle East. However, as the

implementation of this "transition policy" progressed, internal contradictions within the policy emerged. It became evident that economic liberalization exacerbated social inequality rather than contributing to peace and democracy (McClintock, 1992).

3.2 Comparative Analysis of the three cases

This paper will conduct the comparative analysis in order to discover common and different manifestations of neocolonialism in foreign aid relations between the USA and Iraq, the USA and Israel, the USA and Afghanistan. The criteria taken for conducting this comparative analysis are following: military intervention and continued presence of the American contingent in the state that is a recipient of American aid; overall amount of aid during 2001 and 2021 years of the War on Terror era; aid distribution among its various purposes and by sectors; economic, political and other types of involvement in both domestic and foreign policies of the recipient-state.

Table 1

Different types of aid provided by the USA to Iraq, Israel and Afghanistan

Criteria for analysis	Middle East State		
	Iraq	Israel	Afghanistan
Economic and military aid (%)	100% economic aid, 0% military aid.	88% military aid, 12% economic aid.	80% military aid, 20% economic aid.
Military involvement	Military intervention and war of 2003, installation of military bases, installation of American military bases and	- Prioritized access to American defense technology in the region. In situations where both Israel and another Arab nation utilize the same U.S. military equipment,	Military intervention, war in Afghanistan since 2001 and continued presence of the American

Source: Adopted from the data from ForeignAssistance.gov (n.d., "By country" section).

Continuation of the Table 1

Criteria for analysis	Middle East State		
	Iraq	Israel	Afghanistan
Military involvement		<p>Israel has been given precedence in receiving either a more advanced iteration of the equipment or the flexibility to tailor the U.S. system to specific requirements (Israel Policy Forum, 2016). Another instance that exemplifies this situation is when the United States sells weapons to Middle Eastern countries, they simultaneously provide Israel with similar weaponry, but of a more advanced nature (Kerr, 2022).</p> <p>- There were no American military intervention in Israel, however, the States conducted training of their police officers in Israel. This convergence</p>	contingent in Afghanistan.

Source: Adopted from the data from ForeignAssistance.gov (n.d., “By country” section).

Continuation of the Table 1

Criteria for analysis	Middle East State		
	Iraq	Israel	Afghanistan
Military involvement		creates a nexus between U.S.-Israeli prejudices against Arabs and Muslims, which justifies actions taken in the War on Terror and Israel's colonization of Palestine, and U.S. racism, which provides a basis for domestic police brutality. Training programs conducted in Israel claim to equip U.S. law enforcement professionals with the skills to safeguard the United States against perceived "criminal" and "terrorist" threats.	
Economic, political, and other involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploitation of the Iraq's oil resources (Cobban, 2003). - Influencing Iraq's decision-making processes, fostering aid-dependency, 	The USA have initiated various initiatives aimed at promoting industrial and scientific research within Israel. They have also allocated funds with the objective of ensuring	- The significant dependency on foreign assistance resulted in an imbalance of power, with the donors of that aid

Source: Adopted from the data from ForeignAssistance.gov (n.d., "By country" section).

Continuation of the Table 1

Criteria for analysis	Middle East State		
	Iraq	Israel	Afghanistan
Economic, political, and other involvement	exercising control over violent means (Kathem, 2020).	<p>that Israel maintains its scientific superiority, which in turn contributes to its military advantage in the region.</p> <p>*The military assistance provided by the United States to Israel is intended to ensure that Israel maintains a technological advantage over its neighboring militaries. However, some argue that this objective reflects neocolonial tendencies. The justification for this support is based on the belief that Israel, due to its smaller size in land area and population compared to its adversaries, needs superior weaponry and training. This perspective</p>	<p>wielding a disproportionate amount of influence compared to local actors. (Suhrke, 2012:489).</p> <p>- US aid came together with conditions and preconditions that turned out to influence Afghanistan's domestic and foreign policies, ways of life at the same time hijacking its sovereignty and legitimacy of the new government.</p>

Source: Adopted from the data from ForeignAssistance.gov (n.d., "By country" section).

Continuation of the Table 1

Criteria for analysis	Middle East State		
	Iraq	Israel	Afghanistan
Economic, political, and other involvement		can contribute to perceiving everyone in the region as potential enemies, thereby shaping the discourse on security.	
Aid by sector	The sectors that received the greatest amounts of aid were the governance, humanitarian and during the invasion of 2003 and war – infrastructure.	The sectors that received the greatest amounts of aid were the governance, namely the conflict, peace and security, and also economic sectors.	The sectors that received the greatest amounts of aid were the governance, humanitarian and civilian sectors and conflict, peace, and security sectors.
Overall amount of aid allocated	11.5 billion dollars * whereas almost half of this sum was provided to Iraq in 2003 and 2004 – years of the Iraq invasion.	158 billion dollars in assistance and missile defense funding. *The highest amount of aid from the U.S. was received in 2003 (years of the war in Iraq).	201 billion dollars in assistance. *More than half of this sum was allocated for security and military purposes.

Source: Adopted from the data from ForeignAssistance.gov (n.d., “By country” section).

The examination of the U.S. Foreign Aid in conjunction with historical events serves as evidence of the extent to which the United States employs its aid to safeguard

its own national interests rather than genuinely assisting the nations in need. This comparative analysis shows how the American government utilized foreign aid as a tool for neocolonialisation.

Every year since the commencement of the post-9/11 War on Terror the USA has allocated funds for international aid to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Israel. While international assistance programs are generally perceived as providing urgent humanitarian relief or promoting economic development, it is seen from the analysis that a significant portion of the allocated funds is directed towards military or security purposes, only Iraq received purely economic assistance from the USA. In fact, a substantial majority of the international assistance expenditure associated with Afghanistan and Israel is allocated for defense spending, surpassing the comparatively smaller amounts dedicated to non-military aid initiatives (ForeignAssistance.gov, “Dashboard” section).

All three states received substantial amounts of assistance, while Afghanistan is a doubtless leader with more than 200 billion dollars of assistance. There was observed a pattern of certain rises and falls in aid from the U.S. For instance, during the 2003 and 2004 all three states received more aid than ever before or after because due to the war in Iraq the region was very unstable. So the States allocated funds to Iraq and Afghanistan to stabilize the political, economic and humanitarian situations whereas the biggest amount of assistance came to Israel in form of military aid just in case the U.S. needed it to interfere.

The same pattern can be seen when the U.S. did not provide Iraq with any military aid while more than 80% of assistance to Israel and Afghanistan was military as providing Iraq with any military assistance would endanger the power of the States and its military might. While Iraq and Afghanistan endured military and other types of intervention into their lives, Israel did not, but the US became present there in another way. Invasion can be an aspect of the increasing militarization of U.S. law enforcement but also it can involve the training of American police officers and that what happened in Israel.

The declared aim of the US assistance to Iraq during the War on Terror was to stabilize the state and to foster prosperity of its citizens (USAID, 2023). The goals which America outlined before the aid to Iraq were focused on building civil society, fostering

democracy, strengthening the transparent government (USAID, 2023). From the economic standpoint the States' goals were achieving long-term economic growth, improving the investment climate and developing strong private sector (USAID, 2023). However, the declared aims and goals happened to be not very consistent with those realized in practice of the foreign aid relations between the USA and Iraq. In fact, Helena Cobban and other scholars say that the foreign assistance plans and perspectives laid out by the States for Iraq meet the fundamental requirements of colonial occupation as outlined in international law, including the annexation of territory, governance by foreign individuals, and the exploitation of natural resources (2003).

The same inconsistencies happened with the declared and aims perceived in practice of the U.S. in Afghanistan and Israel. The declared aims of the American assistance to Afghanistan are preventing it from becoming a safe haven for terrorists, enhancing Afghanistan's stability and economic development, building civil society and covering humanitarian needs (The White House, 2021). The US government pointed out women's empowerment into a separate aim too. Whereas the aims pursued in practice were extension of the influence of the United States through institutions, culture, and other means. Foreign aid functioned as a tool to exert influence and perpetuate dependency of the recipient country on the donor country. And the declared aims of the American foreign assistance to Israel were increasing stability in the region, fostering economic development and safeguarding Israel's security. However, the aims pursued in practice were securing the American hegemony in the Middle East, securing their access to the oil resources in the region and creating a strong pawn-ally so it would be easier to control the situation in the Middle East and pacify adversaries.

To illustrate Cobban's argument, this paper dwells on an example when the declared aims went separate ways with the actual policy of the USA in Iraq. The 2003-2011 Local Governance Project was one of the most funded projects in the history of the USAID was presented as a powerful international peacebuilding initiative, but in fact it advanced the security objectives of the occupation. That proves the point that the context of American neocolonial interests aimed at establishing a dependent state from Iraq. A

key aspect of the US occupation's strategy to shape Iraq's political trajectory involved exerting influence over power structures at the local level (Kathem, 2020).

Also, another illustrative site of the American “neocolonization” of Iraq can be the amount and the state of American detention centers for Iraqi people. Taking into account Foucault's (1977) concept that prisons serve as sites for the exercise of modern power. Those prisons and extreme number of casualties and reported brutalities are the places where neocolonial power directly intersects with the local population, creating the role of those with and without power, creating meanings of this power and integrating them into social practices (Welch, 2010). Therefore, the theoretical foundations of neocolonialism are built and rebuilt through the discourse and power dynamics that have shaped the aid efforts in Iraq (Welch, 2008).

One of the American crucial interests in the Middle East were oil resources and the States pursued it by various means in all three states. For example, in Iraq it can be seen in the allocation of profitable contracts to American corporations for the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure and the exertion of influence over Iraq's oil industry basically exploiting Iraq's resources.

Also, the USA together with their economic and humanitarian assistance promoted their own cultural values and way of life through media, enhancing consumerism, which can be interpreted as a case of cultural hegemony. This cultural impact, combined with the political and economic dominance exercised by the United States, has been perceived as fostering a neocolonial dynamic in which in all three cases the recipient-state becomes progressively reliant on and shaped by American values and power standards.

In response to various circumstances, the United States has adopted different approaches to address threats from the Third World. These include extending military support and assistance to overthrow populist or radical nationalist regimes, imposing economic sanctions and waging wars against those regimes, as well as providing military aid to Israel to counterbalance radical Arab nationalist states (Ahmad, Bengelsdorf, Cerullo & Chandrani, 2006).

All in all, great amounts of aid provided a cover that allowed the White House to pursue its national interests, primarily focused on augmenting the power and influence of

the United States in the Middle East, without encountering significant obstacles or scrutiny (Keane, 2016). And foreign assistance served as a convenient moral cover for U.S. actions and provided a democratic façade to their presence in the Middle East. Additionally, foreign support enabled the United States to exert control over Israel, Afghanistan and Iraq. According to Chesterman, this situation reflects his thesis that the nature of foreign aid, characterized by an excessive military, financial, and other forms of support, undermines the potential for an independent government to emerge and hinders the effective transfer of power from the donor to the recipient after aid discontinuation (2003).

The previously analyzed narratives of civil society building, development, stabilization and foreign assistance through examples of the U.S. security strategies during the War on Terror, Fragile States Strategy, Transformational diplomacy initiative, etc. indicate that the U.S. government, along with the international community, attempted to increase its influence in the Middle East, specifically in Israel, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Sedra, 2006). However, due to striking differences in political, social, economic contexts, and experiences between these countries and the U.S., it would have required much more time and effort for them to internalize Western values and develop a culture of democracy. Nonetheless, artificially implanted values and lifestyle received desired support and legitimation only within Israel and had a counterproductive effect in Afghanistan and Iraq. Dependence on aid and Western countries, along with the pressure resulting from this dependence, undermined their primary goals (Werbner, 2008). Constant interference and pressure from the U.S. and its partners, coupled with a lack of understanding of the Afghan and Iraqi context, created even greater distrust toward everything imposed from the outside, primarily directed at the new pro-American government and parliament (Wilkins, 2017).

The processes that were set into motion because of the American aid in Afghanistan, Israel, and Iraq have led to the establishment of states that prioritize the interests of a donor-state over their own national interests. According to neocolonial theory of international relations, the United States had little incentive to build independent and strong states in Afghanistan and Iraq, as their primary objective was to extend their

power and influence in the Middle East, access new markets, and control oil resources. Conversely, in the case of Israel, it was more advantageous for the United States to support the development of a robust economic and military state capable of countering the perceived Arab threat in the region. The promotion of democracy and liberal values served as a justification both for the international community and the American public. The mission of liberalization and foreign aid, as part of this process, aimed to legitimize the power of the partners, particularly the United States, in the eyes of both the international community and the local populations in the region.

CONCLUSION

The research circulated around its main research questions: “*How neocolonialism is manifested in foreign aid relations between the USA and the Middle East states, namely Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan, and what are the common and distinctive traits of these manifestations in the three cases?*” Being driven by this question, this thesis researched issues related to the neocolonial features of the American foreign aid policies in the Middle East. This paper discovered such manifestations of neocolonialism in foreign aid relations as military intervention and continued presence of the American contingent in the analysed states, exploiting natural and other types of resources of the recipient-state, imposing values and norms by donor-state, influencing decision-making both domestic and international in recipient-states while using aid as leverage, creating aid-dependency in recipient-states, etc. Furthermore, the research found commonalities among all three cases and those are the following. To begin with, in all three cases have been detected the aid-dependency promotion and development. The USA provided excessive amounts of different kinds of aid to Iraq, Israel and Afghanistan which in the long-term perspective hijacked the internal legitimacy of the local governments and autonomous decision-making. Also, in all three cases the recipient-states had to face conditions together with assistance itself and those conditions gave the donor-state an ability to influence foreign and domestic policies in Iraq, Israel and Afghanistan. The cases of Iraq and Afghanistan share the most similarities as these states both experienced military interventions and continued presence of the American military contingent on their territory. Also, both states suffered from oil resources exploitation and cultural subjugation from the States. The case of Israel is more distinct from the other two cases due to the difference in contexts – as Israel is a non-arab state and consequently, it did not experience bias and anti-arab racism from the States. Also, during the 2001-2021 Israel was already not a fragile state, so it relied on the American military aid mostly. Israel was used by the USA as Afghanistan and Iraq in order to fulfill its national interests in the region but not as a pawn but as a so called pawn-ally. The States used aid to make Israel its ally, strong

enough to protect the interests of the USA in the region and become a continuation of its power globally.

This research paper is making a contribution to the scholarly field of international relations and foreign policy analysis with its efforts to further conceptualize foreign aid and add to the development of neocolonialist theory. However, this study as any other research has a series of limitations that could have influenced the results and the conclusions driven from it. Due to constraints in time and resources, this paper was not able to access primary data from the people who are the stakeholders on both sides of the analysed cases of the foreign aid relations. Finally, the theoretical analysis had a limited scope because of the lack of relevant previous research regarding the topics of both foreign aid conceptualization and neocolonialism. That is why the concept of foreign aid should be studied more, as well as more attention ought to be paid to neocolonialism both a theory of international relations and as a power practice. This paper opens further discussion on other cases of neocolonialism and the concept of foreign aid in the modern foreign policy analysis and practice.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Кваліфікаційної роботи

Тема: Concept of the USA foreign aid relations: comparative analysis of Iraq, Israel, and Afghanistan cases through the neocolonialist paradigm

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Короткий зміст роботи:

Бакалаврська робота присвячена дослідженню та порівняльному аналізу трьох кейсів відносин іноземної допомоги між США та країнами Близького Сходу: Ізраїлем, Іраком та Афганістаном у період із 2001 до 2021 років. Ця робота проаналізувала низку стратегічних урядових документів та даних публічно-правового характеру, а також політично-історичний розвиток відносин іноземної допомоги між Ізраїлем, Іраком, Афганістаном та США та виявила такі прояви неокolonіалізму в них, як: військова інтервенція та тривала військова присутність, експлуатація природних ресурсів, розвиток залежності від допомоги, нав'язування культурних норм і практик, підривання суверенітету тощо. Робота застосувала неокolonіальну теорію міжнародних відносин та компаративний кейс-стаді аналіз для порівняння спільних і відмінних рис проявів неокolonіалізму між трьома кейсами відносин іноземної допомоги. На розвиток відносин іноземної допомоги між США та Ізраїлем, Іраком та Афганістаном впливали різні економічні, політичні, культурні та соціальні чинники, у цьому основні відмінності між кейсами цих відносин. Спільними ж рисами виявлено створення відносин

залежності від допомоги, використання допомоги як важіль впливу на внутрішню та зовнішню політику в державах-реципієнтах, експлуатацію природних ресурсів та використання військової сили для ствердження своєї влади (кейси Іраку та Афганістану). Крім того робота застосувала метод дискурс-аналізу та з'ясувала, що основні наративи відносин іноземної допомоги на Близькому Сході американських державних акторів мають неоколоніальний характер у дискурсі Війни проти тероризму.

Ключові слова: іноземна допомога, неоколоніалізм, національна безпека, національні інтереси, наратив, відносини іноземної допомоги, Війна проти тероризму.

Short summary:

This thesis is dedicated to the research and comparative analysis of three cases of foreign aid relations between the United States and Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan during the years of 2001 to 2021. This work analyzed a range of strategic government documents and publicly available data, as well as the political-historical development of foreign aid relations between Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the United States and identified the following manifestations of neocolonialism in these cases: military intervention and long-term military presence, exploitation of natural resources, aid-dependency development, imposition of cultural norms and practices, undermining of sovereignty, etc. The thesis applied the neocolonial theory of international relations and a comparative case study analysis to compare the common and distinctive features of neocolonialism manifestations in the three cases of foreign aid relations. The development of foreign aid relations between the United States and Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan was influenced by various economic, political, cultural, and social factors, highlighting the main differences between the cases. Common characteristics were identified and those are creating dependency on aid, using aid as leverage to influence domestic and foreign policies in

recipient countries, exploiting natural resources, and using military force to assert power (in the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan). Additionally, the thesis employed discourse analysis and revealed that the main narratives of foreign aid relations in the Middle East by American state actors are of a neocolonial character within the War on Terrorism discourse.

Keywords: foreign aid, neocolonialism, national security, national interests, narrative, foreign aid relations, War on terror.