Military Response To 9/11 Attacks and Gaza Conflict; A Comparative Study

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The event of 9/11 led America to launch a global war on terror. Particularly, America started military intervention in Afghanistan intending to destroy militant extremist organizations and to upgrade the country's security. Likewise, in the light of Hamas assaults, Israel has utilized a mix of military operations, targeted killings, and safety measures to safeguard its nationals and to stop assault escalation. The attacks on America by the Taliban and Israel by Hamas have questioned the security and hegemony of the West. Therefore, this paper tries to investigate the sequence and methods of Hamas's onslaught on Israel and its relationship with the American 9/11 attack, while comparing the counter-war strategies utilized by both nations. To compare and analyze the several aspects of the assaults, this research has adopted a comparative research methodology. The findings of the study suggest that, owing to adopting a force-centric approach, both states, Israel and the US, have failed to eliminate extremism and maintain regional peace. They have put forward a genocide scheme that has created a blowback situation in the West, and people are protesting at the global level against their policies. It has a ripple effect leading to an increase in anti-West sentiments, protests, violence, and militancy.

1. Introduction

The 9/11 assault was carried out by the radical groups, specifically Al-Qaeda. This attack proved as a vital turning point in the current history of international relations. It resulted in the deaths of almost 3000 people and severely damaged the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in America. Four historical commercial airplanes were utilised as weapons to target the American symbols of economy and military. The effect of this attack was not only felt on American soil, but it had ramifications worldwide. It featured the threat of growing extremism and the weakness of Western countries to vulnerability to such assaults. In Comparison, the October 2023 attack on Israel was executed by the Palestinian militant organization, Hamas. This conflict has been ongoing for decades.

The strategies used by Hamas against Israel involve rocket launches and suicide bombings to reclaim a Palestinian Islamic state by challenging the Israeli security. However, these attacks have resulted in various casualties and created fear for Israeli residents. Therefore, their tactics are largely condemned by the international community as acts of violence. Both of these attacks, coordinated by Islamic militant groups, posed a significant threat to the power of the Western community. To respond to these attacks, both the states, America and Israel, adopted different counter-war strategies. The United States of America took the initiative of global counter-war strategy, which includes a mix of methodologies ranging from military interventions, drone strikes, and investing in infrastructure development to building the Afghan nation. Israel has opted for a combination of military operations, targeted assassinations, and other security measures to prevent additional attacks and safeguard its citizens. Despite the efforts, both Western nations have failed to eliminate the cause of extremism. Indeed, their suppressive approaches have added to more risk of anti-Western opinion and resilience, leading to the occurrence of blow-back (Malkasian, 2021; Cordesman, 2021; The Atlantic; The Guardian, 2023; Lanau, 2011).

The scale and effect of the 9/11 assault and the Hamas assault on Israel might vary, but both have had extensive implications for global security and have featured the requirement for a reasonable and sustainable strategy to handle the militancy. The use of military force can only provide short-term relief. Western powers must address the issues of marginalised communities and advance inclusivity and equality. Therefore, the chief aim of this study is to evaluate the short and long-term consequences of the American war in Afghanistan and the Israel-Hamas conflict from different perspectives.

1.1 Research Questions

RQ1: Why has America failed to counter the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan?

RQ2: What lessons can Israel learn from this failure of the US counter-war strategy in the context of the Hamas attack on Gaza?

1.2 Research Objectives

- To assess the short-term and long-term US counter-war strategies in Afghanistan and its impact
- To evaluate the successes and failures of Israel's counter-war strategies in Gaza

- To suggest to Israel ways to avoid a future resurgence of Hamas, while considering the Taliban resurgence as an example

2. Literature Review

A literature review provides an overview of existing literature, such as scholarly papers, books, or articles relevant to a topic. In the context of this research paper, the researcher has used a thematic literature review. She has identified two themes to compare the American counterinsurgency against the Taliban after 9/11 and the Israeli counterinsurgency against Hamas. The themes are as follows:

A: US counter terrorism efforts and their impact

B: US withdrawal from Afghanistan and implications for Israel

2.1 US counter terrorism efforts and their impact

Articles by Rubin (2012), Kolenda (2013), Malkasian (2018), and Malkasian (2021) are of the view that US strategies were successful while dismantling Al-Qaeda and Taliban during its operations in Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11. It includes preventing large-scale attacks and weakening the capacities of Jihadist groups. Some, Rubin (1995), Warren (2011), and Jones (2021) recognise the limitations of American force-centric methodologies. However, they acknowledge the effective US nation-building efforts to create a stable democratic Afghan government as a tool to address the root causes of extremist growth. Furthermore, it developed and improved the health education and infrastructure system for the people of Afghanistan. Authors like Ucko (2011), Chayes (2019), Tellis (2021), and Cordesman (2021) opinionated that America's long-term commitment was impractical and unsuitable. The objectives were less than the financial and human cost it bears.

Articles by Tankel (2021), O'Hanlon (2021), and Nasr (2021) argue that the US has failed in its objective to combat the militant groups. The US actions, particularly drone attacks and target killings, resulted in a larger number of human casualties. It led to the spread of anti-American sentiment and resentment among the local public in Afghanistan.

2.2 US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Implications for Israel:

Cordesman (2006), D'Souza (2015), Malkasian (2014), Jones (2021), Zimmerman (2021), Felbab Brown (2021), Giustozzi (2010), and Cordesman (2019) contend that US military operation strategy in Afghanistan has failed the American aim to develop a sustainable and democratic Afghanistan. Even though it resulted in the American withdrawal, while provided space and created a power vacuum for the Taliban than ever before. They are now able to provide safe havens to other extremist groups like Al-Qaeda. This situation raises questions regarding regional instability and the potential risk of further attacks on Western nations.

Jones (2009), Brown (2010), Tellis (2011), Zakaria (2011), Coyne (2011), and Osman (2021) consider the US withdrawal as a huge global strategic move from military intervention to investing in national and domestic requirements and power politics. Precisely, this shift has raised a debate focusing on how the US will handle the future security challenges at the global level.

Azani (2009), Landau (2011), Shmuel Even (2012), Campbell (2014), Freilich (2015), Amidror (2021), Yadlin (2021), Shay (2021), and Ganor (2021) suggest that Israel can learn many lessons from the US experience in Afghanistan. Particularly, it can examine the limitations of the use of force and the significance of fostering local legitimacy for governance. However, the Taliban takeover, the unexpected resurgence of Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups, is viewed as an alarming situation for Israel, given its historical experience of being targeted by these associations. This requires Israel to re-examine its counterterrorism measures and relocate its regional security associations while making adjustments in its foreign policy.

2.1 Research Hypotheses

H1: Military actions and interventions can lead to the emergence of more extremism and hostility.

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3. Research Methodology

This research employed a comparative analysis of counter-strategies used by America to dismantle the Taliban in Afghanistan and those used by Israel to demolish Hamas in Gaza. However, a comparative analysis was conducted by an extensive literature review on academic papers, reports, and journalistic accounts related to the 9/11 operation and Operation in Gaza on Hamas. For this purpose, key similarities and differences in the literature were identified.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is an analytical tool that provides a conceptual base to explain the phenomena being studied, draw connections, and make predictions in a research process. In the context of the present study, the researcher has utilized the theory of blowback.

3.2 The theory of Blowback

The hypothesis of blowback is an idea that was first presented by the Political Scientist Chalmers Johnson in the late twentieth century. It alludes to the unseen side effects of a foreign policy's activities that eventually bring about regrettable repercussions for that country. The term 'blowback' itself is a CIA expression that was initially used to portray the potential negative results of secret and undercover operations. Nonetheless, Johnson extended this idea to include the more extensive outcomes of a country's international strategic choices.

As per Johnson, blowback happens when a nation participates in activities that have transient advantages but have the potential of negative, unexpected results in the long run. This can occur in different ways, like through military mediations, undercover activities, or monetary strategies. The most important factor is that these actions are frequently taken without fully comprehending the situation's complexity or considering all of the possible outcomes (Johnson, n.d.).

One significant illustration of blowback is American investment in Afghanistan during the Cold War to counter the communist Soviet Union. The US upheld and equipped the Afghan mujahideen in their battle against the Soviet Red Army. It first appeared as a fruitful procedure,

but ultimately drew out fruitless results at last. With the support of the US, the powerful and well-armed mujahideen eventually developed into the Taliban and other extremist groups that continue to pose a threat to global security.

Another model of blowback is the US attack on Iraq in 2003. The US justified the attack by providing the false reason of the availability of weapons of mass destruction. Eventually, this proved infertile. It weakened the region and led to the rise of greater militant organizations like ISIS. Additionally, the US has experienced an expansion in anti-American feelings and fear of targeting its interests (Johnson, n.d.).

Johnson's hypothesis of blowback features the significance of grasping the complications regarding foreign policy actions while taking into account the long-term potential risks. It stresses the requirement for responsibility and transparency by the concerned nations while making decisions. Overlooking blowback can have serious results for nations at the national and global levels.

Moreover, the hypothesis of blowback highlights the interconnectedness of the world and how moves made in one part of the globe can have broad impacts somewhere else. In the present globalized world, it is critical for nations to painstakingly consider the likely blowback of their international strategy activities and to pursue tracking down manageable and commonly useful arrangements (Martha Crenshaw).

4. Discussion and Analysis

This section highlights the intense debate and discussion, and has drawn parallels between the October 2023 attack by Hamas and the 9/11 attack by the Taliban. The chronology of events leading up to the attack reveals striking similarities, raising questions about the motives, tactics used by both groups, and the results of counter-war strategies used by the concerned States in response.

4.1 The Strategies used by the Taliban or Al-Qaeda to threaten the US in 2001

In 2001, the United States faced one of the most devastating terrorist attacks in its history. The September 11 attacks, carried out by the terrorist groups Taliban and Al-Qaeda, left thousands dead and shook the entire nation. But what strategies did these groups use to threaten the US and carry out such a heinous act?

Firstly, both Taliban and Al-Qaeda employed a tactic of surprise and shock. The attacks were meticulously planned and carried out with precision, catching the US off guard and causing chaos and confusion. The hijackers used commercial airplanes as weapons, targeting iconic buildings such as the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. This element of surprise not only caused mass destruction and loss of lives but also instilled fear and uncertainty in the American people (Rubin, 1995).

Secondly, both groups utilized religious extremism as a tool to justify their actions and gain support from their followers. The Taliban, an extremist Islamic group, saw the US as a threat to their strict interpretation of Islam and saw the attacks as a way to defend their beliefs. Al-Qaeda, on the other hand, used their interpretation of jihad, or holy war, to justify the attacks as a retaliation for US military presence in the Middle East and its support of Israel. By framing

the attacks as a religious duty, these groups were able to recruit more members and gain support from other extremist groups (Cordesman, 2021).

Another strategy used by these groups was the recruitment and training of suicide bombers. Suicide attacks have a profound psychological impact, as they demonstrate the lengths to which these groups are willing to go to achieve their goals. By training individuals to sacrifice their own lives in the name of their cause, Taliban and Al-Qaeda were able to carry out deadly attacks that were difficult to prevent or defend against (Rubin 2012).

Moreover, both groups used propaganda and media as a means to spread their message and create fear in the US. Al-Qaeda, in particular, released videos and statements claiming responsibility for the attacks and threatening further attacks in the future. This not only instilled fear in the American people but also garnered attention from the international community, amplifying their message and gaining support from other extremist groups (Malkasian, 2021).

Additionally, the groups used their knowledge of US security measures to their advantage. The hijackers were able to exploit loopholes in airport security, allowing them to board the planes with weapons and carry out the attacks. This demonstrated a failure of the US security system and highlighted the vulnerability of the country (Jones, 2021).

4.2 The Strategies used by Hamas against Israel in the October 2023 attack

In October of 2023, Hamas launched a series of coordinated attacks against Israel, using a combination of military and political strategies. These attacks were aimed at weakening and destabilizing Israel, while simultaneously gaining support for Hamas and its cause.

One of the key strategies used by Hamas in this attack was the surprise element. Hamas had been planning these attacks for months but kept their plans secret until the last moment. This element of surprise caught Israel off guard and allowed Hamas to gain the upper hand in the initial stages of the attack.

Another important strategy used by Hamas was the use of guerrilla warfare tactics. Instead of engaging in confrontations with the Israeli military, Hamas fighters used hit-and-run tactics, ambushing Israeli troops, and then quickly retreating into civilian areas. This not only made it difficult for Israel to target Hamas fighters but also put innocent civilians in danger, creating a sense of chaos and fear.

In addition to military strategies, Hamas also employed a strong propaganda campaign to gain support for its cause. They used social media, as well as traditional media outlets, to spread their message and portray themselves as freedom fighters fighting against the oppressive Israeli occupation. This helped to garner sympathy and support from both the international community and the Palestinian people.

Furthermore, Hamas utilized its extensive network of tunnels to smuggle in weapons and supplies, enabling it to sustain its attacks against Israel. These tunnels also served as strategic hiding places for their fighters and allowed them to bypass Israeli checkpoints and surveillance.

One of the most effective strategies used by Hamas in this attack was the targeting of Israeli civilians. By launching rockets and missiles at civilian areas, Hamas not only caused

physical damage and casualties but also instilled fear and panic in the Israeli population. This tactic also put pressure on the Israeli government to respond and potentially make costly mistakes in their retaliation.

Hamas also took advantage of the political climate in the region, using the attack to exploit existing tensions and divisions between Israel and its Arab neighbors. They called for solidarity and support from other Arab countries, portraying themselves as the defenders of the Palestinian people and garnering political support and resources. In addition to these strategies, Hamas also made use of asymmetric warfare by utilizing unconventional weapons and tactics. This included the use of drones, cyber-attacks, and even chemical weapons, which caught Israel off guard and caused significant damage.

4.3 Similarities and Differences between the strategies used by the Taliban against the US in 2001 and the Hamas against Israel in the October 2023 Attack

Table No 1: The Taliban attack on the United States and the Hamas attack on Israel have some similarities and significant differences

Sr. No	Similarities	Differences
1.	Both the Taliban and Hamas are militant groups that have engaged in acts of violence against their perceived enemies.	The scale and scope of the attacks differ. The 9/11 attacks carried out by the Taliban were large-scale and targeted multiple locations in the United States, resulting in thousands of deaths. Hamas attacks on Israel have been more localized and have primarily targeted Israeli civilians and military personnel.
2.	Both attacks were carried out by non-state actors, meaning they are not official representatives of a government.	The geopolitics in both cases is unique and different. The Taliban attack on the US territory was the part of tussle between Taliban and US involvement in Afghanistan. On the other side, the Hamas assaults are the part of continuous Palestine-Israel dispute.
3.	Both attacks were motivated by political and ideological reasons. The Taliban attacked the United States in 2001 as a response to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, while Hamas has launched attacks on Israel in response to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.	The goals and objectives of the groups are different. The Taliban's primary objective was to remove foreign forces from Afghanistan and establish an Islamic state, while Hamas seeks to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and establish a Palestinian state.
4.	Both attacks resulted in significant loss of life and damage to infrastructure.	

Source: Made by Researcher

In 2001, the world witnessed a horrific attack by the Taliban on the United States, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians. In October 2023, a similar attack was carried out by Hamas on Israel, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. Despite the time gap between these two events, the strategies employed by the Taliban and Hamas share several similarities, while also showcasing some differences. One of the main similarities between the Taliban and Hamas in their attacks against the US and Israel, respectively, is their

use of guerrilla warfare tactics. Both groups relied on surprise attacks and hit-and-run tactics, catching their opponents off guard and inflicting maximum damage. The Taliban, known for their expertise in guerrilla warfare, used this strategy to their advantage in the 2001 attack on the US. Similarly, Hamas utilized the element of surprise in their 2023 attack on Israel, catching the Israeli military off guard and causing significant damage.

Another similarity between the two groups is their use of suicide bombings. The Taliban has a long history of using suicide bombers as a means of attack, and this tactic was used in the 2001 attack on the US. Hamas, on the other hand, has also employed suicide bombings as a key strategy in its attacks against Israel. This tactic not only causes physical damage but also instills fear and psychological trauma in the targeted population.

In terms of differences, one significant factor is the motivation behind the attacks. The Taliban's main motivation for their attack on the US was their opposition to American presence in Afghanistan and their desire to establish an Islamic state. On the other hand, Hamas's attack on Israel was fueled by their ongoing conflict and struggle for control over Palestinian territories. This difference in motivation highlights the distinct political and ideological agendas of the two groups. Additionally, while the Taliban's attack on the US was a one-time event, Hamas has engaged in multiple attacks against Israel over the years. This indicates a more prolonged and ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, as opposed to the isolated incident between the Taliban and the US. Furthermore, Hamas's attacks on Israel have also involved the use of rockets and other weaponry, while the Taliban relied primarily on ground attacks and bombings.

In terms of response from the targeted countries, the US and Israel both employed military tactics to combat these attacks. However, their approaches differed significantly. The US launched a large-scale military invasion in Afghanistan, aiming to dismantle the Taliban and remove their government from power. On the other hand, Israel has engaged in a series of retaliatory strikes against Hamas, often targeting specific individuals and locations believed to be linked to the group.

4.4 Counterinsurgency strategies used by the US to counter the Taliban in Afghanistan

The United States has been engaged in a long and complex war in Afghanistan since the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks. One of the primary objectives of this war has been to topple the Taliban, the oppressive and extremist group that had been ruling Afghanistan since the mid-1990s. To achieve this goal, the US has employed a variety of counter-strategies that have evolved and adapted over the years.

The first counter-strategy used by the US was a large-scale military intervention. In 2001, the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom, sending in ground troops and conducting airstrikes against Taliban strongholds. This initial strategy was successful in overthrowing the Taliban government and driving them out of major cities and towns. However, the Taliban quickly regrouped and began an insurgency, utilizing guerrilla tactics and hiding in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan (Tellis, 2021; Chayes, 2021).

In response, the US shifted its strategy to a counterinsurgency approach. This involved working with the Afghan government to build up their security forces, providing training and

resources to help them combat the Taliban. The US also implemented a strategy of winning hearts and minds by providing aid and development to Afghan communities, to gain their support and undermine the Taliban's influence.

Another key counter-strategy used by the US was targeted drone strikes. These strikes were used to take out high-level Taliban leaders and disrupt their operations. They also served as a psychological tool, instilling fear and uncertainty in the Taliban's leadership. In addition to these military tactics, the US also employed diplomatic efforts to weaken the Taliban. This included working with neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, to cut off the Taliban's supply routes and funding sources. The US also engaged in peace talks with the Taliban, attempting to negotiate a political settlement that would end the conflict.

One of the most important counter-strategies used by the US in the fight against the Taliban was the implementation of a surge of troops in 2009. This increase in troop levels allowed for a more widespread presence in Afghanistan, allowing for better security and stability in areas previously controlled by the Taliban (Rubin, 2008; Zakaria, 2011). The US also utilized intelligence gathering and sharing to track and disrupt the Taliban's operations. This included working with Afghan security forces and using advanced technology to gather information on the Taliban's movements and plans. Additionally, the US focused on building up the Afghan government's capacity to provide services and maintain security. This included training and equipping the Afghan police force and working to root out corruption within the government (Malkasian, 2021; Tankel, 2021; Nasr, 2021; O'Hanlon, 2021).

4.5 Counter-war strategies adopted by Israel to topple Hamas in Gaza

Israel has employed a variety of counter-strategies to weaken and ultimately topple Hamas, the militant group that controls the Gaza Strip. One of the main strategies used by Israel is targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders and operatives. This tactic aims to disrupt the group's chain of command and cripple their ability to carry out attacks against Israel. Israel has also imposed a blockade on the Gaza Strip, restricting the flow of goods and resources into the area. This has severely impacted the economy and quality of life for the people living under Hamas rule, leading to widespread dissatisfaction and potential unrest (Abu-Omar, 2021).

In addition to physical measures, Israel has also launched a propaganda campaign to discredit Hamas and paint it as a terrorist organization. This includes highlighting their use of violence and their disregard for civilian casualties, as well as their ties to other terrorist groups such as Hezbollah. By demonizing Hamas, Israel hopes to sway public opinion and garner support for their actions against the group.

Another key strategy used by Israel is targeted airstrikes on Hamas' infrastructure and weapons storage facilities. This not only weakens their military capabilities but also serves as a deterrent for future attacks. Israel also employs advanced technology, such as drones and surveillance systems, to gather intelligence on Hamas and anticipate their movements and plans. In addition to direct attacks, Israel has also implemented a strategy of isolating Hamas diplomatically. They have worked to cut off the group's international support and isolate them from other countries and organizations. This includes pressuring other nations to designate

Hamas as a terrorist organization and refusing to negotiate or engage in any diplomatic talks with them.

Furthermore, Israel has employed a divide and conquer approach by supporting rival Palestinian factions and encouraging internal conflict within Hamas. This strategy aims to weaken the group's unity and ability to effectively govern the Gaza Strip.

Lastly, Israel has also implemented a strategy of providing aid and assistance to the civilian population in Gaza, to win their hearts and minds and show them that Hamas is not acting in their best interest. This includes providing medical aid, food, and other resources to alleviate the suffering caused by the blockade and military attacks (NPR, 2023).

4.6 The similarities and differences between the counter-war strategies used by the US against the Taliban in Afghanistan after 9/11 and Israel against Hamas after the October 2023 Attack

After the devastating attacks of September 11th, 2001, the United States launched a military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan, while Israel faced a similar threat from Hamas after the October 2023 Attack. These two counter-war strategies share some similarities, such as the use of military force and targeted strikes against enemy leaders. However, there are also notable differences in their approach and overall objectives. One major similarity between the US and Israel's counter-war strategies is their use of military force. In both cases, the use of military power was a central component of their response to the attacks. The US launched a large-scale invasion of Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime and destroy their terrorist infrastructure. Similarly, Israel launched a military offensive against Hamas in Gaza to weaken their military capabilities and destroy their rocket launch sites. Both countries also utilized airstrikes and ground operations to target enemy positions and disrupt their operations.

Another similarity between the two strategies is the use of targeted strikes against enemy leaders. The US famously targeted Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in a covert operation that resulted in his death. Similarly, Israel has targeted several Hamas leaders in airstrikes and targeted killings. Both nations saw these targeted strikes as a way to weaken the enemy's leadership and disrupt their ability to carry out attacks. Additionally, both the US and Israel utilized intelligence gathering and surveillance to identify and target key leaders of their respective enemies.

However, there are also notable differences in the counter-war strategies used by the US and Israel. One key difference is the overall objective of their military campaigns. The US's primary objective in Afghanistan was to eliminate the threat of terrorism and bring stability to the region. In contrast, Israel's main objective in its conflict with Hamas is to protect its citizens from rocket attacks and maintain its security. This difference in objectives has also led to varying levels of international support for their actions.

Furthermore, the US and Israel have different approaches to dealing with civilian casualties. The US has faced criticism for the high number of civilian casualties resulting from airstrikes in Afghanistan. In contrast, Israel has implemented measures such as warning civilians before launching strikes and using precision-guided munitions to minimize civilian

casualties. However, both countries have faced criticism for their actions and have been accused of violating international laws of war.

4.7 Successes and Failures of US counterinsurgency strategies in Afghanistan

The United States has been involved in Afghanistan for over two decades, with the primary goal of toppling the Taliban regime and eliminating terrorist threats in the region. In pursuit of this objective, the US has implemented various counter-war strategies, some of which have been successful while others have faced significant challenges and failures. One of the key successes in the US's counterinsurgency strategies in Afghanistan was the use of Special Operations Forces (SOF). These highly trained and skilled units were able to carry out targeted operations against high-value and elusive Taliban leaders, disrupting their operations and weakening their control over the country. The use of SOF also allowed for a more precise and surgical approach, minimizing civilian casualties and avoiding collateral damage. This strategy proved to be particularly effective in the early years of the war when the US was able to quickly overthrow the Taliban regime and drive them into hiding (Jones, 2021; Felbab-Brown, 2021; Giustozzi, 2010; Osman, 2021).

Another successful counter-war strategy was the implementation of a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. This included not only military operations but also diplomatic efforts, development aid, and support for governance and reconstruction in Afghanistan. The US worked closely with the Afghan government to build institutions and strengthen its capacity to provide security and services to its citizens. This approach helped to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people and gain their support in the fight against the Taliban.

However, despite these successes, the US also faced significant challenges and failures in its counter-war strategies. One of the major failures was the reliance on conventional military tactics and the neglect of counterinsurgency strategies. The US initially focused on defeating the Taliban through conventional warfare, which proved to be ineffective against an insurgency that operated in small and decentralized groups. This resulted in the US being bogged down in a prolonged and costly conflict, with the Taliban regaining control of large parts of the country (Tellis, 2021).

Additionally, the US's reliance on local warlords and militias to fight the Taliban also backfired. While these groups were initially successful in driving out the Taliban, they often resorted to corrupt and brutal tactics, leading to a loss of support from the local population and further destabilizing the country. This also created a power vacuum that allowed for the resurgence of the Taliban and other militant groups (Giustozzi, 2012). Furthermore, the US's failure to address the underlying issues of poverty, corruption, and lack of governance in Afghanistan also hindered its efforts. Despite significant investments in reconstruction and development, the gains were often overshadowed by widespread corruption and mismanagement, leading to a lack of trust and support from the Afghan people (Maan, 2019).

4.8 Successes and Failures of Israel in Countering Hamas

In recent years, Israel has faced numerous challenges in its efforts to maintain peace and security in the Gaza Strip, particularly in its ongoing conflict with Hamas. In response to the constant threats posed by this militant group, Israel has employed various counter war

strategies aimed at crippling Hamas and ultimately toppling down its rule in Gaza. While some of these strategies have yielded successful results, others have been met with failure and have even exacerbated the situation. One of Israel's most successful tactics in countering Hamas has been its use of targeted airstrikes. By accurately targeting key Hamas leaders and infrastructure, Israel has been able to weaken the group's military capabilities and disrupt its operations. In 2014, during Operation Protective Edge, Israel's airstrikes destroyed numerous tunnels used by Hamas for smuggling weapons and conducting attacks, significantly diminishing their ability to launch cross-border attacks. This tactic has also resulted in the elimination of top Hamas leaders, including Ahmed al-Jabari in 2012 and Abu Bakr al-Mansouri in 2019, which has dealt a significant blow to the organization's leadership and morale (The Atlantic, 2023).

In addition to targeted airstrikes, Israel has also implemented a blockade of the Gaza Strip, restricting the flow of weapons and resources to Hamas-controlled territory. By controlling the flow of goods and materials into Gaza, Israel has been able to limit Hamas's access to weapons and funding, making it more difficult for the group to carry out attacks against Israel. This blockade has also put pressure on Hamas to govern more effectively and address the needs of the Palestinian people, as the group is heavily dependent on international aid and resources (NPR, 2023).

However, despite these successful strategies, Israel has also faced significant failures in its efforts to topple Hamas in Gaza. One of the most prominent failures has been the use of ground invasions. In 2009 and 2014, Israel launched major ground offensives in Gaza to root out Hamas militants and destroy their infrastructure. However, these invasions resulted in high civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure, further fueling anti-Israel sentiment and strengthening Hamas's support among the Palestinian population. The 2014 invasion also failed to achieve its goal of completely dismantling Hamas's military capabilities, as the group was able to continue launching rocket attacks on Israel throughout the conflict (Abu-Omar, 2021).

Furthermore, Israel's controversial use of collective punishment tactics, such as demolishing the homes of Hamas members and their families, has also been met with failure. While these actions may have served as a deterrent to some individuals, they have also caused significant harm to innocent civilians and have been condemned by the international community. This has further damaged Israel's reputation and undermined its efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Palestinian people (The Guardian, 2023).

4.9 Lessons that can be learnt by Israel from the US

In the conflict in Afghanistan, the United States announced its plan to withdraw all troops from the country by September 11, 2021. This decision sparked global discussions and raised concerns about the future stability of Afghanistan, as well as the lessons that can be learnt from this withdrawal. As a country with its history of military involvement and conflicts, Israel can certainly learn valuable lessons from the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Firstly, Israel can learn the importance of defining clear objectives and realistic timelines when engaging in military interventions. The US entered Afghanistan in 2001 to dismantle Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban from power. However, as the conflict prolonged, the objectives became increasingly unclear, and the timeline constantly extended. This lack of clarity and constantly

shifting goals made it difficult for the US to achieve a decisive victory and ultimately led to their withdrawal without achieving their initial objectives. Israel can learn from this experience by carefully defining its objectives and setting realistic timelines before engaging in any military intervention (Azani, 2009; Cordesman, 2006).

Secondly, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan highlights the importance of having a comprehensive exit strategy. In the case of Afghanistan, the US failed to establish a stable and functioning government capable of maintaining security and providing basic services to its citizens before withdrawing. As a result, the country is now facing a potential power vacuum and the risk of falling back into chaos and instability. Israel, with its complex security situation, can learn from this by ensuring that any military intervention is accompanied by a well-planned and effective exit strategy to prevent similar consequences Even, S., 2012; Landau, 2011).

Additionally, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan serves as a reminder of the importance of engaging with local communities and building relationships with the population. The US focused primarily on fighting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, neglecting the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. This lack of engagement and understanding of the local culture and dynamics ultimately hindered the US's efforts to build a stable and lasting government in Afghanistan. Israel, with its diverse population and relationships with neighboring countries, can learn from this by prioritizing communication and cooperation with local communities in any military or political endeavor (Shay, 2021; Freilich, 2015; Ganor, 2021).

Furthermore, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan highlights the need for international support and collaboration in conflicts. The US-led coalition in Afghanistan included several NATO countries, but over the years, some allies reduced their involvement or withdrew completely. This lack of a united front weakened the overall effort and made it challenging to achieve lasting stability in the country. Israel, with its strong alliances and partnerships, can learn from this by prioritizing and strengthening international support and collaboration in any conflict or intervention (Amidror, 2021; Yadlin, 2021).

4.10 Blowback Theory and American Exit from Afghanistan

The theory of blowback refers to the unintended consequences that arise from the actions of a powerful nation, often in the form of retaliation or backlash. This theory has gained significant attention in the context of the recent decision by the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan after nearly two decades of military presence. The withdrawal has been met with both support and criticism, with proponents arguing that it is necessary to end the longest war in American history and critics warning of potential blowback in the form of increased instability and violence.

To understand the potential blowback from the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, it is essential to examine the history of US involvement in the country. The US first entered Afghanistan in 2001, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, intending to dismantle al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban from power. However, as the years went by, the mission shifted to nation-building and promoting democracy in a country with deep-rooted tribal and religious divisions.

This shift in focus resulted in a prolonged and costly conflict, with thousands of American and Afghan lives lost, and billions of dollars spent (Stein, n.d.).

The decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan has been a long time coming, with multiple administrations attempting to find an exit strategy. However, the recent rapid Taliban takeover of the country has accelerated the timeline for withdrawal, leaving many questioning the consequences of such a hasty exit. One of the main concerns is the potential for a power vacuum in Afghanistan, which could pave the way for a resurgence of extremist groups like the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This could lead to increased violence and instability not only in Afghanistan but also in neighboring countries, posing a threat to global security.

Another potential consequence of the American withdrawal is the impact on women and minority groups in Afghanistan. The US presence in the country has provided a degree of protection and support for these marginalized communities, particularly in terms of education and employment opportunities. With the Taliban regaining control, there are fears that the progress made in terms of gender equality and human rights will be reversed, leading to a humanitarian crisis (The New Yorker, 2021).

Furthermore, the withdrawal of American troops could also have a significant impact on the regional power dynamics. Afghanistan shares borders with several countries, including Pakistan, Iran, and China, all of which have their interests in the region. The withdrawal of US forces could create a power vacuum that these countries may try to fill, potentially leading to increased tensions and conflicts (Carnegie, 2021). Proponents of the withdrawal argue that it is necessary to end the cycle of violence and bring an end to the war in Afghanistan. They also point to the fact that the US has been involved in nation-building for two decades with little success, and it is time for the Afghan people to take control of their future. However, critics warn that the withdrawal could lead to disastrous consequences, not only for Afghanistan but also for the US and the international community.

4.11 Theory of Blowback in the context of Israel's counter-war strategies against Hamas

The theory of blowback refers to the unintended consequences of a country's actions, particularly in the realm of foreign policy and military interventions. In the context of Israel's counter-war strategies against Hamas, the theory of blowback suggests that the Israeli government's actions may lead to negative repercussions and backlash not only from Hamas but also from other actors in the region and the international community.

Israel's counter-war strategies against Hamas have been ongoing for decades, with the most recent escalation occurring in May 2021. These strategies involve targeted airstrikes and ground operations in the Gaza Strip, as well as a blockade on the territory, to weaken Hamas and prevent attacks on Israeli civilians. However, the theory of blowback suggests that these actions may have unintended consequences that could ultimately harm Israel's long-term security and stability. One potential consequence of Israel's counter-war strategies against Hamas is the radicalization and recruitment of more individuals to join Hamas and other militant groups. The constant airstrikes and ground operations in densely populated areas have resulted in high civilian casualties, including women and children. This not only fuels anti-Israel sentiment among the Palestinian population but also creates a sense of anger and

revenge-seeking among those who have lost loved ones in these attacks. This could potentially lead to an increase in support for Hamas and other militant groups, as well as an influx of new members willing to carry out attacks against Israel (Heuser, 2010).

Furthermore, Israel's counter-war strategies have also created tensions and strained relationships with neighboring Arab countries. The high number of civilian casualties and destruction caused by Israel's actions have sparked widespread condemnation and protests in the Arab world, leading to a further deterioration of Israel's already fragile diplomatic relations in the region. This could have long-lasting consequences, as it may push these countries to align themselves more closely with Hamas and other anti-Israel forces, and potentially even provide support and resources to these groups (Abu-Omar, 2021).

In addition, the theory of blowback also highlights the potential for international backlash against Israel's actions. The disproportionate use of force and civilian casualties have drawn criticism from human rights organizations and the international community, leading to calls for investigations and possible sanctions. This could damage Israel's reputation and credibility on the global stage, and potentially lead to a weakening of support from its allies (The Atlantic, 2023).

Moreover, the theory of blowback also suggests that Israel's counter-war strategies may further entrench the cycle of violence and perpetuate the conflict with Hamas. By continuously engaging in military interventions without addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as the ongoing occupation and blockade of Palestinian territories, Israel may be creating a never-ending cycle of violence and retaliation. This not only puts Israeli citizens at risk but also perpetuates the suffering and instability of the Palestinian people (NPR, 2023).

4.12 US withdrawal from Afghanistan and important lessons for Israel to consider in relevance to Blowback theory

The theory of blowback, originally coined by American author Chalmers Johnson, refers to the unintended consequences of a nation's actions, particularly in the realm of foreign policy. It suggests that when a country intervenes in the affairs of another nation, it can often lead to unforeseen and negative consequences that come back to haunt the intervening nation. This theory has gained significant relevance in the context of the recent US withdrawal from Afghanistan and has important lessons for Israel to consider.

The US intervention in Afghanistan began in 2001 to dismantle Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime from power. However, the prolonged and costly war has not only failed to achieve its objectives, but it has also created a power vacuum that has allowed extremist groups like the Taliban and the Islamic State to gain a foothold in the region. The US withdrawal has now left the Afghan government vulnerable and has emboldened these groups, posing a threat not only to Afghanistan but also to neighboring countries and potentially to the US itself.

This situation serves as a cautionary tale for Israel, a country that has often intervened in the affairs of its neighboring countries, particularly in the Middle East. Israel's military actions in Lebanon, Syria, and the Palestinian territories have often been met with strong opposition and have resulted in increased hostility and retaliation from these countries. The concept of

blowback suggests that these actions may have unintended consequences and could potentially lead to increased insecurity and threats for Israel in the future.

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan also highlights the importance of long-term strategic planning and considering the potential blowback of interventions. The US failed to adequately plan for the aftermath of its intervention in Afghanistan, leading to chaos and instability in the region. Israel must learn from this and carefully consider the potential consequences of its actions in neighboring countries, including the potential for increased radicalization and extremist groups gaining power. Moreover, the US withdrawal has also brought to light the importance of building strong and sustainable partnerships with local governments and communities. The lack of a strong and stable Afghan government has contributed to the current situation, and Israel must prioritize building positive relationships with its neighboring countries to avoid similar scenarios.

5. Conclusion

In the wake of the twenty-year-long war in Afghanistan, the US exit has been a controversial topic. On the one side, it is considered that it was significant for the US to bring back its soldiers and end the war. On the other hand, it is considered that the US has left Afghanistan in a condition of chaos and instability. However, this withdrawal is seen because of a power-driven approach in foreign policy and the potential of a blowback phenomenon.

Initially, the US utilized military operations to dispense with militant groups such as Al Qaeda and the Taliban to bring regional stability. This aim was partially achieved as the Taliban were overthrown and the country found a time of relative peace. Afterward, the US moved its concentration towards nation-building and forced democracy in Afghanistan. This made the US war delayed and costly, as it spent billions of dollars and lost thousands of troops.

The immediate withdrawal has shown that this power-driven approach was not effective in accomplishing its ideal objectives. The Taliban, which was at first debilitated by the US, has recaptured control of the State and is presently more powerful than ever before. The Afghan government, which was set up by the US, imploded in a couple of days, leaving the country defenseless and in a state of fear of extremist organizations. Moreover, this situation led many Afghan refugees to flee the country owing to the fear of the Taliban regime, while creating a humanitarian catastrophe.

In contrast to Israel's use of force against Hamas, the US withdrawal serves as a wake-up call against the use of the power approach in foreign policy. In the same way, Israel is often criticized for its military-centered policy in the case of the continuous Palestinian struggle. The theory of blowback is profoundly applied in this state, which recommends that the use of force-oriented strategy can prompt inadvertent consequences, blowback, and be costly. The US exit has set an example that, despite having the most exceptional military and assets, a power-centric strategy provides short-term solutions and long-term harm that can bring failure and disappointment. Israel must consider this as an example and refrain from relying only on military-centric methodologies while dealing with militancy and extremism. Instead, it should focus on a peaceful way of handling the situation to lower the possibility of retaliation and to establish real peace and stability in the region.

5.1 Solutions to eliminate radicalism by fostering soft methodologies

To eradicate radicalism with the use of force and strict regulations leads to additional violence and polarisation. Therefore, it is vital to use soft measures that promote harmony and understanding as follows:

- One of the effective ways is to consider education. Vulnerable young people are easily targeted by the radical-minded groups. They are impacted by their propaganda. When those vulnerable people are equipped with quality education, knowledge, and reasoning abilities, they are ready enough to counter radical philosophies. Moreover, they must be incorporated with teaching regarding diversity, residence, and human rights to reduce the gap between distinct cultures and religions.

- Another significant measure is to develop community engagement and empowerment. It is observed that economically and socially marginalised communities have a greater tendency to move towards a radical organisation. This tendency can be eliminated by promoting an inclusive society. This involves identifying and addressing issues of those deprived individuals, promoting community-based initiatives, and providing economic opportunities. This will create a sense of responsibility and belongingness among them towards the state.

- Media and technology can be more useful in this contemporary world. Most importantly, social media platforms are being utilised by extremist groups to propagate their opinion and recruit new individuals as members. This propaganda can be countered by spreading alternative positive narratives.

- Finally, good governance and the rule of law can help to promote transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. It builds the trust and support of their citizens. Corrupt and oppressive governments are responsible for injustice and anger in society. The oppressed people can easily be misled by the radical groups.

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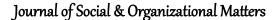
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