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Analysis - From Afghanistan & Iraq to the Vetoes in the Security Council on Gaza Ceasefire:  
U.S. Controversies throughout the decades

### *U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan*

It was in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, that the United States decided to enter Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. To topple the Taliban leadership and to dismantle al-Qaeda's capacity to plan and operate within the country, was the approach with which the United States entered. After a protracted conflict, about \$1 trillion spent by the U.S., 2.300 American lives, widespread civilian casualties, allegations of human rights abuses and ultimately a failure to achieve its full objective. Today, March 12, 2024, the Taliban government is once again in power, this time they have been in power since August 2021 with no immediate international intentions to intervene in Afghanistan. After several debates over the years, the question is if it was justified or unjustified to enter Afghanistan. I wonder if the response would have been the same if the U.S. had succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban leadership as planned. With enormous money spent, approximately 46.000 Afghan civilians killed, would it have been considered as a victory? I struggle to envision that the debate would have varied significantly, despite a victory on paper.

### *U.S. military invasion in Iraq*

While the US was fighting in Afghanistan, the US launched a military invasion of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. On the grounds that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and ties to terrorism, on March 20, 2003, the United States entered Iraq. The invasion was also part of the broader theme of the "War on Terror" stated by the George W. Bush administration. For the first few months, its allies with the United States at the forefront, succeeded in defeating the Iraqi army and the main government of Saddam Hussein. Although US forces remained in Iraq for several years after the overthrow of the Iraqi government, they succeeded in deposing Saddam Hussein within a relatively short time following the invasion.

It was in December, 2003, American forces apprehended the Iraqi leader. The civilian population of Iraq suffered significantly due to all the bombings, carried out by the U.S..

The identical debate that arises in discussions concerning the objection of the United States in Afghanistan has occurred to the same degree, if not more, regarding the invasion of Iraq. What was stated from the American side, was that Saddam and Iraq had/created weapons of mass destruction, any evidence of the accusation was never found. However, there was no evidence indicating Iraq's involvement in the terrorist attack on September 11 either. Unlike America's entry into Afghanistan with a total failure of their plan, the U.S. actually succeeded in its goal of overthrowing Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Despite their successful plan to topple Saddam, headlines over the years have been anything but positive on several occasions, mentioning suffering, deaths of civilians and no weapons of mass destruction. Despite the "victory" in ousting Saddam Hussein, there has been no discernible difference in media outlets that have portrayed the invasion of Iraq and the entry into Afghanistan.

### *Vetoes in the Security Council on Gaza Ceasefire*

In recent months, there have been several occasions of attempts for a ceasefire in Gaza. Attempts by different nations to get *a more stabilized* situation in the war zone, which has been denied three times by the United States. The U.S. veto in the Security Council of the UN has been heavily criticized by leaders and nations, as well as gathering of people protesting on streets worldwide. According to the Gaza Health Ministry over 30.000 civilians have been killed since October 7. It's important to mention that approximately 1,200 innocent Israelis were tragically killed by Hamas on October 7. Beside the barbaric killing, children, youth and elderly were taken hostage. Still today in the middle of March, a number of hostages are still guarded by Hamas and not free.

I do believe that the aftermath, from a few months from now to a few years from now, the same critics will come and haunt the U.S., similar to what occurred with Afghanistan and Iraq. Even without the U.S. vetoing the resolutions, it's uncertain whether Israel would have ceased its attacks on Hamas. In this scenario, had the U.S. not cast its vote against the resolution(s), it could have mitigated the criticism received thus far and potentially the criticism in near time and in the future. Today, March 13, 2024, is it still unknown if there will be an upcoming vote in the UNSC (United Nation Security Council), and therefore it is still unclear whether the U.S. would choose to veto another resolution or in near future, let the resolution go through.

### *Final analysis*

Throughout the past decades, the United States has made decisions that have garnered significant attention in society. The entry into Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq and presently, with one veto after another in the UN Security Council. The criticism comes from states, leaders and people in public gatherings in various countries. The enormous criticism that has come regarding the veto in the Security Council is largely due to all the children who have lost their lives in these months of war. The U.S. has consistently pointed out that a ceasefire agreement would allow Hamas to regroup, acquire more weapons and the potential to prepare for another attack. Something that the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, has said on several occasions, that they (Israel) will not stop until Hamas is wiped out and all of the hostages are safe and back in Israel. The United States sees its veto as Israel having the right to defend itself, while part of the rest of the world believes that it is no longer proportionate with approximately 30,000 dead civilians when Israel "Is in war with Hamas". And that the United States with the help of a veto, possibly could have stopped the killing, and by that, not been the "bad guy" in the coverage of this conflict. The U.S. however, has said that should Israel enter Rafah, the United States will consider cutting off the military funds it continues to send to Israel. Perhaps, the Rafah situation, may be a turning point in the U.S. foreign policy in this conflict. I do believe, sooner or later, the U.S. will stand on the rest of the world's side in this conflict. If it is a non-veto in the Security Council or just diplomatic support, we may see. But I do believe there will be a shift in the U.S. direction, it is in the horizon.

