

# Assessing the Impact and Failures of America's War on Terror in the Middle East

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## Abstract

*This research paper critically analyses how the United States aided Jihadists and supported terrorists and paramilitary organisations during the Cold War. It further defines Jihadists in the United States. Despite this, it discusses US aid to some authoritarian governments that have used state terrorism as a means of repression in the Middle East and US supports for non-state terrorists. Apart from that, it elaborates on US foreign policy regarding weapons, training, and extensive financial and logistical support for terrorist organisations in the Middle East. Further, it explains how radical Islamist terrorism is a serious threat and how many terrorist groups operate in the Middle East. In addition, this article discusses the causes of Islamist terrorism. The paper argues that if authoritarianism is not the cause of Islamist terrorism then what other factors have contributed to it? In addition, the research examines the challenges of American foreign policy in the Middle East in the fight against terrorism. This study argues that the war on terror has failed because of two main reasons discussed in the research paper. It also considers how American foreign policy in the Middle East has been complex and has evolved over the years.*

**Keywords:** Middle East; Terrorism; Democracy; U.S Foreign Policy.

## 1. Introduction

The attacks of 11 September had complex and profound effects on American foreign policy in the Middle East. The policy of American President George Bush was to promote democracy in the region because the spread of democracy would act as an antidote to the emergence of Islamist terrorism and would increase the security of the West (Dalacoura, 2012). As a result of September. 11. 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States, the threat of militant Islamic terrorism took root in the Middle East and South Asia (J. Moore, point 1). The United States launched an international war on terrorism after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, saying it was an effort to intervene militarily, build a nation and change politics in the Middle East. The U.S. strategy since 2017 has been obvious that the U.S. is destabilizing the

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Middle East and that it will not help to protect the US from terrorism, and the US strategy has not produced a decent result (Thrall & Goepner, 2017).

George Bush and Barack Obama exercised remarkable strategic consistency during their presidencies. However, Donald Trump used an aggressive strategy towards ISIS and the goals of the war on terror defined by the Bush administration. "Our national strategy is to end terrorist attacks against the United States, its citizens, its interests, and our friends and allies around the world, and ultimately to create an international environment free of terrorists and all their supporters" said by George W Bush, President of United States of America. In this research, we argue that the war on terror has failed and this failure has had two main and interrelated sources: The first is an assessment of the terrorist threat to the United States, and it led to a broad counterterrorism campaign that focused on a few activities that did not produce sufficient results to protect Americans from terrorist attacks. Another reason for failure is the adoption of an aggressive strategy of military intervention (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). In addition, America used direct military intervention. In direct military intervention, America sent its troops to fight, occupy, or defend the territories of other countries, to conduct airstrikes (either by drones or by manned aircraft) or for missile attacks. Examples of direct military intervention include the invasion and subsequent occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. drone campaign, U.S. military support for Iraq to retake territory from the Islamic State, and U.S. Special Forces supporting local counterterrorism efforts in Tunisia, Somalia, and Mali and Nigeria. America has also used indirect military intervention against the Syrian armed and rebel groups to fight the Islamic State, which is one example of indirect military intervention. Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen is another example of indirect military intervention, where the United States has provided intelligence, weapons, sales, and logistical support to Saudi Arabia (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). U.S. officials used military force as a deterrent against future terrorism. After the destruction of Al-Qaeda, United States invaded Afghanistan as a punishment for giving way to the terrorist group (the Taliban). So, this is a warning to other countries that support the terrorist group. Furthermore, Iraq was not an Al-Qaeda-sponsored country. "The administration of President Bush made it clear that the invasion of Iraq was essential to establish a key front in the war on terrorism" said by George W Bush, President of United States of America. In addition, the United States has invested more in reforming the Middle East and finding solutions to the root causes of terrorism. Furthermore, Al-Qaeda and ISIS continue to pose a substantial threat to the United States; historically, major terrorist acts outside of a battle zone are uncommon. Before and after 9/11, most terrorist attacks got failed and warned to states.

Before September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks accounted for slightly more than one-third of the deaths on September 11. In 1994, there was an attack in Rwanda, when 1,180 Tutsis who sought refuge in a church were targeted. The next major terrorist attack occurred in Iran during the Islamic Revolution in

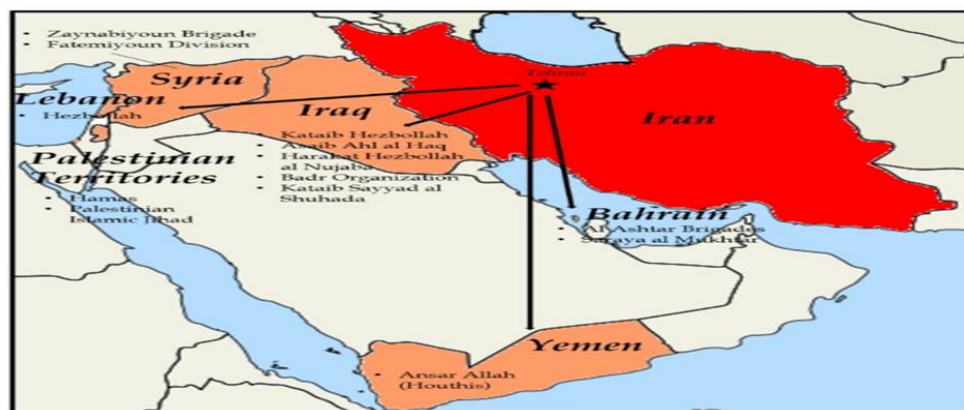
1979. Since 9/11, most terrorist attacks in Iraq, Syria, Nepal, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have killed between 400 and 1,700 people (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Although, the level of terrorism in America has increased only slightly since 2001, the number of Islamist terrorist groups and terrorist attacks in the Middle East and elsewhere has exploded. There is no denying that Al-Qaeda and ISIS posed an enormous threat to the American people.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 American Foreign Policy in the Middle Eastern Countries:-

#### 2.1.1 Iran

Since the 1979 revolution of Iran, Iran has set up a network of proxies across the Middle East. Beginning in 2022, Tehran formed alliances with powerful militias, some of which were affiliated with their political parties and caused issues for regional and neighbouring governments. Moreover, Iran's Revolutionary Guards and the special Quds Force supported political movements and militias with weapons, training, and funding in at least six nations, including Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Syria, and Yemen. Furthermore, the United States has dealt with short military confrontations and Iran's proxies. Since 1984, the United States has imposed sanctions on Iran's extensive network of militia proxies in the Middle East to stop Tehran's regional influence (Lane, 2023).



Iranian proxies sanctioned by the United States

**Source:** U.S. Institute of Peace/the Woodrow Wilson Center

In 1995, the United States imposed sanctions on Hezbollah, a Shiite militia and political movement in Lebanon, Hamas, and in the Palestinian territories, Sunni militia and political movement, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Apart from that, 11 Iranian proxy groups have been subjected to sanctions from 1995 to 2020 under the leadership of five different administrations: Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden. They also imposed sanctions on 89 leaders from 13 groups supported by Tehran. President

Trump's foreign policy goal was to reduce Tehran's regional influence and provide support for militant groups across the Middle East. "From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, Iran funds, arms, and trains terrorists, militias, and other extremist groups that created destruction across the region." He said in 2017 "For decades, Iran has fueled the fires of sectarian conflict and terror." (Lane, 2023).

Since the mid-1990s, U.S. sanctions have been an important tool to destroy terrorist financial networks, denying access to U.S. banks and deterring funders. But U.S. sanctions have not affected Iran's relationships with its proxies. "Financial sanctions can't affect the most important aspects of Iran's proxy relationships, including the training, safe havens, and transfers of weapons and technology that it provides," Ariane Tabatabai and Colin Clarke wrote in 2019. Apart from that, between 2017 and 2020, the Trump administration imposed 40 percent sanctions. It included seven groups and 32 leaders have a relationship with Iran (Lane, 2023).

### **2.1.2 Lebanon**

Iran's first proxy in the Middle East is the Hezbollah Shiite movement. In the 1980s, it started several suicide bombings against U.S. personnel and facilities in Lebanon and seized foreign hostages, including more than Americans. "Hezbollah's budget, everything it eats and drinks, its weapons, and rockets, comes from the Islamic Republic of Iran," Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of Hezbollah, stated in 2016 (Lane, 2023). In 2018, Tehran provided Hezbollah with \$700 million annually according to the Treasury Department. Iranian funding was reduced in 2020 because of U.S. sanctions, decreasing oil prices, and the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the economy, according to Washington Institute for Near East Policy's Matthew Levitt. The Clinton administration sanctioned Hezbollah and Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah in 1995 for interfering in the Middle East peace process. Between 1995 and 2020, the United States has imposed sanctions on 44 Hezbollah leaders. In 2020, the Treasury Department charged Hezbollah's senior leadership because it created violent agendas against U.S. interests and partners around the world. According to Marshall Billingslea, Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Hezbollah has global influence and remains "one of our nation's most critical national security challenges" (Lane, 2023).

- In 2015, Foreign Relations Department representative Abdallah Tahini provided logistical support to Hezbollah in Nigeria.
- In 2016, External Security Organization operative Muhammad Ghaleb Hamdar worked on behalf of Hezbollah by assisting in the planning of terrorist acts.
- In 2017, Military commander Mustafa Mughniyeh aided Hezbollah's terrorist activities.
- In 2018, Deputy Secretary General Naim Qasim acted on behalf of Hezbollah.

- In 2018, Judicial Council leader and military commander Muhammad Yazbak provided logistical and training support to Hezbollah.
- In 2018, Political Council head Ibrahim al Amin al-Sayyid acted on behalf of Hezbollah.
- In 2019, Liaison and Coordination Unit head Wafiq Safa led Hezbollah's terrorist activities.
- In 2019, Jihad Council leader Ali Karaki led Hezbollah military operations in Southern Lebanon.
- In 2021, the Chief of Hezbollah's Central Financial Unit Ibrahim Ali Daher acted on behalf of Hezbollah.
- In 2021, Office Manager Ali al Shair provided financial and material support for Hezbollah.

The United States imposed sanctions on shipping companies and airlines for providing services to Hezbollah. In 2006, Al Manar Television Network and al Nour Radio supported Hezbollah fundraising and recruitment efforts. Furthermore, in 2011, Mahan Air acted on behalf of the Quds Force and transported personnel, weapons, and goods for Hezbollah. In 2015, Fadi Hussein Serhan provided the material support and services to Hezbollah. The Treasury Department imposed sanctions on his company, Le Hua Electronic Field Co. Limited.

### **2.1.3 Iraq**

In 2007, Kataib Hezbollah a Shiite militia was formed. Iran's Revolutionary Guards trained and armed Hezbollah Shiite militia. The United States imposed sanctions on Kataib Hezbollah's leadership in 2020. Kataib Hezbollah started attacks against U.S. forces and from 2007 to 2011 and 2018 to 2020 made coalition allies in Iraq. The United States started drone strikes on Muhandis and Gen. Qassem Soleimani in January 2020. Gen. Qassem Soleimani was the commander of the Quds Force, in Baghdad. It also designated its new secretary general, In February 2020, Ahmad al Hamidawi, a global terrorist. The United States has also imposed sanctions on front companies for working on behalf of the Quds Force and providing aid to Iraqi militias backed by Iran (Lane, 2023).

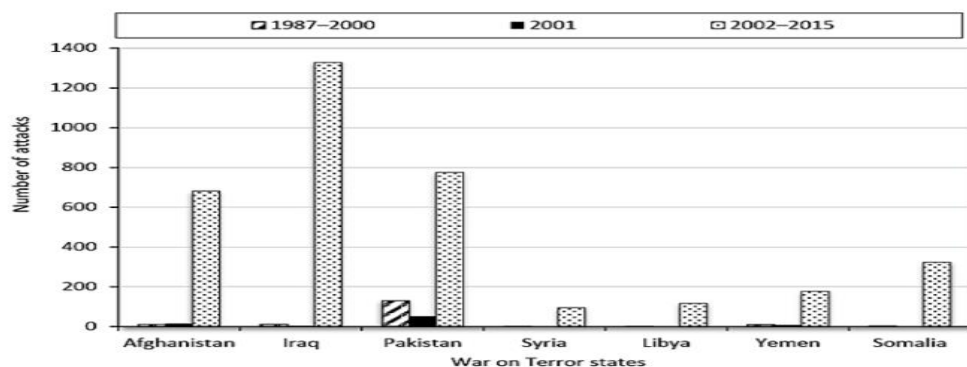
### **2.1.4 Yemen**

In the early 1990s, Ansar Allah a Zaydi Shiite movement started and it has fought the Yemeni government since 2004. The United States imposed sanctions on two senior Houthi military commanders in 2014; 'Ansar Allah founder' and 'Abdul Malik al Houthi' in 2015. The Trump administration said the Houthis were a Foreign Terrorist Organization in November 2018 and in September 2020 to intensify pressure on Iran. (Lane, 2023).

### 2.1.5 Syria

The Zaynabiyoun Brigade is a Pakistani Shiite militia founded in 2014 and trained by the Quds Force with assistance from the Revolutionary Guard Corps. The Zaynabiyoun Brigade fought alongside the Assad regime's soldiers in Syria. The Zaynabiyoun Brigade was subjected to sanctions by the Treasury Department in 2019 as a result of its support for the Quds Force and violations of Iranian human rights.

**Figure:** Terror Attacks Where the U.S. Fought the War on Terror, 1987–2015



*Source:* Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland

### 2.1.6 Bahrain

Iran trained and armed 'The Al Ashtar Brigades'- a militant group based in Bahrain. The State Department had charged it and said, it had committed terrorist attacks in Bahrain to overthrow the government (Lane, 2023).

### 2.1.7 Palestinian Territories

From the 1990s Iran's Revolutionary Guards armed, trained, and funded Hamas, or Harakat al Muqawama al Islamiyah (a Sunni Islamist militia and political party based in Gaza). The U.S. government imposed sanctions on Hamas in 1995, it became a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997 and then it was considered as a Global Terrorist in 2001. It has also imposed sanctions on 21 senior leaders and operatives. The Treasury Department imposed sanctions on charities, front companies, and banks for providing financial support to Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (a Sunni Islamist militant group in Gaza). Since the late 1980s, this group funded, trained, and armed by Iran. Although, it is based in Damascus, it established an office in Tehran. The United States imposed the first sanction on Palestinian Islamic Jihad in 1995 for disrupting the Middle East peace. It is a Foreign Terrorist Organization, which committed terrorist acts in 1997 that challenged U.S. interests and national security. The Treasury Department has imposed sanctions on at least one charity that is providing financial support to Palestinian Islamic Jihad. (Lane, 2023).

### **2.1.8 The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the New Israeli Government**

Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the new Israeli government in December 2022, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu established a government of the political right following Israel's fifth election since April 2019. Its governing agreement calls for the legal annexation of settlements in the Occupied West Bank and judicial reform (albeit there is no timetable for this). Critics contend that annexation will worsen regional tensions and that judicial reforms pose a threat to Israel's democracy. The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has stated that the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict needs "meaningful initiatives." Analysts predict increased hostilities and conflicts in 2023.

In early October 2023, Israel declared war against Hamas, the militant Islamist group that has ruled Gaza since 2006. Hamas fighters launched missiles into Israel and assaulted southern Israeli cities and villages across the Gaza Strip's border, killing and wounding hundreds of troops and civilians and kidnapping others. The attack caught Israel off guard, but the state soon launched a lethal retaliation operation. The Israeli cabinet formally declared war on Hamas one day after the October 7 strike, followed by a mandate from the defence minister to the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) to carry out a "complete siege" of Gaza. Since then, the two sides have engaged in daily rocket exchanges, and Israel has issued an evacuation order for more than a million Palestinian people living in northern Gaza in preparation for a potential ground invasion. In the midst of an Israeli assistance blockade supplies, water and gasoline in Gaza. So, the battle is at risk of spreading as cross-border attacks in Lebanon and Syria intensify.

### **2.1.9 Saudi Arabia**

Hezbollah al Hejaz, a Shiite terrorist organisation based on Lebanon's Hezbollah and allied with Iran, was established in 1987. As a result of their involvement, in the 1996, Khobar Towers bombing resulted in the deaths of 19 members of the U.S. Air Force and 372 injuries, the United States imposed sanctions on four officials in 2001. (Lane, 2023).

Democracy is important for US foreign policy because it is linked to US interests and forcefully intervening in the Middle East to protect the US interests. United States is promoting universal values, and the policy of democracy to achieve its interest in the region. The US attempts to maintain political, economic, military, and cultural dominance. But there was another, more important reason for the change of direction: the realization that in the short term, democracy strengthened Islamist groups through the electoral process.

In December 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt won parliamentary elections by 88 seats. Further, Hamas won the national elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in January 2005. In both cases, the US promotes democratic processes and by this step, its enemies gain power and damage its allies. Hosni Mubarak and Mahmoud Abbas have stopped

democracy promotion in the Middle East and for Western security and interests, it is crucial for the region such as; Western and American intervention for decades. Mistrust against the United States was high, as numerous opinion polls indicate that the U.S. and Western promoting democracy for their interests and it is the wrong strategy. It created the perception among Middle Eastern publics that Western governments have ignored the well-being and freedoms of the local people.

The post-9/11 Bush administration decided to deal with Al-Qaeda as a military opponent rather than a criminal entity. It also said the use of terrorist tactics was effective in achieving their results (hence the multiplication of attacks in Madrid, Bali, London, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the Maghreb, to mention but a few examples). It may even have increased the life of “Al-Qaeda” as an entity. (Dalacoura, 2012).

Trends have very rarely reversed themselves so quickly. Up until last Saturday, conventional opinion in the US about the Middle East predicted a pattern of détente and reconciliation: normalisation between Sunni Arab governments and Israel, détente between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and US informal agreements restricting Iran's nuclear operations. This pattern would reverse years of unrest and violence. The Gaza War between Israel and the Palestinians now appears more likely to engulf a significant US ally and have repercussions for both the US and the rest of the globe than to conclude soon. If the US becomes more actively involved in the conflict, it might go against what had been perceived as the Trump and Biden administrations' desire to withdraw from the region and focus more on China. (Burrows & Manning, 2023).

### **3. Research Questions**

- 1) How will the region absorb and react to the USG's war on terrorism in its regional manifestations, given that by necessity the Middle East will turn out to be the main theater of operations?
- 2) Which US policy choices are more likely to be effective in limiting the threat of terrorist strikes against the homeland in particular and other countries generally?

### **4. Research Objectives**

The causes of Islamist terrorism have been examined in this paper. The study then argues that if authoritarianism is not the root cause of Islamist terrorism, what other variables are at work? Economic and societal issues are not the primary motivators for Islamist terrorism. Furthermore, policies that promote democracy as an antidote to terrorism must be replaced. If we assume that Islamist movements use terrorist tactics for tactical or strategic purposes. Effective counter-terrorism will begin with the recognition that Islamist terrorists are rational actors, and who will always benefit from the deployment of terrorist techniques (Dalacoura, 2012).



## 5. Methodology

This research study was conducted through secondary data. Such as books, various articles, magazines, newspapers, websites, and research articles published by various scholars and researchers. In addition, this research was conducted with a descriptive research design.

## 6. Result/Discussion

Following the demise of the Soviet Union, the 9/11 terrorist attacks that killed 2,977 people, and Iraq and Iran's aspirations to get nuclear weapons, the United States' foreign policy priority expanded to counter-terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The US now promotes economic growth through billions of dollars in annual foreign aid while projecting its military power throughout the region through military bases in more than a half-dozen countries, an offshore naval presence in the Gulf, and military assistance and arms sales to its partners, most notably; Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

The American policy to fight terrorism in the Middle East faced the following challenges: American intervention aim was wrong and to maintain its power in the Middle East, not a radical Islamist hatred of the West. Unfortunately, since the beginning of the War on Terror, American officials believe that the motivation for al Qaeda and ISIS terrorist attacks against the United States was because they were an anti-American ideology, hatred of their freedoms, and to destroy the United States (Thrall & Goepner, 2017). Although, it will benefit the United States if Middle Eastern countries adopt Western-style democracies. There is no evidence that the United States itself can play any role in making it, especially via military intervention.

**Table 1:** Terrorism Before and During the War on Terror: Average Number of Terror Attacks per Country, per Year:

| Nations  | Before 9/11 | After 9/11 | Present Changes |
|--|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| War on Terror states (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen) | 24          | 481        | 1,904           |
| Muslim majority nations  | 12          | 17         | 42              |
| Global average   | 14          | 13         | -7              |

**Notes:** "Before 9/11" captures all terror attacks from 1987-2000 (14 years).

"After 9/11" captures all terror attacks from 2002-2015 (14 years).

Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, was killed by the U.S. strike, he was the head of the paramilitary Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and supported the terrorist, insurgent, and other substate groups in Iran's foreign policy. Iran trained and armed numerous insurgent and rebel groups in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, the Palestinian territories, and

other areas. That's why the United States has labeled Iran the "World's leading sponsor of terrorism." (Byman, 2020).

In Iraq, Iran worked with nonstate groups, including "special groups" that targeted the United States. After that, these groups also worked with the Iraqi government (and indirectly with U.S. forces) to go after the Islamic State. (Byman, 2020). The United States wants to maintain its presence in the Middle East, with diplomatic, military, commercial, and cultural dimensions. The United States has an interest in the Middle East. (Jabber, 2001).

Analysis and discussion of American foreign policy in the Middle East have been substantial. Particularly, the military operations carried out under the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama has come under close examination. Allegations of Islamophobia and the sad loss of millions of innocent lives have been made in response to these operations, which were presumably started under the cover of combating Islamic terrorism. Another less-discussed incentive has been the desire for control over the immense natural oil riches in the region. This motivation has been hidden beneath the language of counterterrorism. To shed light on these divisive policies' causes, effects, and underlying goals, this essay conducts a careful critical examination of them.

The perceived necessity of fighting terrorism served as the main justification for military deployments in the Middle East during the Bush administration, notably in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001. A volatile period of American involvement in the region began with the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was therefore justified on the grounds of removing WMD and overthrowing the regime of Saddam Hussein. But these efforts drew harsh criticism, with critics claiming that they were motivated, at least in part, by a desire to get access to the region's substantial oil reserves.

Amid these initiatives, accusations of Islamophobia surfaced as a result of the idea that the United States was waging a wider war against Islam rather than concentrating its efforts on extremist organizations. International censure was increased by the regrettable loss of innocent lives which was made worse by airstrikes and collateral damage. Deep moral and ethical concerns concerning the human cost borne in the pursuit of geopolitical goals are raised in light of these claims and criticisms that reflect a harsh light on American military engagements.

The desire to dominate the natural riches of the Middle East has historically been a significant if frequently unacknowledged motive of American strategy in the region beneath the surface of counterterrorism goals. With some of the greatest known oil reserves in the world, the Middle East is crucial to the security of the world's energy supply. Many people believe that the United States is trying to create a presence in the area to protect its energy interests and keep control of the world energy market.

China has been subtly increasing its influence in the Middle East while the United States deals with criticism and difficulties there. China has

developed strong commercial ties with important Middle Eastern states, most notably Iran and Saudi Arabia, as a result of its growing energy needs. These alliances are distinguished by substantial financial outlays, energy deals, and sizable infrastructure projects, all made possible by China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China's influence in the Middle East has consequently increased dramatically, changing the geopolitical dynamics of the area.

In addition, it is crucial to take the larger geopolitical situation into account. China and Russia have both acknowledged the Middle East's strategic importance and have actively pursued their interests within the region. In addition to increasing its power, Russia's military operation in Syria gave it a platform for diplomatic engagement. Russia's position as a major player in local wars was further cemented by the sale of armaments to numerous Middle Eastern countries. The Middle East continues to have a prominent place in the shifting landscape of international relations as global powers like China and Russia push their economic and geopolitical interests.

The Middle East policy of the United States, notably its military interventions under the Bush and Obama administrations, has been the topic of intense discussion and criticism. The language of counterterrorism has frequently disguised the fight for control of the oil riches in the area. The difficulties American politicians are facing have been made worse by claims of Islamophobia and worries over civilian losses. Additionally, the interests of other major powers like Russia and China as well as China's expanding presence in the Middle East highlight the area's continued importance in the world of politics. For a thorough grasp of global geopolitics, as we traverse these intricacies, a critical assessment of the United States' involvement in the Middle East is still essential.

## **7. Recent Middle Eastern Developments**

The continuing Israel-Palestine Conflict 2023, which began on October 7, 2023, when the Hamas Group attacked Israel's major cities with nearly 3,000 rockets in less than 20 minutes, has alarmed the whole world. As we are all aware, Israel bombarded the Gaza Strip with airstrikes on Monday in response to a startling onslaught launched by the Palestinian militant group Hamas early on Saturday morning. A "Complete siege" has been imposed by Israeli ministers on the already blockaded and impoverished Gaza Strip, depriving its two million residents of access to food, water, and electricity. Additionally, more than 100 Israeli citizens, soldiers, and foreigners have been abducted by Hamas.

According to the most recent data, a hospital in Gaza was hit by a rocket on October 18, 2023, and as of this writing, more than 900 people have died there. The death toll continues to rise. Therefore, the Israel-Hamas War has resulted in about 1228 fatalities and over 3,000 injuries in Israel. The Palestine-Israel war in Gaza has already claimed the lives of more than 2300 people and injured 10583 more. Over 4,000 people have died in Palestine and Israel together.

The Gaza Strip, which the UN claims is being "strangled" by Israel's tight closure, is in desperate need of humanitarian aid, according to relief organisations, which are pleading for its quick entry. As resources are depleting as the Israeli military continues to bombard the enclave, tens of thousands of Palestinians are in need of food, water, fuel, and medical supplies. All citizens in Gaza City were instructed to go "southwards" by the Israeli military late last week as it continued to strike the coastal enclave in retaliation for last weekend's Hamas attacks, which claimed more than 1,400 Israeli lives. Additionally, there are growing worries that a further escalation could inadvertently involve Israel's adversaries in the protracted confrontation. The diplomatic effort is getting stronger. The sole practical route for getting people out of the enclave and supplies into it, the Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza, is under pressure from the international community to build a humanitarian corridor through it. The first entry of fuel trucks into Gaza since the October 7 strikes by Hamas in Israel was spotted by a CNN employee at the Rafah border crossing on Monday afternoon, though there was no indication that a larger aid convoy would be permitted through. In order to prevent the violence from escalating further, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is currently travelling the area in a hurried shuttle mission.

An Iranian official stated on Monday that the United States must be held accountable because it is already deeply involved in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. In reaction to the conflict between Israel, a U.S. ally, and the Iranian-backed Palestinian militant group Hamas, which threatens to spread throughout the area, the U.S. has increased its firepower in the Middle East. Nasser Kanaani (a spokesman for the foreign ministry) responded when asked if Tehran intervenes, the United States will be involved: "Iran considers that the United States is already militarily involved in the conflict between Israel and Palestinians."

## **8. Conclusion**

To sum up, the promotion of democracy in the Middle East by the Bush administration can be criticized from a variety of angles. It was big on words, short on substance. It mostly followed previous policies. It had little practical effect on the ground. Such as invading Iraq under what turned out to be pretenses even as the democracy rhetoric became shriller. However, the policy can also be criticized because it diverts attention what is the reason behind Islamist terrorism. In the post-9/11 period, the US policy on the promotion of democracy was based on these different reasons. It defined Western interests with democratization in the Middle East and therefore instrumentalized democracy in a way that undermined faith in it both as a concept and as practice. The United States used democracy in the Middle East for its interests and maintained its dominance in the Middle East.

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