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AFGHANISTAN AS A STATEMENT OF DISCONTINUATION OF INTERESTS AND GOALS OF THE US NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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Abstract: In August 2021, the US military engagement in Afghanistan ended, after almost 20 years of conflict with the Taliban and terrorist organizations, with the engagement of allies, primarily NATO member countries. Given the participants in the war, the consequences of the war, as well as the inability to predict further events, the world is flooded with a multitude of analyzes, reactions, predictions and other observations of that war. These reviews come from officials of many countries and international organizations, as well as from scientific institutions and analysts to social networks and other media spaces.

This article is a view of American participation in the war in Afghanistan through a key document - the national security strategy, ie the national interests established in it. In that sense, 17 strategies of the USA, adopted in the period 1987-2021, were subjected to research. year, certainly heavier documents from 2001, when the direct US military engagement in Afghanistan began. The basic hypothesis of the research is: "US engagement in Afghanistan was supposed to confirm American dominance in the world after the Cold War, as one of the vital national interests established in all national security strategies, but it did not have clear goals."

Key words: Afghanistan, The United States of America, National Security Strategy of the USA.

INTRODUCTION

In state-centric international relations, which are dominated by the interests of the great powers, a temporary form of international order is established at certain intervals and there are no final solutions. The position and aspirations of most countries in the world mostly depend not on their own interests, but on relations with the great powers.

The Cold War ended with the victory of Western countries led by the United States. Proving the supremacy of the United States on the global level was

demonstrated by the invasion of Iraq in 1991, that it was the culmination of American hegemony and its extended arm of power - NATO was crowned with aggression against FR Yugoslavia, on the 50th anniversary of the Alliance in 1999. A unipolar international order has been established.

The key determinants of the state and process in international relations, when it comes to the United States, are set out in the document on national security strategies, and further operationalized in NATO's strategic concepts. At the heart of all U.S. national security strategies, from President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) to Donald Trump (2016-2020) is the pursuit of American national interests. One of the dominant national interests of the United States identified in all strategies is the "export" of American-type democracy and the "historical role" of America to be a world leader.

Such an appearance by the United States at the international level is constantly gaining resistance not only from the great powers but also from other countries, including Afghanistan, but also from movements and terrorist organizations. In order to eliminate these resistances, the United States, primarily, approaches the brutal use of force, constantly rushing from war to war. According to the record from the Bible - you can do as you want, but not as long as you want, American hegemony once had to come to an end.

Basic terms in the paper have the following meanings:

- National interests: "At a certain level of generality, we can accept the view that state (national) interests represent the unity of elements on which the basic needs of the state (macija), state (national) interests are based. Their range can be quite wide, and if it is about those of vital importance for the state, in case of their endangerment, it means the readiness to defend them with all available means. That is something that is not negotiated" (Novakovic, 2016: 141).
- National (strategic) goals: "Goals represent the practical fulfillment of the interests of a community. While interests can be imprecise, incoherent, or even unformulated, goals need to be clearly defined, coordinated, and converted into orders, requests, and recommendations. The path from interest to goals is equal to the path from desire to fulfillment. Interests supply the content of goals, goals give form and discipline to interests, and a change in interests brings a change in goals in parallel, while the opposite does not have to be the case. Thus, in theory, the prevailing view is that the goals (national, strategic) are operationalized out of interests". (Novakovic, 2016, in Forca, 2021b).
- The US National Security Strategy is a document established in the National Security Act of 1947, and supplemented by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.
- Afghanistan is a Central Asian country, which for geopolitical reasons is classified in the South Asian region, which has been officially at war with the

United States and coalition forces since 2001, primarily NATO members, but also other countries.

The basic method applied in the paper is the analysis of the content of 17 US national security strategies adopted in the period from 1987 to 2017. In addition, numerous scientific papers on the subject matter were subjected to content analysis, as well as some experiences of the first author of the work from his professional activity during his military career.

1. INTERESTS AND GOALS IN THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE USA

As a term (syntagm), the national security strategy was first mentioned in the National Security Act of 1947. Article 108 of that law explicitly states:

(a) (1) The President shall submit annually to Congress a comprehensive report on the United States National Security Strategy (hereinafter referred to in this section as the National Security Strategy Report)...

(b) Each National Security Strategy report shall contain the United States National Security Strategy and shall include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

(1) The global interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.

(2) The foreign policy, world obligations, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the United States national security strategy.

(3) Proposed short- and long-term use of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the objectives of paragraph (1)

(4) The adequacy of the ability of the United States to implement the national security strategy of the United States, including an assessment of the balance between the ability of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of national security strategies.

(5) All other information that may be required to inform Congress of matters relating to the United States National Security Strategy” (National Security Act, 1947: sec.108).

In 1986, during the administration of President Ronald Reagan, there was a major transformation of the Ministry of Defense and the Law on the Reorganization of the Ministry of Defense (Goldwater-Nichols act, 1986: Sec.603) amended the position on the annual report on national security strategy gained in importance (<https://history.defense.gov/Historical-Sources/National-Security-Strategy>). From

President Reagan, through George W. Bush (senior), and especially Bill Clinton, to George W. Bush (junior), the strategy was adopted almost every year, except 1989, 1992, and 2001. After that, during the administration of President George W. Bush (junior), Barack Obama and Donald Trump, the practice has been established that the strategy is not adopted every year, but that each administration adopts one such document during its mandate. Thus, from 1987 to 2017, 17 documents were adopted in the United States under the common name of national security strategies (Forca, 2019a).

Although the basic content of the US National Security Strategy was established in the National Security Act of 1947, it, like the name of the strategy itself, changed from administration to administration in power, with major or minor changes. But in every document, the vital national interests (and goals) of the United States have a central place, whether they are stated explicitly or in descriptive form. Every vital national interest (goal) of the United States included the way America acted, primarily in the political, economic and military spheres.

In the first national security strategy after the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, President Ronald Reagan said: "Freedom, peace and prosperity ... that's what America is all about... for ourselves, our friends, and those people across the globe struggling for democracy" (National Security Strategy, 1987:front page). In the strategy, national interests are articulated as follows: "The key national interests which our strategy seeks to assure and protect include: 1. The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values and institutions intact. 2. A healthy and growing U.S. economy. 3. The growth of freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system. 4. A stable and secure world, free of major threats to U.S. interests. 5. The health and vigor of U.S. alliance relationships" (National Security Strategy, 1987:4). The perspective of America in the strategy emphasizes: "While the United States has been the leader of the free world since the end of the Second World War, we have not acted alone. During that war and in the succeeding four decades, our strategy has been based on partnership with those nations that share our common goals" (National Security Strategy, 1987:1).

After the victory in the Cold War and the demonstration of force in the Gulf War (Iraq 1991), President George W. Bush (senior) stated in his 1993 national security strategy: "Foremost, the United States must ensure its security as a free and independent nation, and the protection of its fundamental values, institutions, and people. This is a sovereign responsibility which we will not abdicate to any other nation or collective organization" (National Security Strategy, 1993:3). After that, said: "we have four mutually supportive goals that guide our overall national security efforts. These are: 1) protecting the United States and its citizens from attack; 2)

honoring, strengthening, and extending our historic, treaty and collective defense arrangements; 3) ensuring that no hostile power is able to dominate or control a region critical to our interests; 4) and, working to avoid conflict by reducing sources of regional instability and violence, limiting the proliferation of advanced military technology and weapons of mass destruction, and strengthening civil-military institutions while reducing the economic burdens of military spending (National Security Strategy, 1993:3). "For the United States to lead effectively in the political arena, there are several steps we must take: 1) The key to our success has been -and will continue to be - our partnerships with the industrial and other major democracies. In concert, we must support stability and economic and political reform in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union - our numberone foreign policy priority today; 2) We must also work to support, encourage, and consolidate democracy elsewhere around the world, both multilaterally and bilaterally, and 3) We must continue to champion a fair, politically sustainable international refugee and immigration regime for the post-Cold War era" (National Security Strategy, 1993:6).

From 1994 to 2000, President Bill Clinton's administration adopted seven national security strategies. In these documents, the demand for the "historical role of the United States" for a leading position in the world is constantly emphasized, and until 1999, they emphasized three key goals (interests): 1) To sustain our security with military forces that are ready to fight, 2) To bolster America's economic revitalization and 3) To promote democracy abroad (National Security Strategy, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999). In the 2000 strategy, the Clinton administration for the first time graded U.S. national interests into vital, important, and humanitarian (and other long-term) ones, as follows:

"We divide our national interests into three categories: vital, important, and humanitarian. Vital interests are those directly connected to the survival, safety, and vitality of our nation. Among these are the physical security of our territory and that of our allies, the safety of our citizens both at home and abroad, protection against WMD proliferation, the economic well-being of our society, and the protection of our critical infrastructures - including energy, banking and finance, telecommunications, transportation, water systems, vital human services, and government services--from disruption intended to cripple their operation. We will do what we must to defend these interests. This may involve the use of military force, including unilateral action, where deemed necessary or appropriate. The second category, important national interests, affects our national well being or that of the world in which we live. Principally, this may include developments in regions where America holds a significant economic or political stake, issues with significant global environmental impact, infrastructure disruptions that destabilize but do not cripple smooth economic activity, and crises that could cause destabilizing economic turmoil

or humanitarian movement. Examples of when we have acted to protect important national interests include our successful efforts to end the brutal conflict and restore peace in Kosovo, or our assistance to our Asian and Pacific allies and friends in support of the restoration of order and transition to nationhood in East Timor. The third category is humanitarian and other longer-term interests. Examples include reacting to natural and manmade disasters; acting to halt gross violations of human rights; supporting emerging democracies; encouraging adherence to the rule of law and civilian control of the military; conducting Joint Recovery Operations worldwide to account for our country's war dead; promoting sustainable development and environmental protection; or facilitating humanitarian demining” (National Security Strategy, 2000:9).

The administration of President George W. Bush (Jr.) adopted two national security strategies, in 2002 and 2006. The 2002 National Security Strategy was adopted after Al Qaeda carried out terrorist acts in New York and Washington (September 11, 2001) and after the military operations of the United States and its allies in Afghanistan had already begun (October 2001). In that sense, the strategy lists the positions of President Bush, announced after September 11, 2001, as anthologies of certain chapters. Thus, among other things, about the terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda, three days after their events, Bush told the nation: “Just three days removed from these events, Americans do not yet have the distance of history. But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil. War has been waged against us by stealth and deceit and murder. This nation is peaceful, but fierce when stirred to anger. The conflict was begun on the timing and terms of others. It will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing.” (National Security Strategy, 2002:5).

In the 2002 document, again underlining the US leadership role in the world, three key goals are expressed as follows: “Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity” (National Security Strategy, 2002:1).

Bush's (younger) strategy from 2006 is a particularly indicative document, created at a time when the United States has been at war in Afghanistan for five years and three years after the invasion of Iraq (2003). President Bush calls this strategy a war strategy and points out: “America is at war. This is wartime national security strategy required by the grave challenge we face – the rise of terrorism fueled by an aggressive ideology of hatred and murder, fully revealed to the American people on September 11, 2001. This strategy reflects our most solemn obligation: to protect the security of American people”. (National Security Strategy, 2006: President's editorial).

In the 2006 document, US national interests are described descriptively, but two pillars of the strategy stand out: 1) promoting freedom, justice and human dignity – working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies. Free government do not oppress their people or attack other free nations, 2) confronting of challenges of our time by leading and growing community of democracies. Many of the problem we face – from the threat of pandemic disease, to proliferation of weapons of mass destructions, to terrorism, to human trafficking, to natural disasters – reach across borders. Yet history has shown that only when we do our part will other do theirs. America must continue to lead”. (National Security Strategy, 2006: President's editorial).

The administration of President Barack Obama (2008-2016) passed two documents called national security strategies, in 2010 and 2015. According to some sources, Obama was "brought" to the position of US president to stop the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. (<https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/svet-54703032>).

Although the US National Security Strategy 2010 ("Obama") was announced as a mitigation of George W. Bush's "war strategy", it will be shown that this strategy, like the 2015 strategy, is drawing the United States deeper into wars around the world. The motto of this strategy is the leadership of the USA in the world, which is named as “Renewing American Leadership—Building at Home, Shaping Abroad” (National Security Strategy, 2010:2). In line with the above, the strategy emphasizes that American national interests are permanent and emphasizes: “American interests are enduring. They are: 1) The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners; 2) A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; 3) Respect for universal values at home and around the world; and 4) An international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges” (National Security Strategy, 2010:7). The entire Chapter III, as a central part of the strategy, is dedicated to the advancement of the stated national interests of the USA.

The 2010 strategy comes at a time when the United States is pursuing an "exit strategy" from Iraq and is making a stronger commitment to Afghanistan. In order to end the conflict in Afghanistan, President Obama announces the strategy for Afghanistan as "a series of new waves of forces", and appoints General David Petraeus, who (during President Bush) was the commander of the coalition forces in Iraq, as the commander of the coalition forces (2010). In the year in which Obama won the US elections (2008), the regular annual US Army Conference was held in Washington, at which General Petraeus' presentation on America's success in Iraq was especially announced. Speaking about the success in Iraq, Petraeus points out

that America has stabilized the situation in that country and is withdrawing, but Afghanistan is following. For Afghanistan, Petraeus announces the "Anaconda" strategy, without explaining in detail what it means by that name¹. In general, that announcement of Petraeus and his later appointment as the commander of the ISAF operation, leads to a huge increase in American forces in Afghanistan, about 100,000 soldiers, which together with Iraq makes 180,000 members of the armed forces in that region (National Security Strategy, 2015: President's editorial).

The US National Security Strategy 2015, practically, in addition to President Obama's editorial, introduction and conclusion, contains a way to achieve the four vital national interests of America, listed in the 2010 strategy: Security, Prosperity, Values, International Order. The strategy comes at a time when the United States has not realized its announced withdrawal from Afghanistan (extended every year), but America has been embroiled in new war conflicts known as the "African (Arab) Spring" since 2011, which, under President Obama, will have culmination in Syria in 2014.

Analyzing the conflicts in Africa in 2011, the high-ranking general of the Algerian Armed Forces points out that this is, in fact, the creation of a new world order, according to the United States and Western allies, under the motto "overthrow of dictatorial regimes". In that sense, the general points out that, starting from Morocco, Algeria was skipped, so it was the turn of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and says: 1) they overthrew the previous leaders ("dictators") in the mentioned countries, and brought fundamentalists to power, even worse 2) they skipped Algeria, but due to the situation in the Sahel (a desert area of several thousand kilometers) where terrorism is "blooming", we are afraid that they will invade our country, under the pretext of fighting terrorism. Explaining in detail what had happened in Libya until then, the general concluded - "It's nothing that will happen when it's Syria's turn."²

Donald Trump wins the 2016 US elections. In 2017, the administration of President Trump announces a new national security strategy. President Trump's basic motto explicitly stated in the strategy is: "This National Security Strategy puts America First" (National Security Strategy, 2017: President's editorial). This motto in the Introduction to the document reads: "Putting America first is the duty of our government and the foundation for U.S. leadership in the world" (National Security Strategy, 2017:1). By the way, the entire document, except for the president's editorial, introduction and conclusion, is operationalized in four vital US national interests and

¹ The first author of this article was the head of the Serbian MoD delegation on US Army Conference in Washington 2008.

² The first author of this article was the head of the delegation of the Serbian Ministry of Defense, which visited Algeria in 2011.

the regional context of the strategy. The four vital U.S. national interests in the strategy are identified as follows: 1) protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life, 2) promote American prosperity, 3) preserve peace through strength and 4) advance American influence (National Security Strategy, 2017:4).

Among the allies, and especially the opponents of the USA, the question of what Trump means - America in the first place was constantly repeated. President Trump usually explained his position with the words - "Everyone has their country first." In the practice of implementing the strategy, two aspects are particularly important: 1) Trump identified China and Russia as key opponents and named them revisionist states, and 2) Trump remained determined not to start new wars and withdraw contingents of armed forces from Syria and Afghanistan.

2. GEOPOLITICAL ASPECT OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES OF THE USA

Even during the time of President Reagan, and especially since the time of President George W. Bush, it is evident that America and the West are winning the Cold War, or the bipolar world order. According to US strategists, it was an opportunity for America to establish hegemony in the world order, which was named unipolar. Also, as well-known theorists have warned US presidents (Kegli, Witkoff, 2002; Mirsheimer, 2009), it was clear to US strategists that no country alone could rule the world. In that sense, after the collapse of the USSR and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the United States managed to impose itself on the world community as a guarantor of peace and to maintain its lever of power - NATO. Thus, NATO, from its original defense alliance, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter (UN Charter, 1945), grew into a world security forum and remained the main lever of US power.

The basic processes after the disintegration of bipolarism had a disintegration and integration character. The key disintegration processes are the disintegration of the USSR, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the peaceful disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the break-up of SFR Yugoslavia. On the other hand, key integration processes began with the unification of Germany, and continued with the formation of the European Union and the survival and expansion of NATO. Using Russia's preoccupation with the problems of dissolving universities and the disintegration of the USSR, and the still not so strong global influence of China, the USA and Western countries managed to impose themselves on most European countries, especially the countries of former universities, as well as the former USSR and SFR Yugoslavia (Forca, 2019). From 12 countries in 1992 to 2013, the European Union grew to 28 members, and the United Kingdom left the Union in 2020, and that number dropped to 27. On the other hand, NATO grew from 12 founding members

in 1949 to 30 members in 2020. At the same time, most EU member states (21 out of 27) are also members of NATO (Forca, 2020).

The culmination of the power of the United States and Western countries and the consolidation of the dominant American hegemony in the world took place on the 50th anniversary of the formation of NATO, which was practically demonstrated by the aggression on FR Yugoslavia in 1999. Since then, all American national security strategies emphasize the leading position of the United States in the world, as a historical role and task, and in practice, the use of force is resorted to if anyone has just tried to challenge that role of America. Certainly, that leadership position of the USA is named as the spread of true democracy of the American type. In addition to Iraq (1991 and 2003), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), the FRY (1999), the United States began or became involved in the war in Afghanistan (since 2001) and the conflicts in North Africa and Syria, beginning in Libya in 2011. directly or indirectly involved in conflicts in which their armed forces do not participate, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Venezuela and some African countries. Thus, the American strategy remains the true application of the theory of realism, which President Trump himself points out in the strategy from 2017: "This strategy is guided by principled realism. It is realist because it acknowledges the central role of power in international politics, affirms that sovereign states are the best hope for a peaceful world, and clearly defines our national interests" (National Security Strategy, 2017:55).

Through its activities around the world, the United States has caused repulsion and rejection of hegemonic behavior by some Muslim countries, especially Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya and Palestine, as well as by Russia and China, and countries in favor of them. Intolerance towards America and its allies is especially manifested by a part of the Muslim world through terrorist activities of small to the widest scale. The most drastic outburst of anti-American attitude, which some call the first major defeat of the US strategy in the new century, are the terrorist attacks by Al Qaeda on facilities in New York and Washington, September 11, 2001 ("nine eleven"). Osama Bill Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, described the anti-American attitude of the Muslim world: "The American people should remember that they pay taxes to their government and that they voted for their president. Their government produces weapons and delivers them to Israel, which uses them to kill Palestinian Muslims. Given that the US Congress is the body that represents the people, the fact that it agrees with the actions of the US authorities proves that America as a whole is responsible for the atrocities it commits against Muslims"(Lawrence, 2005: 140-141). The fact is that there are analysts in the United States who have criticized the so-called America's fight against terrorism, including Noam Chomsky, who claims that this "fight" became the key to foreign policy under President Reagan, not George W. Bush. As a result of the Reagan administration, Chomsky cites the correlation and

mentorship of the largest international terrorist network Al Qaeda, as well as entering the war with Nicaragua, because America is the only country ever convicted of international terrorism before the International Court of Justice (Nikodinovic, 2017: 27).

Another "signal" that questioned US hegemony and pointed to the need to change its strategy in the new century is Russia's return to the world stage, the war in Georgia in 2008, and especially the return of Crimea to its membership in 2014, as well as strengthening China's influence. "Belt and Road" since 2012. To this should be added political, economic and security integrations such as the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Many recognized analysts, including Joseph Nye in particular, have argued that the era of unipolarity and US domination is over, as well as the era of multipolarity, and that the world will not return to the age of bipolarism. In addition to creating new forces in international relations, Nye, as indicators of the multipolarity of the world order, included other "power dispersers", primarily transnational companies and information technology (Nye, 2009).

The third "signal" that indicated the need to revise the American strategy, and which still does not have sufficient strength, is the strengthening of the European Union. In terms of security, the key stone in the dispute between the EU and the United States is the issue of the Union's defense. On that issue, there were two currents in the EU. The first was led by Germany and France, and they advocated for the independent defense of the Union. The other current was led by the United Kingdom, which considered NATO to be a sufficient guarantor of the EU's defense (Forca, 2019a). In such a situation, the EU found a compromise, and its defense "reconciled" all currents with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty ratified in 2009. According to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU's defense is determined in three ways: 1) independent defense, when such a decision is made by the European Council, 2) NATO as the guarantor of the Union's defense and 3) according to the decision of countries declaring themselves military neutral (Austria, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Malta and Cyprus). (Lisbon Treaty, art.42). The third way of defending the EU, however, is hindered by the provision of the Lisbon Treaty, which requires that each member state of the Union has the obligation to provide assistance to another member if it is militarily attacked (Lisbon Treaty, art. 42/7). Many analysts have found similarity in such a provision of Article 42/7 of Lisbon Treaty with the provision of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty on the Formation of NATO, according to which an attack on any member of the Alliance is also an attack on NATO.

One gets the impression that in such conditions, the United States did not pay enough attention to the strengthening of anti-American attitudes and forces in the world and the fact that a multipolar world is being established. In order to maintain

the hegemonic position of the world leader, America applied two strategic approaches: 1) open suppression of the strengthening of the influence of Russia and China and 2) direct military engagement and indirect strategy in parts of the world that endangered vital US interests. The United States used NATO to put pressure on Russia and military engagement in various regions of the world. In all declarations from the NATO summit, Russia is marked as a key generator of world security. On the other hand, in the strategic concept of NATO - "Defense in 3600", the military encirclement of Russia is practically constantly strengthening (Forca, 2018, 2021). To restrain China, the United States started an economic war with the most populous country in expansion, imposing sanctions and restraining the Belt and Road initiative, and strongly encouraged the European Union, but also some other allies, such as Japan, Singapore and Australia. (Forca, 2019b).

The arrival of Donald Trump as the President of the United States, in practice, showed what the attitude means - America in the first place. Trump turned to strengthening the economy and internal conditions in the United States. In terms of foreign policy, he identified two main opponents - Russia and China, and adjusted his strategic moves accordingly. He believed that the United States could not wage protracted wars around the world, and began the first steps to withdraw American forces from Syria and Afghanistan. On the third side, in support of his intentions, he exerted strong pressure on the allies, primarily in the EU, and abandoned some of the important agreements and treaties. That cost him the elections in 2020, in which he lost the battle in the race with Joseph Biden.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND GOALS OF THE US STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is a Central Asian country, which for geopolitical reasons is classified as a part of South Asia, larger in area than France, with an estimate of between 32 and 38 million inhabitants. It is a poor multiethnic state in which civil conflicts have lasted for decades and centuries, with direct and indirect foreign interference. The most numerous ethnic community are Pashtuns, followed by Tajiks, Khazars, Uzbeks and others. According to the religion, the vast majority are Muslims, mostly of Sunni orientation. Afghanistan is the country from which the largest amount of opiates is exported in the world, about 90% (Figure 1). The occupation of Afghanistan by the USSR, in the period 1979-1989, was opposed by militant groups of mujahedin, which were supported and armed by the USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and China. After the withdrawal of the USSR from Afghanistan (1989), interethnic conflicts over power began in that country.

Kako raste uzgoj maka u Avganistanu

Površina pod opijumskim makom u hektarima (1994-2018)

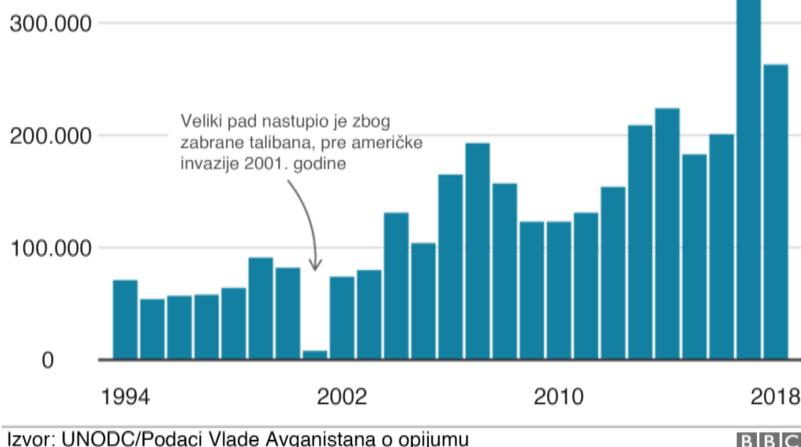


Figure 1. Production of opiates in Afghanistan

The Taliban, as part of the largest ethnic group, appeared in Pakistan in 1994, and in 1996 they took power in Afghanistan. Only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have recognized this authority. In the struggle for power, the Taliban used, among other things, terrorist activities. Because of such an approach, the USSR declared the Taliban an unrecognized organization, and America put them on the list of terrorist organizations. The fact is that the group of Al Qaeda, led by the Saudi millionaire Osama Bin Laden, was also on the territory of Afghanistan. The United Nations imposed sanctions 1999 (Resolution SC UN, No. 1267) on Afghanistan due to the activities of terrorist organizations on their territory, and American forces bombed terrorist of Al Qaeda (1998) positions in that country (<https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/svet-58241809>).

In 2001, al Qaeda carried out terrorist acts in New York and Washington on September 11. It was an "unexpected slap" to the only superpower in the world that was at the peak of its power. The answer of the strongest force in the world was expected. The US response arrived very quickly, with air strikes on Afghanistan, which began in October 2001, and the deployment of armed formations on the territory of that country. America used Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and, invoking it, agitated for NATO members to join it.

American interests are clear and stated above. But what was the real goal (s) of the attack on Afghanistan? Among analysts, three goals of US (NATO) engagement in Afghanistan are most often identified. Over time, both NATO and non-NATO members have done so in the ISAF operation.

The first goal is unequivocal - revenge for the terrorist acts of Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001 and the support of the Taliban for that terrorist organization. We have already pointed out that President Bush, three days after the terrorist attacks of 2001, stated that America is entering the war against terrorists, which will end at the hour set by the United States, and not by terrorists. Is that watch 31.08.2021? Certainly not. So what was the real goal of the US engagement in Afghanistan?

As another goal, the analysis cites the well-known US interest in spreading American-style democracy around the world. Thus, American-style Western democracy has become entangled in a fundamental type of Muslim organization of state and society, in which the Sharia of the Sunni model represents the basic form of identity and norms of behavior. Incompatible, but democracy is neither introduced nor imposed by armed force. America has managed to bring pro-American forces to power in Afghanistan. That government disintegrated like a "tower of cards" even before the United States withdrew from Afghanistan.

However, the main goal of the US engagement in Afghanistan was the effort of the world's strongest power to "wedge" into the mainland of the Asian continent, which is dominated by Russia and China. Therefore, the military intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001, and the call of Art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, was just a mask of that goal. Afghanistan's position was ideal for such an approach by the United States. Russia is in the north, and between it and Afghanistan are Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In that sense, the United States tried to establish military bases in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (<https://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1953615&print=yes>), but they were shut down after a short time. Uzbekistan, where the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was formed, has twice left the organization. Afghanistan's western neighbor is Iran, as one of the countries that the United States names as its greatest enemy. Therefore, the positioning of tens of thousands of US and NATO troops in the hinterland of Iran was a convenient situation - if necessary, as a constant threat to Iran's security. To the east, Afghanistan has a tens of kilometers wide border with China. China feared the Taliban's influence on the ethnic Muslim group Uighurs, and on the other hand, the land route through Afghanistan to Europe was one branch of the "Belt and Road" initiative. On the other hand, China has already started some oil exploration and exploitation projects on the territory of Afghanistan. Thus, with its positioning in Afghanistan, the United States was able to influence the obstruction of the arm of the Chinese initiative "Belt and Road" through that country, that is, part of the obstruction of China's economic strengthening.

According to the actions of the USA in the 20 years of the conflict in Afghanistan, it has not become clear what is the primary goal of America in that country and region. The very way of withdrawing US forces from Afghanistan (with them and

other multinational forces) will be analyzed for a long time. The fact is that the administration of President Bush (younger), and especially Obama, was looking for a way out of Afghanistan. However, despite the fact that they formed a government "of their own free will" in Afghanistan, the United States never managed to fully take over the country.

President Trump remained determined to withdraw US forces from Afghanistan. He realized that in practice by negotiating with the Taliban, starting in 2018 and with the agreement reached in Doha (Qatar) in 2019. So, it was clear to Trump who rules Afghanistan - the Taliban.

CONCLUSION

The United States is a world superpower of the 20th century. Their participation in the First and Second World Wars and their huge contribution to the victory over the forces that started that war are evident. America is the strongest world economy and a country of true democracy. Its influence in the economy, culture, sports and other social activities is global. America is the strongest military power in the world, which, with the formation and maintenance of NATO, after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the USSR, additionally gained military strength. America has done many good things and provided all kinds of support to many countries and international organizations.

On the other hand, the policy and strategy of the USA, starting with Woodrow Wilson, and especially after the Second and Cold War, turned to hegemony on a global level. All documents entitled National Security Strategies, and especially since 1987, explicitly express the interests of the United States to rule the world and spread American (Western) type of democracy.

After the Cold War, the United States preserved NATO and established a unipolar system. To defend the leadership position, as its national interest, the United States often resorted to the use of military force. The use of military force had a counter-effect and many countries and organizations openly or covertly opposed it. It is believed that the global appearance of the United States has created numerous terrorist organizations among the Muslim world.

In order to achieve and preserve its national interests, the United States often undertook activities that did not know the real goal. The discrepancy between the interests and goals of the national security strategy was especially evident in the twenty-year war in Afghanistan.

The war in Vietnam was the most studied in America. Why? Because the United States lost that war. It remains to be seen what the situation will be with the war in Afghanistan. One thing is clear - America must change its strategy in a world that is obviously multipolar.

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