

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies
Department of Security Studies

**Constructing and Transforming the Image of the
Enemy in the Discourse of American Presidents on
the Example of Counterterrorist Operations in
Afghanistan and Iraq**

Master's Thesis

Author of the Thesis: Mareeva Elizaveta

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Supervisor: PhDr. JUDr. Tomáš Karásek, Ph.D.

Year of the defence: 2024

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on
31.07.2024

Mareeva Elizaveta

References

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Introduction

The terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, became one of the most tragic and pivotal events in recent history, significantly impacting both domestic and foreign policy in the United States and international relations. On that day, terrorists hijacked four passenger planes. They directed them towards key targets in the U.S., including the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon, resulting in thousands of lives lost and shocking the entire world. This act of violence forever changed the perception of security and demonstrated that even a superpower like the United States could be vulnerable in the face of a new threat—terrorism.

In response to these events, the U.S. initiated two large and enduring military operations on another continent, in Afghanistan and Iraq. In October 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom began in Afghanistan, aimed at overthrowing the Taliban regime, which had provided a safe harbor for the al-Qaida terrorist organization responsible for the September 11 attacks. In March 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom began, aimed at removing the regime of Saddam Hussein, who, according to the U.S. leadership, posed a threat because of the presence of weapons of mass destruction and links to terrorist organizations.

This paper's relevance stems from the significance of understanding how political leaders shape public opinion and legitimize military action through rhetoric. Considering the ongoing global conflicts and the fight against terrorism, the study of the construction and transformation of the enemy image in the speeches of American presidents provides essential insights into the mechanisms of political rhetoric and its impact on public perception.

The chronological framework of the study covers the period from the beginning of the first presidential term of George W. Bush Jr. to the end of Donald Trump's presidency.

In this regard, the author poses the following research question: What similarities and differences can be identified in constructing the enemy's image in the speeches of American presidents regarding counterterrorist operations in Afghanistan and Iraq?

This thesis aims to study the construction and transformation of the enemy's image in the discourse of American presidents, using the example of counterterrorist operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The research analyzes the rhetoric used to shape public perception of the enemy and identifies changes in the representation of the enemy's image depending on the political context and stages of these operations.

Qualitative content analysis will be used to analyze speeches and speeches of United States presidents, official documents, and doctrines to identify individual words, phrases, and sentences regarding the presence in Afghanistan and related topics involving counterterrorism and security issues. Within the framework of the hypothesis, the texts and speeches will be analyzed based on the theoretical basis. Subsequently, the results will be interpreted.

Within the framework of the work, the author pays special attention to the conceptualization of the problem of terrorist threat, as well as the issues of securitization of the Afghan Taliban organization. The theory of **securitization** was founded by representatives of the Copenhagen School of International Relations and is a synthesis of the constructivist approach and classical realism. The works of such scholars as Wæver, Buzan, and de Wilde (1998) made the greatest contribution to the development of the theory. Securitization is the process by which political, social, economic, or military issues are transformed into security problems, thus enabling, by gaining the support of citizens, the world community, or other political actors, extraordinary methods to be used to solve it. At the same time, securitized issues do not always really pose an existential threat to the state and its citizens. Of great importance for securitization is the publicity and authority of the politician: without these two qualities, it is impossible to get the support of large segments of the population. To securitize the problem, politicians resort to the following methods: building the discourse “friend-enemy,” constant reminders of the seriousness of the threat, which is directly related to survival, and demonization of the enemy. There is also a reverse process - desecuritization. It is characterized by a gradual decrease in the number of mentions of the problem in speeches, documents, and media as the problem ceases to be significant for the implementation of specific measures and the justification for their introduction.

The structure of the paper includes an introduction, literature review, theoretical chapter, methodological chapter, and three analytical chapters devoted to analyzing the rhetoric of American presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. The first analytical chapter focuses on George W. Bush. It includes a retrospective of military events in Afghanistan and Iraq and an analysis of his rhetoric in the context of counterterrorism operations. The second analytical chapter focuses on Barack Obama, takes a retrospective look at events, and analyzes changes in rhetoric compared to the George W. Bush period. The third analytical chapter examines Donald Trump, includes a retrospective of events, and analyzes his rhetoric, noting further changes from previous presidents. The

conclusion summarizes the research and draws conclusions about the dynamics of constructing and transforming the enemy image in American political discourse.

1. Literature review

The purpose of this paper is to study the construction and transformation of the enemy image in the discourse of American presidents using the example of counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Although this work has a certain degree of scientific novelty, the topics addressed in this study have been quite widely researched in the academic literature.

There is a significant body of work that explores how American society and especially the political leaders shaped the discourse regarding the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001.

Mervat F. Hatem's 2004 paper, "Discourses on the 'War on Terrorism' in the U.S. and its Views of the Arab, Muslim, and Gendered 'Other'," examines how U.S. political and media narratives post-9/11 constructed and perpetuated stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. These discourses often portrayed Arabs and Muslims as monolithic, inherently violent, and oppositional to Western values. The paper also explores the gendered aspects of these representations, highlighting how Muslim women were depicted in ways that reinforced both gender and cultural biases, thus legitimizing certain political agendas and actions. Although the image of the enemy is not studied in this paper, it still tracks how the change in the way politicians approach the public has a real impact on a certain society group.

Nicholas Kerton-Johnson's paper, "Justifying the Use of Force in a Post-9/11 World: Striving for Hierarchy in International Society," delves into the reasons the U.S. provided for its military interventions after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The paper asserts that these justifications marked a significant shift from previous international norms, emphasizing the U.S.'s effort to create a hierarchical global order where it acts as the primary enforcer of freedom and peace. The U.S. government, in the aftermath of 9/11, used various narratives to legitimize military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq. These narratives focused on the necessity of combating terrorism, spreading democracy, and ensuring international security. This approach highlights the U.S.'s intention to solidify its dominant position in the international system, establishing a moral and political hierarchy with itself and its allies at the top, responsible for global order maintenance. Kerton-Johnson's analysis reveals a

departure from the post-Cold War era's focus on multilateralism and adherence to international law. The post-9/11 U.S. actions were more unilateral, often circumventing international bodies like the United Nations.

Sahill (2019) argues that the U.S. discourse post-9/11, primarily during George W. Bush's presidency, presented the U.S. as an extraordinary and inherently good entity combating an "evil" enemy. This discourse framed the War on Terror as a moral imperative, simplifying the complex socio-political dynamics into a binary opposition of good versus evil. By doing so, it de-politicized the conflict, stripping away the political contexts and grievances that contributed to the rise of terrorism, and instead, portrayed terrorism as a standalone evil to be eradicated. The article delves into how this dominant discourse was constructed and perpetuated through various speeches and policy documents from the Bush administration. It highlights how this narrative justified extensive military actions in Afghanistan, framing them as necessary to protect civilization and freedom. This narrative was supported by cross-referencing texts from international and Afghan media to confirm the persistence of these themes. Furthermore, Sahill critiques the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan as inherently contradictory. While it was ostensibly aimed at bringing emancipation and freedom, it often resulted in oppressive and illiberal practices, such as indefinite detentions and severe restrictions on local populations, undermining the very values it claimed to uphold.

Abid and Manan (2016) examine the rhetorical strategies employed by George W. Bush to create and differentiate identities within his political discourse surrounding the Iraq War. The study utilizes Van Dijk's ideological square theory and Halliday's systemic functional grammar to analyze Bush's speeches from 2002 to 2008. The analysis reveals that Bush's rhetoric is characterized by a clear dichotomy between the "self" (America) and the "other" (Iraq and its leadership). Before the invasion, Iraq was depicted as a significant threat due to its alleged weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) program and its support for terrorism. This portrayal served to justify the necessity of military action against Iraq. However, following the invasion, Bush's discourse shifted to frame Iraq as a potential beacon of hope and democracy in the Middle East, thus legitimizing the invasion and occupation as a moral and necessary intervention for regional stability and global security.

Merskin (2004) examines how President Bush's rhetoric after the September 9, 2001 terrorist attack changed public opinion about Arabs. The paper argues that Bush's language created a stark division between Americans (and by extension, the West) and Arabs (often

conflated with Muslims). This discourse framed Arabs as a monolithic group associated with terrorism and presented as oppositional to American values. Such rhetoric served to justify U.S. military interventions in the Middle East, particularly the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The research situates Bush's rhetoric within the broader historical and political context of U.S.-Middle East relations and the War on Terror. It explores how this discourse influenced public opinion, policy-making, and the treatment of Arab-Americans and Muslims within the United States.

Gershkoff and Kushner's (2005) paper attempts to assess the ways in which the Bush administration connected the war in Iraq to the September 11 attacks in its discourse. They examine the president's own statements for such connections, but also look at the American media, using the New York Times as an example, to examine whether such a narrative has faced any criticism or misunderstanding. The authors conclude that this framing was successful because it did not meet with any opposition in the media and allowed the president to spend large amounts of public resources on the war.

Of great importance for this paper is the study by Wolfe (2008), in which the author analyzes a large number of President Bush's speeches concerning the September 11 attacks, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Focusing only on this president, he presents a clear picture of how the president's discourse on these issues originated and evolved. He examines the president's actions from a marketing perspective, gauging its success through relevant public polls on the issues in question, and concludes that Bush succeeded in persuading the public to support the wars by continually raising the stakes to the point of threatening the use of weapons of mass destruction on U.S. soil by terrorist groups.

A large number of other works analyze George W. Bush's rhetoric following the 9/11 attacks and its role in shaping the "War on Terror" narrative. Graham et al. (2004) identify four enduring features of "call to arms" speeches, including appeals to external power and the construction of an evil Other. Hodges (2011) examines the narrative's intertextual construction and contestation in media and public discourse. Kellner (2007) critiques Bush's rhetoric as "Bushspeak," arguing that it manipulated fear to advance a right-wing agenda and justify military interventions. Maggio (2007) analyzes six presidential speeches, demonstrating how Bush's language created a "war-like aporia" and set the parameters for discussing terrorism. All four studies highlight the power of presidential discourse in shaping sociopolitical reality, particularly in times of crisis, and its potential to legitimize military

action and restrict public debate (Graham et al., 2004; Hodges, 2011; Kellner, 2007; Maggio, 2007).

Despite their undeniable importance to the field these works lack one important aspect, which is the focus of this study. These papers focus on the public speeches of one particular person (most often George W. Bush), analyzing how his statements influenced the conduct of the war, the American public, and international security in general. However, for the analysis conducted in this thesis, it is important to examine not the discourse of one president, but to conduct a comparative analysis of how other U.S. presidents have addressed similar issues.

For example, Lazar and Lazar (2004) compare how the discourse of George H. W. Bush correlates with the main directions of the foreign policy discourse of Bill Clinton and George Bush Sr. The discourse surrounding the 9/11 attacks and subsequent events can be understood within the broader context of the 'New World Order' narrative. Through an intertextual analysis of speeches by Presidents George W. Bush, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton, the authors identify a key element of this discourse: the establishment of a moral order defined against two primary threats, Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. The study proposes that these 'twin terrors' are constructed through a process of 'out-casting', which employs four micro-strategies: enemy construction, criminalization, orientalizing, and (e)vilification. These strategies rely on a binary logic that perpetuates a framework of heightened difference and conflict in the post-Cold War international system (Lazar & Lazar, 2004). This discursive bipolarity serves to maintain a clear distinction between 'us' and 'them' in the global political landscape.

McCrisken (2011) attempts to assess the differences that the election of Barack Obama has brought to the American political discourse on the war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Barack Obama's approach to counterterrorism, despite campaign promises of change, largely continued and intensified policies established by the Bush administration. While Obama sought to distance himself from Bush's rhetoric and certain practices, he shared the fundamental belief in the necessity of combating terrorism as a primary national security concern. The article argues that Obama's policies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Guantanamo Bay, and domestic surveillance demonstrate significant continuity with his predecessor's approach. Notable examples include the increased use of drone strikes and the maintenance of controversial surveillance programs. Although Obama aimed to present his strategy as more focused and morally acceptable, the author contends that his 'war' on terrorism is

equally problematic as Bush's, raising questions about the effectiveness and ethical implications of these ongoing counterterrorism efforts.

The study by Vavilova and Galieva (2023) analyzes State of the Union addresses by US Presidents George W. Bush (2003) and Joe Biden (2022) to identify hidden aspects of leadership in their speeches. The research employs quantitative content analysis and qualitative discourse analysis to examine semantic priorities and key words. Both speeches exhibit similar strategies, including generalization, example, amplification, concession, repetition, and contrast. The authors found that the speeches share common features due to the genre's specifics, such as frequent use of socio-political references and personal pronouns to portray strong leadership qualities. However, differences in agenda and expression were also noted. The study highlights the importance of analyzing political discourse in the context of current events and demonstrates how presidential speeches can reflect and shape the information landscape of their respective eras.

An interesting application of comparative analysis of the rhetoric of the War on Terror can be seen in the paper by Bhatia (2017). This paper analyzes speeches by George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden, revealing their use of similar rhetorical strategies to present subjective realities as objective truths. Both leaders employ religious metaphors to categorize themselves as morally superior and their opponents as morally corrupt. These metaphors, including concepts of good vs. evil and light vs. darkness, serve to legitimize their actions and frame sociopolitical issues as religious events. The study demonstrates how both Bush and bin Laden exploit linguistic tools to create a discourse of illusion, portraying contrasting versions of reality where each sees themselves as the righteous "self" and the other as the negative "other." By endorsing moral absolutism in the War on Terror, both leaders appeal to emotions and seek collective agreement for their respective causes.

The study by Reyes, (2014) situated within Critical Discourse Analysis, examines the use of (in)formality as a persuasive strategy in political discourse, focusing on speeches by George W. Bush and Barack Obama. The research analyzes (para)linguistic variables in relation to Aristotelian modes of persuasion, Ethos and Pathos, to reveal different approaches to conveying political messages. The study compares stylistic differences in speeches justifying troop escalations in Iraq (2007) and Afghanistan (2009) by Bush and Obama, respectively. proposes indicators of formality associated with Aristotelian modes, including lexical choices, textual organization, non-verbal communication, and intertextuality. The analysis considers linguistic variables, marked register usages, structure and predictability,

laughter, and the introduction of new voices into the discourse. This research contributes to understanding how political leaders use language and style to persuade their audiences in different contexts. Raissouni (2020) conducts similar research on ethos, pathos and logos in Bush's and Obama's speeches on the War of Terror.

Some other notable papers on the topic of comparing the way Obama and Bush framed their speeches on the war on terror are done by Safro, Oddo and Trailović. Sarfo (2013) and Oddo (2014) employ Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate speeches by both presidents, revealing their use of emotionally charged language to portray terrorism negatively and anti-terrorism positively. Oddo (2014) notes that while Obama varied stylistic elements, he largely maintained Bush's "war on terror" discourse. Trailović (2014) uses Corpus Linguistics to analyze pronouns, modal auxiliaries, metaphors, and euphemisms in their speeches. The study finds correlations between these linguistic features and their manipulative purposes, such as self-presentation and war justification. Bush's language is characterized as more direct and focused on foreign policy, while Obama's is perceived as more social and domestically oriented. All three studies highlight the presidents' strategic use of language to shape public perception and justify their policies on terrorism and warfare.

The study by Hall (2022) is worthy of special attention in light of our paper. It examines the evolution of the rhetoric of three American presidents (Bush, Obama, and Trump) about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but, unlike our paper, it takes a narrower approach and tries to identify changes related not to the general direction of the speeches. This paper examines how US presidents have used rhetoric around "winning" and "victory" in the War on Terror to address national ontological security. Through discourse analysis of speeches by Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump, the study reveals that all three leaders employed American exceptionalism narratives to bolster national identity. However, the prolonged and indeterminate nature of the conflict has challenged perceptions of order and control, leading to widespread ontological insecurity. Despite scholarship suggesting presidents would avoid predicting short conflicts against terrorist groups, the promise of ontological security associated with "victory" has encouraged the use of decisive language typically reserved for interstate warfare. Ultimately, the realities of postmodern warfare and great power competition have made it difficult to establish a consensus on what constitutes "winning" or "victory," further exacerbating national ontological insecurity. The study highlights the importance of identity-based issues in policy evaluation processes.

All of these papers are also important for our study, but do not fully answer the research goal set here. This shows that the topic of comparing the speeches of three American presidents (specifically Bush, Obama and Trump) on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq using content analysis with a focus on securitization and desecuritization of these conflicts is understudied.

2. Theoretical basis

The securitization theory, developed by Copenhagen School scientists at the end of the 20th century, studies the "politicization of discourse" concerning a particular threat. Its main ideologists were Wæver, Buzan, and de Wilde (1998), who described their concept in the scientific work "Security: A New Framework for Analysis". Other authors' works were outlined in the introduction to this paper, so only the central work is mentioned here.

In the framework of the study, the concept under consideration was a blend of realist and constructivist theorizing. It transformed the familiar realist understanding of national security into an intersubjective notion of security practice. The theory lays the foundations for a constructivist paradigm of understanding international security as a product of large and small social groups forming general concepts. It takes international security as a self-reflective practice as an axiom.

Among the key terms of this concept are the concepts of "sectors," "regional security complexes," and "securitization" itself. The first concept includes the "fields" of interaction between actors- economic, social, political, military, and, recently, the ecological field. The second is based on a fundamental concept for security - its regional character; it considers different minisystems and aspects of regional security. At the same time, the security of each regional actor depends on other actors. The third is the public process of political leaders framing an existential threat to security through the construction of particular rhetoric and media use. This process legitimizes "forced measures" towards the aggressor, i.e., legitimization of military interventions, economic sanctions, etc.

The main methods of securitization of the problem can be identified as justification of existential danger to society through increasing the level of threat in the eyes of the public and conceptualization of the "friend-enemy" discourse, which is characteristic of self-identification. However, securitization can only exist in the context of the authority of a political leader. In other words, a political leader speaker can shape the discourse around a particular security issue only when his audience recognizes him as a political authority.

In discussing the topic of securitization of the problem, it is impossible to omit consideration of the phenomenon of desecuritization. Desecuritization is the process of reverse securitization, when an issue or object previously considered a security threat is no longer perceived as such. This process involves the reduction of anxiety and gradually returns an issue to the realm of ordinary politics. An issue previously discussed in a security context begins to be addressed in an everyday political or social context, and the rhetoric of threat and existential danger is reduced. New interpretations of the issue emerge that minimize or altogether remove the sense of threat. The topic returns to the usual political agenda and is discussed in terms of standard political solutions.

In other words, we can say that the problem is securitized by building a rhetoric around the friend-enemy problem, addressing the nature of the conflict (justifying why “they” hate us), legitimizing and symbolizing the response, and then the reverse process occurs—the desecuritization of the problem.

Considering this theoretical framework, it is necessary to consider how the US presidents shaped the narrative of the war on terrorism. What political tools helped them justify the deployment of troops to Afghanistan and Iraq? Since this paper aims to investigate recurring themes in statements and documents corresponding to different presidents, qualitative content analysis was chosen as the primary research method.

3. Methodology

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a research method used to systematically examine textual data to identify significant themes, patterns, and meanings. In contrast to quantitative content analysis, which focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, QCA emphasizes the depth and complexity of content, allowing researchers to explore themes, patterns, and meanings in the text (Bengtsson, 2016). In the field of security studies, QCA is particularly useful for examining official documents, speeches, policy papers, media reports, and other textual sources to reveal how security threats are constructed, how policies are justified, and how public perceptions are shaped. This method involves coding text into categories, identifying recurring themes, and interpreting hidden messages and discourses.

These characteristics of QCA make it relevant to this paper because QCA provides a deeper understanding of how enemy images are formed and changed through rhetorical

strategies. This method helps to identify key themes and narratives in presidential speeches and official documents and analyze their context and influence on public opinion.

The process of employing QCA typically involves several distinct steps: selecting the material to be analyzed, establishing the coding scheme, coding the text according to the scheme, and interpreting the results.

Qualitative content analysis involves working with large amounts of data, not all of which are entirely suitable for researching the stated topic, nor can they be fully cited to support specific arguments. In this regard, one of the main parts of content analysis is coding - the process of categorizing different parts of the researched text into special categories (also called coding frame) (Schreier, 2012). For this purpose, defining a unit code, i.e., a unit of text that can be considered separate within the QCA framework, is necessary.

To conduct a qualitative content analysis, it is necessary to select materials for analytics. When choosing them, the author of the study was guided by the following criteria:

When it comes to public speeches and presidential addresses, the author adhered to specific criteria. These include the length of the speech (at least 500 words), the presence of formal discourse, and relevance to the topic of troops' deployment on the territory of Afghanistan and/or Iraq, the war against terrorist threat in Afghanistan and Iraq, interaction with allies, and attitude towards political forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In selecting official documents, the author gave preference to two types: the National Security Strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review. Both are published periodically, reflect strategic goals on national security issues, and analyze potential military threats. However, it is worth mentioning that during Donald Trump's presidency, the document was replaced by the National Defense Strategy.

Due to the collected dataset and the fact that it is filled with a variety of texts, including presidential monologues, interviews, as well as official documents, unit codes were considered not as an explicit part of a text occupying a specific position in its hierarchy (a sentence, a paragraph, or the whole text), but as a specific complete idea. This approach allows for the generalization of codes among different types of resources. In addition, securitization and desecuritization were chosen as the main themes and categories to be coded and further analyzed, as they are conditioned by the topic and theory chosen for this paper. These themes, documents, and speeches will be analyzed to find codes and further analysis to interpret the results.

4. G. W. Bush's Counterterrorism Rhetoric: Analyzing the the Military Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, George W. Bush declared war on terrorism, which became the starting point for the two most significant military operations of the 21st century - in Afghanistan and Iraq. The military intervention in Afghanistan was aimed at destroying the al-Qaeda terrorist network and overthrowing the Taliban regime that had sheltered it. The war in Iraq was started under the excuse of Saddam Hussein's regime's weapons of mass destruction and its alleged links to terrorists. Both of these operations had a significant impact on world politics and the domestic affairs of the United States itself.

This chapter examines key aspects of President Bush's discourse aimed at legitimizing military action and constructing an enemy image. Particular attention is paid to analyzing his rhetoric, strategies for shaping public opinion, and justifying military interventions. Part of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) documents, which reflect the long-term goals and priorities of U.S. policy in the context of counterterrorism. Thus, the first chapter covers a comprehensive analysis of events and military actions, as well as the rhetorical strategies that played a crucial role in shaping and transforming the enemy image in international discourse under the presidency of G. W. Bush

4.1 The Initial Phase of the Military Operation in Afghanistan 2001–2009

The terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, was a real challenge for G. Bush and his administration. The president, whose election program was centered around domestic policy issues, had to adjust priorities and develop a response strategy quickly. Since the terrorist attack came as a surprise, it was necessary to find the perpetrators and their disposition as soon as possible. Immediately after the attacks, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) launched a criminal investigation that concluded that the attacks were linked to the al-Qaida group, whose leaders were hiding in Afghanistan. With this information, Bush appealed to the government of Afghanistan and, in particular, to the leaders of the Taliban organization, which had significant political influence in the country, with a request to extradite al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, destroy terrorist camps, and allow U.S. observers to monitor their elimination. Having received a refusal, the United States launched an operation that became the most protracted and most expensive in U.S. history – Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (Almukhtar & Nordland 2019).

Already on September 18, Bush signed a resolution authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the September 11 attack on the United States. The Bush administration would later use this resolution as the legal justification for its decision to take drastic measures against terrorism and to invade Afghanistan. Operation Enduring Freedom was scheduled to begin on October 7, 2001. The U.S. was supported by 28 NATO countries (UK, Germany, Spain, Canada, France, etc.) and other allies who sent troops to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (Torreon, 2021).

In the early phase of the counterterrorism operation, the U.S. Air Force, with assistance from the Northern Alliance and ethnic Pashtun anti-Taliban forces, struck al Qaeda and Taliban forces. U.S. ground forces arrived twelve days later, so most of the ground fighting was between Taliban fighters and their Pashtun opponents. After only a few weeks, allied troops managed to defeat the main Taliban and al Qaeda forces, successively recapturing Herat, Kabul, and Jalalabad by mid-November 2001. By December, the leader of the al Qaeda group, Osama bin Laden, was tracked down in the well-equipped Tora Bora cave complex near Kabul. The battle with the militants lasted from December 3 to December 17. Hostages were taken, but Osama bin Laden managed to escape and is believed to have fled to Pakistan. Also, by December 9, 2001, allied forces had succeeded in defeating Taliban fighters, forcing them to flee and abandon the de facto capital city of Kandahar, home to the Taliban's main forces and one of al-Qaida's major training camps, al-Farooq.

On December 5, 2001, leaders of the allied forces met at UN headquarters in Bonn to sign Resolution 1383, which established an international peacekeeping force in Kabul and an interim Afghan government headed by Afghan statesman Hamid Karzai. Karzai was to serve as interim head of state until the Grand Council elected the future leader of Afghanistan and the transitional government members in a Grand Assembly with the participation of local community leaders. Based on the agreement, the coming government would submit a new Afghan constitution and hold elections once elected. As part of the promises, an emergency Loya Jirga or Grand Assembly was convened in Kabul in June 2002. The assembly, which included 1,550 delegates, elected Hamid Karzai as head of the transitional government. Also, in October 2002, a 35-member commission was convened, which produced a new constitution by January 2004. Karzai would also later become Afghanistan's first democratically elected president.

After the establishment of the new government in early March 2002, the U.S. military deployed Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan's Shah-i Kot Valley against remnants of al-

Qaida and Taliban fighting forces. From the very beginning, the operation faced problems: it became clear that the U.S. intelligence service had misjudged the enemy's strength, and the military took a weak position, resulting in losses. However, the allied forces were able to win and drive the militants out of the valley, inflicting heavy damage (Biddle, 2003).

Over the next three years, the insurgents made occasional guerrilla attacks but tried to avoid confrontation with the U.S. military. Allied forces continued to clear insurgent strongholds. By 2005-2006, however, the Taliban began to increase their presence in the eastern and southern regions of Afghanistan. The Taliban started distributing leaflets in rural areas, encouraging them to rise against the Americans. The number of suicide bombers also increased every year. The number of their attacks increased fivefold, from 27 in 2005 to 139 in 2006, and the number of remote detonation bombings more than doubled to 1,677, resulting in significant casualties among U.S. and allied troops. By 2009, Taliban fighters were able to regain control of most provinces, particularly in the south of the country (Biddle, 2003). This is mainly linked to an ineffective government and the inability to organize its armed forces. Also, the military failures of the American Air Force, as often their airstrikes were inaccurate, which affected the civilian population, served to reduce the popularity of the Afghan government and the U.S. actions. Subsequently, Afghan and UN investigations revealed that a mistaken U.S. helicopter attack killed dozens of Afghan civilians in the Shindand district of western Herat province, prompting condemnation from President Hamid Karzai and reinforcing Taliban claims that coalition forces were unable to defend the country.

The military failures have created a rift in the relations of U.S. allies: At the NATO summit in Riga in November 2006, disagreements arose among member states over troop commitments to Afghanistan. In late 2007, U.S. Defense Secretary R. Gates criticized NATO countries for refusing to send more soldiers even though attacks on NGOs such as the Red Cross and other aid workers were on the rise.

The operation in Afghanistan was becoming increasingly resource-intensive: substantial financial resources were allocated, and the allies suffered heavy human losses. At the time of the active phase of hostilities in October-December 2001, there were approximately 10,000 troops on Afghan territory. After the first defeat of the Taliban in the winter of 2001, the number of U.S. troops gradually doubled to 20,000 by 2005. As the mission expanded and because U.S. commanders were concerned about the deteriorating situation, President Bush agreed to further double the number of U.S. troops to about 40,000

by 2007-2008 (Belasco, 2015). Before leaving the presidency in 2009, G. Bush announced his intention to increase the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan to 45,000. Between 2001 and 2008, the Allies contributed roughly the same number of soldiers as the U.S. At the same time, the costs were also rising: along with the expensive maintenance of the army, they had to pay for the treatment and rehabilitation of the wounded.

Moreover, the U.S. Congress allocated more than \$3.4 billion annually for humanitarian and reconstruction aid to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009. G.W. Bush compared this aid to the famous Marshall Plan and urged other allied countries to invest in rebuilding Afghanistan's infrastructure after so many years of war. However, neither the United States nor the international community has come close to realizing the plan to allocate funds for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. All this also affected Bush's ratings and his subsequent political career.

George W. Bush is the first American president to face such a significant attack on the country's sovereignty from a non-state actor - a terrorist organization. He and his administration had to create a strategy of war with the enemy in a short time, which did not always contribute to the operation's success. After the end of the presidential term of George W. Bush, the continuation of the operation "Enduring Freedom" in Afghanistan was under the leadership of the new administration of the Democratic President B. Obama. The new president was given a challenging role - the role of a leader in whose hands the responsibility for repeating the successes of the first years of the campaign against terrorists, leveling the failures and losses, and the destruction of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.

4.2 George Bush's Discourse on the War in Afghanistan

The events of September 11 horrified Americans and the world community, literally catching the government and national security services off guard. On that day, current United States President G. W. Bush was attending a reading class at an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida, to promote his education initiative when he received the news that two planes had crashed into the Twin Towers in New York City.

Later that evening, the 43rd President of the United States addressed the nation from the Oval Office. The President declared without a doubt that he considered the incident to be an act of terrorism. Throughout the President's address, phrases such as: "Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts" and "Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable

acts of terror.". Bush appealed to the patriotic sentiments of the people, thus trying to show that the tragedy affected not only the families of the victims but every American. The President paid particular attention to the fact that the crime was premeditated and aimed at undermining the fundamental ideals of the American people - freedom and democracy. In his speech, Bush was careful to point out the incompatibility of America's values and those of the terrorists: "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world," "Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world" and "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America." Bush stated that there is already "The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts" and called on all of America's "friends and allies" to unite "with those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism." The President said that he was not going to "distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." Later, after a failed attempt to negotiate the extradition of al-Qaeda fighters with the Taliban, the President noted the impossibility of dealing with terrorists (President of the United States, 2001a).

This speech set the tone for all subsequent ones. Further, Mr. Bush continued to appeal to the themes already raised in his first address to the nation:

- The "us-them" discourse: terrorists and their allies are enemies and represent the image of evil. In essence, the demonization of the enemy's image. At the same time, the USA and the countries that expressed solidarity with the states in the war against terrorism are the image of justice.
- Justification of the reasons for the enemy's appearance: since the terrorists are alien to the values of American society, they have attacked the freedom and democracy of the United States.
- Justification for response: the justification is that terrorism is an existential threat to the U.S. and the rest of the world.

Nine days after the tragedy, the President addressed a joint session of Congress and the American people where he stated that "we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime. "

As part of the speech, the terrorist organization Al Qaeda was accused of carrying out the 9/11 attacks. It was also stated that "The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country." Bush also addressed the Taliban: "All the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. [...] Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan and hand over every terrorist and every person in their support structure to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. ", specifying that "Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them.", specifying that "our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them." and that "the Taliban regime is committing murder." The President said he was ready to retaliate: "Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done." Bush also pointed to the importance of support from foreign colleagues in the fight against terrorism, pointing out that it is not just an American problem but a global problem: "Nor will we forget the citizens of 80 other nations who died with our own: dozens of Pakistanis; more than 130 Israelis; more than 250 citizens of India; men and women from El Salvador, Iran, Mexico, and Japan; and hundreds of British citizens." (President of the United States, 2001b).

While building a democratic regime in Afghanistan, in April 2002, G. W. Bush delivered an address at the Virginia Military Institute calling for an end to terrorism. One of the measures needed to end the Taliban and al-Qaida terrorist regime, G. W. Bush saw the reconstruction of the government and democratic institutions - a constitution and transparent elections: "By helping to build an Afghanistan that is free from this evil and is a better place in which to live". Speaking of the war with the Taliban, the president confidently stated that "Global terrorism will be defeated only by a global response," adding that "Our international coalition against these killers is strong and united and acting." (President of the United States, 2002d)

From 2003 to 2006. G. W. Bush emphasized in his speeches the progress made in the fight against terror, including through the assistance of American citizens and allied countries: "And we're making great progress. In the battle of Afghanistan, we destroyed one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind " (President of the United States, 2003a), "In Afghanistan, we have nearly 18,000 American troops who continue to serve as

part of a coalition that has made extraordinary progress in delivering freedom and security to the people of that proud nation.”, (President of the United States, 2005b) " We have more than 50,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, including thousands of National Guardsmen and Reservists, all on the ground helping the people there. These good folks showed great capacity and compassion for our fellow citizens who hurt. " (President of the United States, 2005b) "And my deep belief, my firm and deep belief is that the sacrifices being made today will inure to the benefit of our children and grandchildren. " (President of the United States, 2006b). At the same time, the successes themselves were not significant, and Bush needed to gain support from Americans and the world community. Among other things, for this purpose, Bush, in each of his speeches, pointed to the inhumanity of the enemy and also brought the audience back to the events of September 11, trying to show what would happen if the threat was not eliminated today: "In the battle of Afghanistan, we destroyed one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind. A regime so barbaric, they would not allow young girls to go to school. A regime so barbaric, they were willing to house al Qaeda. “ (President of the United States, 2003a), “Afghanistan [...] was under the Taliban, a miserable place, a place where citizens have no rights, women are oppressed, and the terrorists have a safe haven to plan and plot attacks.” (President of the United States 2005b)," It's an enemy which has an ideology that does not believe in free speech, free religion, free dissent, does not believe in women's rights, and they have a desire to impose their ideology on much of the world ". (President of the United States 2006b)

In the final years of Bush's presidency, his discourse shifted noticeably toward the war in Iraq, with the bulk of his speeches devoted to the battle against Iraqi terrorist forces and significantly fewer speeches about Afghanistan. This can be explained by the fact that the protracted nature of the conflict and minor successes began to undermine the allies' faith in the necessity of the Afghan war.

In the final years of Bush's presidency, his discourse shifted noticeably toward the war in Iraq, with the bulk of his speeches devoted to the war against Iraqi terrorist forces and significantly fewer speeches about Afghanistan. This can be explained by the fact that the protracted nature of the conflict and minor successes began to undermine the allies' faith in the necessity of the Afghan war. In 2007, in the President's January address on counterterrorism, the war in Afghanistan was mentioned only a few times and in passing, while most of the speech was about the war in Iraq (President of the United States, 2007b). Even in G. Bush's February speech in Washington, which was organized to discuss progress

on the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, the emphasis of the speech shifted to the need to wage war in Iraq. At the same time, the President himself stopped denying the unpopularity of the Afghan campaign but still tried to prove its necessity to the audience: "For some, that may seem like an impossible task. But it's not impossible if you believe what [...] and that freedom is universal; that we believe all human beings to live in freedom and peace. " (President of the United States, 2007c). " Our goal in Afghanistan is to help the people of that country to defeat the terrorists and establish a stable, moderate, and democratic state that respects the rights of its citizens, governs its territory effectively, and is a reliable ally in this war against extremists and terrorists. " (President of the United States, 2007c). The President's goal in Afghanistan is to help the people of that country defeat the terrorists and create a stable, moderate and democratic state that respects the rights of its citizens, governs its territory effectively and is a reliable ally in this war against extremists and terrorists. And despite the obvious military and political losses in Afghanistan, in 2008, the President, in one of his last speeches on terrorism, urged Americans not to forget the horrors of 9/11 and the successes against the enemy: "Until that day comes, the United States will not rest in our fight against oppression and terror. As President, I've had no higher responsibility than waging this struggle for the security and liberty of our people. After 9/11, I vowed that I would never forget the wounds from that day -- and I'm not. That day defined my presidency, and that day changed the course of history. And while we cannot know the path ahead, we can be confident in the destination -- a world where the American people are safe, and children around the world grow up with hope and peace. " (President of the United States, 2008).

To summarize, presidential discourse can be seen as having a definite plan of development through specific phrases and semantic constructions. Often, in order to implement certain measures, Bush reminded people of the events of September 11 in order to arouse the emotions of doubting citizens and also to form a consolidated majority on the war on terrorism, which was able to suppress dissenters. President G. Bush developed a strategy to rationalize patriotic sentiment and the emotional turmoil of what had happened in order to get citizens to accept the logic of the war on terrorism and support the attack on Afghanistan. In this way, Bush was able to gain support and form a unified opinion on the implementation of the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan.

4.3 Military Operation in Iraq 2003-2009.

The operation in Afghanistan was not the only U.S. response to the September 11 attacks. The invasion of Iraq began two years after that date. On March 20, 2003, U.S.-led coalition forces launched Operation Iraqi Freedom. On the same day, coalition ground forces, including U.S., British, Australian, and Polish troops, crossed Iraq's border with Kuwait and began advancing deep into the country. From the very first days, the capital, Baghdad, and other strategic sites were subjected to massive air and missile strikes. The goal of the operation was the need to disarm Iraq and overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein.

The coalition forces quickly advanced deep into the country and seized important strategic centers. One of the significant moments at the beginning of the war was the capture of Basra by British troops on April 6, 2003. This strategic port city opened the way for a further offensive on Baghdad. On the same day, U.S. troops entered Najaf, an important Shiite religious center. April 9 was a historic day when coalition forces entered Baghdad. The country's leader, Saddam Hussein, managed to escape. A symbolic event marked this moment - the fall of Hussein's statue in Firdous Square in the center of the capital- a sign of the end of the dictator's rule.

The rapid advance of coalition forces characterized the initial phase of the war in Iraq, the capture of key cities, and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime during the first months of the conflict. Major events during this period demonstrated the high mobility and firepower of coalition forces and the significant challenges associated with the subsequent reconstruction and stabilization of Iraq.

After the fall of Baghdad and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, Iraq came under the control of U.S.-led coalition forces. The period of occupation began with the installation of an interim administration and attempts to stabilize the country. The main task of the coalition forces was to restore order, rebuild infrastructure, and create conditions for political and economic stability.

After the fall of Baghdad in April 2003, an Interim Coalition Administration, led by Paul Bremer, was established in Iraq. The Coalition governed the country until June 2004 to restore order and prepare the country for self-governance. Bremer and his administration initiated several key reforms, such as disbanding the Iraqi army and banning the Baath Party, which, however, drew criticism and fostered a growing insurgency. The insurgency included various groups such as remnants of the Baath Party, Sunni militias, Shiite militias, and foreign terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda in Iraq. These groups have launched

systematic attacks against coalition forces, Iraqi police, government institutions, and civilians. One of the most prominent insurgent leaders was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, responsible for numerous terrorist attacks and assaults.

In late 2003, U.S. forces conducted Operation Red Dawn, aimed at capturing Saddam Hussein, the former Iraqi president who had been in hiding since the overthrow of his regime. The operation was carried out near his hometown of Tikrit, about 15 kilometers south of the city, in the small settlement of Ad-Dawr. The operation was meticulously prepared. In the course of intelligence work, the U.S. military received information about the possible whereabouts of Saddam Hussein. A search found Saddam Hussein in a hiding place underground - a small hole equipped for concealment, with a vent and enough room for one person. Saddam Hussein was arrested without resistance. After Saddam Hussein's capture, he was placed under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Iraqi Government. Its discovery and capture were important events in the context of the Iraq war, as its prolonged hiding place symbolized the resistance of the former authorities.

In 2004, the Coalition transferred sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government headed by Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. This move was necessary to restore national sovereignty and prepare the country for self-governance. The Interim Government was mandated to run the country until elections and a new constitution could be drafted. The main task of Allawi and his cabinet was to provide security, rebuild infrastructure, and prepare for the first democratic elections in January 2005. Despite significant efforts, the situation in the country remained unstable. Insurgents and terrorist groups continued to organize attacks targeting both coalition forces and civilians.

In January 2005, Iraq held its first democratic elections to select members of a transitional national assembly responsible for drafting a new constitution. These elections were an important step toward democratic governance despite significant security concerns and a boycott by Sunni groups. In October 2005, Iraqis adopted the new constitution in a referendum, and elections for a permanent national assembly were held in December. This process led to a new government led by Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, later replaced by Nouri al-Maliki in 2006.

The trial of the former Iraqi leader began in October 2005. He was charged with war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The main accusation concerned his role in the massacre of Shiites. On November 5, 2006, Saddam Hussein was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. His execution took place on December 30, 2006 in Baghdad.

The execution was carried out in the wee hours of the morning, and its execution was videotaped, causing widespread outcry in Iraq and beyond.

Between 2006 and 2007, violence against civilians and coalition forces in Iraq escalated. Inter-ethnic and sectarian conflicts between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds complicated the situation. The insurgency resulted in significant loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, and destabilization of the country. One of the bloodiest events was the bombing of a Shiite holy site in Samarra in February 2006, which sparked a wave of sectarian violence.

In response, in January 2007, President Bush announced a "surge," a strategy to increase the number of U.S. troops in Iraq by 30,000. The measure aimed to improve security and stabilize the country, especially Baghdad and other hotbeds of violence. (President of the United States, 2007d) The increased forces led to the creation of more effective patrols and operations to suppress violent groups. As a result, by mid-2007, violence in the country began to decline. One notable operation during this period was Operation Phantom Fury, aimed at eliminating the al Qaeda base in Fallujah.

In 2008, the general fatigue of U.S. citizens from the war in Iraq was already evident. This can also be seen in opinion polls. While in 2003, people were inclined to believe that the military operation in Iraq was not a mistake, by 2008, the majority of those polled were convinced of the opposite. That same year saw the end of President Bush's term, leading to significant changes in the Iraq campaign. The beginning of the year saw the end of operations aimed at suppressing Shiite militias, such as Operation Rock of Justice in Basra, which began in March 2008. The operation was carried out by Iraqi government forces under the leadership of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and targeted local armed groups backed by Iran. The operation improved security in the region and strengthened the authority of the Government. In November 2008, the Security and Standing Operation Agreement (SOFA) between the United States and Iraq was signed. This treaty formalized the timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. According to the agreement, all U.S. combat troops were to leave the country by the end of 2011.

By the end of President George W. Bush Jr.'s term in January 2009, the situation in Iraq remained tense and complex. Since the 2003 invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the country has fallen into deep instability. Internecine conflicts between Sunnis and Shiites intensified, and serious threats from insurgents and extremist groups such as al-Qaeda in Iraq, which later evolved into the Islamic State (ISIL), emerged. By 2007, violence

had peaked, prompting the U.S. to conduct an "add-on force" operation, increasing the number of U.S. troops to stabilize the situation. This strategy, combined with efforts to improve security, made some progress. However, political instability and complex ethnic and religious conflicts remained significant challenges. In 2008, the U.S. and Iraq signed a Security Agreement that called for a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops by the end of 2011. Despite improvements, the fundamental problems and threats in the country have not been fully resolved.

4.4 Bush's rhetoric on the war in Iraq: an analysis of public statements

President George W. Bush's discourse on the war in Iraq represents a significant aspect of his presidency and is an important subject for analysis. In 2003, the Bush administration took decisive action to invade Iraq, motivated by the need to eliminate the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime, which was alleged to possess weapons of mass destruction and support terrorist organizations.

After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the U.S. began to pursue national security through active counterterrorism on the international stage. However, for the first months after the terrorist attack, the focus of the President's discussion was not on the problem of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq but on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. On September 20, 2001, President George W. Bush gave a speech to Congress addressing the nation after the September 11 terrorist attacks. In his speech, Bush offered condolences to the families of the victims and paid tribute to the rescue workers and volunteers. He declared the beginning of a global war against terrorism, saying the U.S. would go after not only terrorists but also those who help them.

Prior to his January 2002 address to Congress, President George W. Bush had largely de-emphasized the threat from the Iraqi regime for several reasons. First, the administration's primary focus was on fighting al Qaeda and its terrorist bases in Afghanistan after the attacks of September 11, 2001. In addition, at that time, there was no credible evidence linking Iraq to the September 11 terrorist attacks or a direct threat to the United States. The Bush administration was initially busy developing and implementing a new global counterterrorism strategy, which required time to gather intelligence and develop rhetoric to justify expanding the conflict.

At the very beginning of 2002, on January 29, George W. Bush gave a speech to a joint session of Congress in which he first introduced the term "axis of evil," referring to

Iraq, Iran, and North Korea: "States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world." (President of the United States, 2002b). Bush emphasized that these states, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. Bush emphasized that these states pose a serious threat to international security because they support terrorism and seek to develop weapons of mass destruction. The speech also focused on the need to strengthen national security after the attacks of September 11, 2001, and to mobilize international support to fight terrorism. The call for assistance from allied countries became part of the President's discourse in the period before the Iraq operation, as he needed to gain support not only in the international arena but also in a future military operation "Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction" (President of the United States, 2002b). Bush called for unity and resolve in defense of freedom and democracy around the world.

It was important for the President to get the support of the U.S. Congress to vote on a resolution authorizing the President to use military force against Iraq. Therefore, on October 7, G. Bush gave a speech in Cincinnati where he explained the threat he believed Iraq posed. Bush claimed that the Iraqi regime possessed chemical and biological weapons and was seeking a nuclear arsenal. He emphasized that Saddam Hussein had repeatedly deceived the international community and violated UN resolutions. Also, Bush also claimed that Iraq supports terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda, which increases the global threat. (President of the United States, 2002b).

Due to the efforts to build an enemy image of Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime, on March 19, 2003, President George W. Bush announced a military operation in Iraq called Operation Iraqi Freedom. In his address to the nation, he often noted that the operation was forced because Iraq posed a huge threat to the United States. He addressed the nation with the words, "My fellow citizens, at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people, and to defend the world from grave danger." (President of the United States, 2003b). Appealing to the patriotic feelings of citizens. Bush emphasized that the goal of the operation was to disarm Iraq, overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein, and liberate the Iraqi people from dictatorship. The President also emphasized that the military operation was the last resort after diplomatic efforts that failed to disarm Iraq: "The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder."

(President of the United States, 2003b). Bush expressed confidence that coalition forces would quickly achieve their objectives and assured that the U.S. and its allies would make every effort to minimize civilian casualties. The speech was a pivotal moment in history, launching a war that has had lasting consequences for Iraq, the region, and the international community.

As the first months of the war were fruitful for the U.S., this was reflected in the President's subsequent speeches. Already 1.5 months after the announcement of the beginning of "Operation Free Iraq," G. Bush spoke on May 1 on the aircraft carrier "Abraham Lincoln." Bush proclaimed the main combat operations in Iraq were completed and declared that Saddam Hussein was no longer in power. A banner reading "Mission Accomplished" hung in the background as the President delivered the speech. At the same time, his rhetoric remained tough, emphasizing the need to fight the remaining elements of resistance and terrorism (President of the United States, 2003c)

It is important to mention the scandal that erupted against the backdrop of the military operation in Iraq and questioned its legitimacy. Despite numerous successes and the establishment of control over important strategic sites, the Americans failed to provide evidence of the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. In July 2004, the Senate Intelligence Committee released a report concluding that much of the intelligence about the presence of WMD in Iraq was erroneous. In December 2005, President Bush acknowledged the errors in the intelligence, saying, "It is true that much of the intelligence turned out to be wrong. As President, I'm responsible for the decision to go into Iraq. And I'm also responsible for fixing what went wrong by reforming our intelligence capabilities. And we're doing just that." While Bush acknowledged the intelligence mistakes that led to the Iraq war, he and his administration did not make an official statement that the allegations against the Iraqi regime were completely false. The admission of errors centered on the unreliability of the intelligence that led to the conclusions about the presence of weapons in Iraq. (President of the United States, 2005c)

The end of President George W. Bush's first term was accompanied by a series of victories and challenges on the Iraqi front. Despite having succeeded in installing a new government and capturing Saddam Hussein by 2005, the U.S. still needed allied support, especially amid the intelligence scandal. In his January 31, 2006 State of the Union address, he declared, "We will never surrender to evil, and we will leave behind a better, more stable Iraq." (President of the United States, 2006c)

In early 2007, Bush announced a new strategy known as Surge, which involved sending additional troops to Iraq. In his January 10, 2007, address to the nation, he stated, "Our troops will have a well-defined mission: to help Iraqis clear and secure neighborhoods, to help them protect the local population, and to help ensure that the Iraqi forces left behind are capable of providing the security that Baghdad needs." (President of the United States, 2007d). The Surge strategy began to show results: violence decreased, and the situation in Iraq became more stable. This allowed the Bush administration to focus on the political and economic aspects of resolving the conflict.

Towards the end of President Bush's second term, Bush's rhetoric began to shift towards desecuritizing the problem of Iraq. As time passed, the war in Iraq became increasingly unpopular with the American public. Growing dissatisfaction with the war led to the need to shift rhetoric and seek diplomatic solutions. The decline in violence and the relative stabilization of Iraq allowed the Bush administration to shift the focus from military action to political and economic reconstruction. Allies and international organizations pushed for a peaceful resolution and stabilization of the region, which also contributed to the desecuritization of the conflict in Bush's rhetoric.

In January 2006, the Democratic Party won congressional elections, which was seen as a signal of public discontent with the war. In January 2007, Bush gave a speech in which he recognized the complexity of the situation, "It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq." Bush's rhetoric in January 2007 included a speech in which he said, "It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq." (President of the United States, 2007d).

In 2008, Bush's rhetoric began to shift toward desecuritization. In his speech at his annual address to Congress on January 28, 2008, he noted significant progress in Iraq due to the Surge strategy but also emphasized the importance of a political settlement and long-term stabilization. In his last address to the nation in January 2009, Bush focused on the need to maintain democratic institutions and stability in Iraq. This emphasis on the political aspects of the conflict indicates a change in the perception of Iraq from an immediate threat to a complex political issue.

4.5 Conceptualizing the threat of terrorism in U.S. official documents 2001-2009.

Official documents in America are of great importance, especially regarding security. This paper will examine two types of documents: the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS). Both documents, which come

out periodically, will help form a better understanding of the conceptualization of the problem of terrorism and the need to combat this phenomenon. They also contain information on potential military threats and major strategic plans to address security issues.

Quadrennial Defense Review is a document issued by the U.S. Department of Defense every four years. At the time of the tragic events of 9/11, the QDR (Quadrennial Defense Review) dated November 7-8, 2000, had already been issued. Still, the terrorist attack by Al Qaeda suicide bombers forced the U.S. government to change its priorities in defense issues as well. Therefore, an updated document, much of which focused on the counterterrorism issue, was presented on September 30, 2001, with the assistance of the U.S. President and Secretary of Defense (Secretary of Defence, 2001).

The 2001 QDR preface begins very emotionally with the words that “on September 11, 2001, the United States was subjected to a brutal, bloody attack” and “the war our country is fighting today is not a war America chose. It is a war brought brutally and brutally to America's shores by the evil forces of terror. It is a war against America and the American way of life. It is a war against everything America holds dear. It is a war against freedom itself. “This is unusual for official documents. It is also worth saying that many of the QDR's stated goals and objectives were argued in favor of retaliatory actions against terrorists and their supporters. The text of the document repeatedly repeats the need to “wage a war against terrorism.” In the text of the document, it is necessary to “wage a war against terrorism.” (Secretary of Defence, 2001)

As part of the report, the U.S. Department of Defense developed a new strategic - framework to protect the state and citizens. The QDR text set the following goals:

- **Defense of Allies and Friends:** The U.S. expresses “a willingness to use force for its own defense and the defense of other nations” and “will promote security cooperation with allies and friendly nations.” The U.S. is prepared to “defeat any adversary decisively.
- **Deterrence of threats and pressures against American interests:** under which the U.S. is prepared to “inflict decisive defeat on any adversary”.
- **And if deterrence fails,** to inflict decisive defeat on any adversary: in which case the United States was prepared to engage in “regime change in an adversary state or occupation of foreign territory pending the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives.” The United States was also prepared to engage in

“regime change in an adversary state or occupation of foreign territory pending the achievement of U.S. strategic objectives.”

At the same time, some experts believe that the report failed because it focused on the terrorist threat rather than on the real transformation of the U.S. military [1]. As a result, the army was not well equipped to fight a war on the territory of another country with a complex landscape and plans to fight terrorism were never fully realized.

The authors of the next edition of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review emphasize from the first pages the continuity of ideas of the 2001 report: “The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review reflects a process of change that has gained momentum since the previous QDR was published in 2001. Now in the fifth year of global warfare, the ideas and suggestions contained in that document serve as a roadmap for change that leads to victory.” (Secretary of Defence, 2006) However, the document was more thorough: it was prepared in a more rigorous manner. However, the document was prepared more thoroughly: it presents terrorism not as an abstract problem but as a real threat - Afghanistan, the Taliban regime, and al-Qaida. Separately, the authors point to the results achieved and the assistance of international forces and American citizens: “an important international contribution has helped achieve this result: the 9,000-strong International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), led by NATO since 2003, has been operating in Kabul and throughout most of Afghanistan.” The Defense Department points to the inhumanity of the Taliban regime and al-Qaida. The Ministry of Defense points out the inhumanity of the terrorists, comparing them to fascists: “victory will come when the extremist ideologies of the enemy are discredited in the eyes of the population and the silent supporters of the host nation, become unfashionable and, following other discredited creeds such as communism and Nazism, fade into oblivion,” as well as the difficulty of waging war on the enemy, as “the enemies we face are not traditional conventional military forces, but rather distributed multinational and multi-ethnic networks of terrorists.”

In the 2006 QDR document, the authors paid special attention to the issue of the war in Iraq. At the time of publication of the document, the conflict had managed to pass through several phases, from successes at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom to accusations of false pretexts for the start of the intervention and destabilization of the situation in Iraq by militants. In this regard, the discourse in the paper can logically be divided into two broad themes. The first is “securitization of the Iraqi issue,” where the authors of the document

justify the necessity of keeping the military contingent on the territory of the country. This part can include a discourse on the critical threat to the U.S. and the world from Iraqi insurgents. This follows from such statements as: “Iraq has become the central front in the global war on terror. Victory there is critical to the future security of the United States.” Insurgent organizations on the territory of Iraq are seen as enemies not only to the new regime established in the country but also to the United States. It is emphasized that “ruthless and adaptive” insurgents must be destroyed “to prevent the spread of terrorism.”

The second theme includes a narrative of the successes already in place - that is, “the desecuritization of the Iraqi problem.” The document talks about the reconstruction of infrastructure and economic growth in the country after the overthrow of the Hussein regime, with an emphasis on the fact that without international support and the democratization of the Iraqi political system, this would not have been achieved. The goal is to help Iraq establish a democratic government that is representative of all its people and capable of maintaining peace: “Our goal is to help Iraq establish a government that is representative of all its people and capable of maintaining peace.” The issue of Iraq undergoes a transformation and moves from military to political discourse.

Despite the detail of the document and its greater elaboration in comparison with the previous version, it is still worth noting that the Quadrennial Defense Review 2006 looked more like a report on the work done rather than a well-developed plan for further steps and improvement of the U.S. military forces.

Also, on September 17, 2002, the National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS) (President of the United, 2002) was released. One of the main ideas of the document was to consolidate the discourse about the readiness of the United States to wage war against terrorism, in particular against Afghanistan, a country that harbors militants. From the first pages, it is stated that “America will hold countries that have been influenced by terrorism-including those that harbor terrorists-back to account because allies of terror are enemies of civilization”. As before, it was important for the Bush administration to express its willingness to assist other countries in the war against the common enemy - terrorism. At the same time, Americans expected a reciprocal willingness to help on the part of allies: “We will fight terrorists not only on this battlefield. Thousands of trained terrorists remain at large, with cells in North America, South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and throughout Asia.” And ‘the September 11 attacks were also an attack on NATO, as NATO itself has recognized [...] NATO's core mission is the collective defense of the transatlantic

alliance of democracies.’. Democracy was to be one of the measures to help effectively combat the terrorist threat. The spread of democratic institutions was noted by the authors of the report as a necessity: “Involving all the world's poor in the expanding circle of development and opportunity is a moral imperative and one of the top priorities of U.S. international policy”.

The document pays almost no attention to the problem of Iraq. The document mentions it only once, treating it as part of an “axis of evil” along with Iran and North Korea. However, there is already a background to Bush's later statements that Saddam Hussein's regime posed a significant threat because of its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction and the potential to transfer these weapons to terrorist organizations.

The 2002 National Security Strategy offers no advice on how to address the problems highlighted in the report. Yet the message of the document remains implicit: no clear plan for overthrowing authoritarian governments that are abettors of terrorism, no clear plan for engaging with allies and their role in the conflict. All of this cast doubt on whether the goals could be realized.

In March 2006, an updated version of the U.S. NSS document was released. As in the president's speeches of that time, one can feel the shift of emphasis from the problems of the war in Afghanistan to the confrontation with militants in Iraq¹. Similar to the previous version of the document, the administration emphasizes the results already achieved and still no concrete steps to achieve the final goal - the victory over terrorism: “In Afghanistan, the tyranny of the Taliban has been replaced by a freely elected government” (President of the United States,) 2006. As seen at the time of writing, the Taliban is still an enemy organization. Therefore, despite the successes achieved, the Americans need to wage war on Afghan territory to prevent the Taliban from returning to the former regime: “In Afghanistan, it is necessary to consolidate the successes already achieved. A few years ago, Afghanistan was doomed to exist in a primitive nightmare.”.

As with QDR 2006 in NSS 2006 in describing the Iraq issue, the discourse in the document can be divided into two parts:

Securitization involves the presentation of war as a critical threat to U.S. national security. The document emphasizes that “the war on terrorism is a battle of ideas” where terrorists use religion to justify violence. References to terrorists “using every means

¹ The National Security Strategy Of The United States. 2006. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://nssarchive.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2006.pdf>

available to them to attack Americans and coalition forces” reinforce the sense of danger. The importance of winning freedom in Iraq is also emphasized to prevent the creation of a safe haven for radical terrorist ideology.

Desecuritization, by contrast, focuses on efforts to stabilize and peacefully resolve the conflict. The document calls for assistance in building inclusive institutions that will protect the rights of all Iraqis, as well as rebuilding infrastructure and providing essential services such as electricity and water. Diplomatic efforts to support the new Iraqi government and international cooperation to promote stability and peace in the region are emphasized.

5. Framing the discourse around operations in Afghanistan and Iraq by B. Obama.

The presidency of Barack Obama marked a new era in American foreign policy, especially in the context of ongoing counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Obama came to office amid intense public fatigue with protracted wars, promising to focus on diplomacy and reducing the U.S. military presence abroad. Despite his campaign promises, the Obama administration has faced numerous challenges in global security and counterterrorism. From the first days of his presidency, Obama was forced to continue military operations that his predecessor had begun. The war in Afghanistan remained in focus, and Obama decided to increase the number of U.S. troops to stabilize the situation and undermine Taliban forces. At the same time, the Obama administration strategized a gradual withdrawal from Iraq, one of the main objectives of his first term.

This chapter analyzes President Obama's discourse aimed at legitimizing and justifying his military and foreign policy strategy. Particular attention is paid to his rhetoric aimed at redefining the enemy image and adapting the U.S. counterterrorism strategy to new challenges. Documents such as the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) reflect the Obama administration's strategic counterterrorism priorities. These documents provide insight into the shifts in approach and rhetoric used to justify military action and enemy image.

5.1. Counterterrorism Operation in Afghanistan 2009–2017.

After winning the election, the new Democratic President B. Obama announced his intention to continue to wage war in Afghanistan and increase the military presence by an additional 17,000 troops, stating that the Afghan war is a “war of necessity.” (Torreon, 2021, p. 214). During his campaign, Obama repeatedly stated the need to end hostilities in Iraq as soon as possible because the war was distracting from the main theater of operations, Afghanistan. Confirming campaign statements that Afghanistan is a more important U.S. front against terrorist forces, the president announced the United States' intention to adhere to a timetable for withdrawing most combat forces from Iraq by the end of 2011. At the same time, R. Gates, one of the Republican secretaries of defense under the Democratic Obama administration, stated that the president's plans were “too broad and too forward-looking” and called for setting limited goals such as reducing and destroying terrorist safe havens ((Torreon, 2021, p. 216).

By mid-spring 2009, President Obama announced a new strategy for military action in Afghanistan: the main goal of the strategy was the intention to disrupt, destroy, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens and to prevent their return from other countries to Afghanistan. At this time, terrorist militancy in Afghanistan intensified; in particular, the number of attacks in and around the capital city increased. In this regard, in December 2009, it was decided to immediately increase the presence of the U.S. and Allied military contingent. In addition to the 17,000 announced by Obama, ISAF commander General D. McKiernan called for up to 30,000 additional troops, effectively doubling the number of troops (President of the United States, 2009b). Later, in June 2011, Obama would announce a reduction in the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and an over-fulfillment of the original plans to break the main Taliban forces and eliminate 20 of the 30 al Qaeda leaders.

The new military concept of 2009 envisioned the following:

- 1) A military strategy to create victory conditions and subsequently withdraw the contingent, as the president intended to bring U.S. troops home by 2011;
- 2) A civilian strategy to ensure the safety of the population. This item was of particular importance because it was important to gain the support of the people of Afghanistan;
- 3) Effective engagement with Pakistan to address the terrorist threat. (President of the United States, 2009b).

In conjunction with the announcement of the new concept, U.S. commanders of the operation are calling on NATO nations to provide nonmilitary resources to Afghanistan. Officials emphasize the need for NATO members to build Afghan civil society and, for example, provide resources for urban reconstruction. A two-day NATO summit in early April concluded with NATO countries pledging to send an additional 5,000 troops to train the Afghan army and police and to provide security for the country's presidential elections in August (Morelli & Belkin, 2011).

In mid-summer 2009, U.S. Marines launched a major offensive in southern Afghanistan, representing a major test of the U.S. military's new counterinsurgency strategy. The offensive was launched in response to a growing pro-Taliban movement in the country's southern provinces. The operation was aimed at protecting civilians and strengthening local police forces.

Against a backdrop of increasing corruption, devastation, and ongoing war, another Afghan presidential election is underway. In the fall of 2009, Hamid Karzai was re-elected for another term, but due to numerous allegations of fraud, a UN-backed recount was conducted. The result was a runoff vote because Karzai failed to reach the threshold number of votes in the first round. But a week before the runoff, Karzai's main rival, Abdullah, dropped out, and Karzai was declared the winner. Concerns about Karzai's legitimacy have grown, and the U.S. and other international partners are calling for better governance against the backdrop of worsening elections in November 2009. Karzai publicly called for direct talks with the Taliban leadership. Karzai stated that negotiations were necessary, although he made it clear that the Obama administration opposed such talks.

There was also a split in the leadership of the U.S. military - General S. McChrystal was relieved of his post as commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan after a scandal criticizing the Obama administration. The change in command came at a crucial time in the war when preparations were underway for an operation to re-capture Kandahar from insurgents. The operation began in mid-winter 2010 with the liberation of the town of Marjah[5]. Due to the operation plan that became public, some of the terrorists managed to escape to Pakistan, although the city itself was liberated. However, sometime later, remnants of the militants managed to return to the city and staged several major terrorist attacks, with Marjah civilians as victims. The failure stalled planned operations to liberate other cities.

The new commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, D. Petraeus together with Afghan President H. Karazem, in the summer of 2011, began training local defense forces in certain

regions of Afghanistan to combat the terrorist threat. The Afghan government began to build up the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police to carry out joint counterterrorism strikes with U.S. forces against the Taliban's main centers, particularly Kandahar. The operation, dubbed "Dragon Strike," received popular support, allowing the main Taliban forces in the city to be broken.

At the same time, U.S. forces managed to track down and kill al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. This event has sparked debate about the need to continue the war. President B. Obama announced plans to withdraw all troops by 2014, but serious doubts remain about the Afghan government's ability to secure the country.

Ten years after the first international conference to discuss Afghanistan's political future, leaders of world powers and organizations gathered again in Bonn to discuss a plan to withdraw troops and establish a peace process in Afghanistan after 2014. During the conference, H. Karzai announced that the country would need 10 billion dollars annually over the next decade to improve security and rebuild the country. For his part, he promised to fight corruption and strengthen democratic institutions. However, the goals of the conference were never achieved due to disagreements.

However, the Afghan president dares to hold secret talks with the Taliban in order to achieve an end to the bombings and the militants' recognition of Afghanistan's new constitution.

Over the next few years until 2014, allied forces suffered repeated failures in their attempts to destroy terrorist camps scattered across the country. Eventually, the Taliban declared victory over U.S. and Afghan troops. B. Obama announces a timetable for withdrawing most U.S. troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2016. The first phase of his plan calls for 9,800 U.S. troops to remain in Afghanistan after the end of Operation Enduring Freedom at the end of 2014 to train Afghan forces and conduct operations against al Qaeda remnants. In 2014, an agreement was signed to end Operation Enduring Freedom and hand over security control to Afghan forces (Torreon, 2021).

Almost immediately after the withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops began, the Taliban began to strengthen their position. Since 2015, they have organized several terrorist attacks in Kabul; there was an attack on the Kabul parliament building, as well as several clashes in small settlements of Afghanistan. First of all, the events of 2015-2016 showed the inability of Afghanistan's national army and police to provide security for its own citizens and political forces.

B. Obama managed to end the protracted operation far from the American borders and succeeded in accomplishing its main goal, killing their leader, Osama bin Laden. However, it cannot be said that the war was over for Americans. Terrorists still controlled vast areas of Afghanistan and intimidated locals and politicians with terrorist attacks and assaults. Few U.S. troops remained on Afghan soil to maintain order and assist the government. Therefore, the next Republican president, D. Trump, had to deal with the virtually unsolvable Afghan issue.

5.2. President B. Obama's discourse on the Afghan war.

In the first year of his presidency, Obama faced a daunting task. The President needed to change the image of the war in Afghanistan. American soldiers were dying hundreds of miles from home in a war with an abstract enemy.

Barack Obama's inaugural address on January 20, 2009, marked the beginning of his presidency and set the tone for his foreign policy priorities, including his Afghanistan and counterterrorism strategy. Obama stated, "We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan." (President of the United States, 2009c) Also, the problem of Afghanistan began to be seen by Obama not only as a political and security issue but also an environmental one: "With old friends and former foes, we'll work tirelessly to lessen the nuclear threat, and roll back the specter of a warming planet." One of the goals of Obama's presidency was to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but while the President's predecessor paved the way for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, the situation on the Afghan front was not so clear. Although Obama did not provide a detailed analysis of the situation in Afghanistan in his inaugural address, his statements set the stage for subsequent actions and rhetoric. Addressing the need to protect the people and allies, justice as the basis of security, and international cooperation reflect his approach to foreign policy going forward.

With Obama's arrival, the Afghan people have come to be seen as just as much a victim of Taliban tyranny as Americans. Therefore, in his speeches, the President is beginning to address not only Americans but also the Afghan people, pinning his hopes on depopularizing the Taliban regime. It was strategically important for Obama to get in closer contact with the Afghan people since most of the American casualties were due to manifestations of guerrilla warfare.

On March 27, 2009, President Barack Obama gave a major speech in which he announced a new U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This speech marked a significant shift in the U.S. approach to conflict in the region, emphasizing a comprehensive and multilateral approach to counterterrorism. Obama clearly outlined the main goals of the new strategy: disrupting and dismantling the al-Qaida network, preventing its resurgence, and ensuring stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The President said, "if the Afghan government falls to the Taliban -- or allows al Qaeda to go unchallenged -- that country will again be a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of our people as they possibly can." (President of the United States, 2009b). Obama also stressed the importance of civilian and economic aid, announcing plans to increase assistance to rebuild infrastructure, education, and medical programs. Noticeably, the President also appealed to allies for help. He mentioned terrorist attacks in other countries prepared by al Qaeda, thus showing that the Taliban and al Qaeda problem is not just about America but about the whole world. This speech was an important turning point in U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Obama showed that he saw the conflict as multifactorial, requiring both a military and civilian approach. The new strategy envisioned not only fighting terrorists but also addressing the socio-economic problems that contribute to extremism.

B. Obama began to frequently mention that it was necessary to increase the military contingent in Afghanistan to help Afghan security forces and pursue insurgents. He argued that it was necessary to destroy terrorists in the country as soon as possible, which would help end the war.

By the middle of his first term, the President's rhetoric began to shift towards desecuritization. Therefore, on June 22, 2011, Obama announced that he would begin withdrawing 10,000 U.S. troops by the end of 2011 and another 23,000 by the summer of 2012. He emphasized that Afghan forces must assume responsibility for the country's security. He also declared the end of the operation in Afghanistan in 2014 (President of the United States, 2014). With this speech, it was evident that the Taliban was no longer seen as a threat. Obama stated, "So as we strengthen the Afghan government and security forces, America will join initiatives that reconcile the Afghan people, including the Taliban." He also goes on to add, "Those who want to be a part of a peaceful Afghanistan must break from al Qaeda, abandon violence, and abide by the Afghan constitution" (President of the United States, 2014) By this point, it was clear that the Taliban had enormous influence in the country, and a resolution to the conflict would have to take this fact into account.

The May 2012 NATO summit in Chicago was another important moment when Obama reaffirmed the commitment of the U.S. and its allies to end the combat mission in Afghanistan by the end of 2014. This international consensus supported the transition to Afghan governance, further underscoring the importance of joint efforts to stabilize the region.

Thirteen years after the start of the military Operation Enduring Freedom, B. Obama announced its completion on December 28, 2014. The President shared the successes of the operation and thanked the U.S. military for providing security for Americans. In doing so, he also said: "Afghanistan remains a dangerous place, and the Afghan people and their security forces continue to make tremendous sacrifices in defense of their country." (President of the United States, 2014). Thus, Obama shows that despite the ongoing tensions in the country, it is now a problem for Afghanistan, not the United States. That being said, the Afghan government is seen as an ally, and the U.S. will continue to advise and assist Afghanistan.

Between 2015 and 2017, Barack Obama's rhetoric towards Afghanistan and the Taliban continued to evolve, emphasizing a peace settlement and political process. This phase is characterized by the end of the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan, the beginning of the peace negotiation process, and attempts to strengthen Afghan state institutions to ensure long-term stability. However, despite the emphasis on peaceful resolution, Obama recognized the need for continued military support to Afghanistan. In October 2015, he announced a decision to keep about 9,800 U.S. troops in Afghanistan until the end of 2016, contradicting his previous plans for a complete withdrawal. In his speech, he explained, "Our troops will continue to pursue those two narrow tasks that I outlined earlier -- training Afghan forces and going after al Qaeda." (President of the United States, 2015). The measure was aimed at ensuring stability during the transition period and preventing a possible resurgence of terrorist organizations.

In the following years, Obama continued to emphasize the importance of the peace process. In 2015, he welcomed efforts to begin peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Obama also emphasized the importance of regional cooperation, bringing countries such as Pakistan into the process that could influence the Taliban and facilitate peace negotiations.

By the end of his presidency, Obama left a legacy of a more steady and balanced approach to Afghanistan. Obama's rhetoric focused on a peaceful resolution of the conflict

in Afghanistan and a gradual reduction in military presence. Obama has sought to balance the need to maintain security in the region with advancing the political process. His rhetoric, when compared to his predecessor, reflected the evolution of the U.S. approach to Afghanistan, from a military strategy to supporting peace initiatives and strengthening Afghan state institutions. He frequently mentioned the need for civilian and economic assistance for Afghanistan and its people. This change was aimed at creating a sustainable base for long-term stability and peace in Afghanistan.

5.3. End of Operation Iraqi Freedom and withdrawal from Iraq.

Barack Obama came to office with a promise to end the war in Iraq and focus on Afghanistan. However, Obama, who in his campaign promised to end "stupid wars" and focus on America's domestic reconstruction, has faced many challenges in trying to balance the need for security in the region and the desire to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq.

One of Obama's first steps as president was to announce his intention to end combat operations in Iraq. In February 2009, he unveiled a new strategy that envisioned the withdrawal of most U.S. combat forces from Iraq by August 2010. (President of the United States, 2009a). The remaining about 50 thousand soldiers were to perform tasks to support and train Iraqi security forces, as well as participate in counterterrorism operations. The same year marked the beginning of the gradual withdrawal of troops from Iraq under a plan signed by SOFA G. W. Bush. This process included transferring control of the provinces to Iraqi security forces, as well as changing the format of the U.S. troop presence. In June 2009, a significant event occurred: U.S. troops left Iraqi cities and redeployed to military bases outside populated areas. This move symbolized an important stage in the transfer of responsibility for Iraq's security to its government.

Also, during this time, U.S. troops conducted several counterterrorism operations against al Qaeda militants in Iraq. The Americans managed to eliminate the leaders Abu Ayyub al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, which weakened the organization.

During the same period, another election is held in Iraq. In March 2010, Iraq held parliamentary elections, which were an important test for the country's democratic institutions. The elections were accompanied by violence and accusations of fraud but eventually led to the formation of a new government. The process was complex and protracted, reflecting the continuing political divisions in the country. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who retained his position after the elections, faced accusations of authoritarianism

and curtailing the rights of the Sunni minority. This set the stage for a resurgent insurgency and an increase in terrorist attacks.

In August 2010, the end of hostilities was officially declared, and the remaining U.S. troops were reoriented to train and support Iraqi security forces. Obama announced the transition from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn, emphasizing the change in the role of U.S. troops from combat operations to stabilization and reconstruction tasks. This decision was supported by Congress and the public, tired of a prolonged and costly war. Officially launched on September 1, 2010, the operation symbolized the end of active combat operations and a new phase of U.S. presence in Iraq focused on training, advising, and support.

Despite significant efforts to stabilize Iraq, the situation in the country remained unstable, and sectarian conflicts and insurgent attacks continued. However, the Obama Administration remained committed to implementing its withdrawal plan. On October 21, 2011, President Obama announced the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of the year (President of the United States, 2011b). This decision was made after negotiations to extend the stay of U.S. troops failed. The U.S. and Iraqi governments were unable to agree on the legal status of the remaining U.S. soldiers, which was the reason for the final withdrawal. On December 18, 2011, the last U.S. troops left Iraq, ending a nearly nine-year military campaign. The final withdrawal marked the end of active U.S. involvement in the Iraq conflict.

The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq had significant political, military, and social implications for both Iraq and the United States. On the one hand, the withdrawal allowed Iraqi security forces to assume full responsibility for security in the country. On the other hand, Iraq faced serious challenges, including increased violence, sectarian conflict, and the rise of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State. For the U.S., the withdrawal marked the end of a long and costly military operation, allowing the Obama administration to focus on domestic issues and other foreign policy challenges. The international community received the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq with mixed reactions. Some welcomed the end of the military presence, while others expressed concern about further stability in the region.

5.4. B. Obama's rhetoric on the Iraq issue

In his first years in office, Barack Obama emphasized a responsible end to the war in Iraq, signaling a shift to desecuritization. His predecessor, G. W. Bush, paved the way for a

change in discourse at the end of his presidency to prepare for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq. This was combined with the peacemaking discourse during B. Obama's presidential campaign. Obama was reflected in his public speeches.

During a speech at Camp Lejeune in 2009, he announced that our combat mission in Iraq would end on August 31, 2010, emphasizing the transition from military intervention to political and economic stabilization. One of the new narratives the president used was the rhetoric that Iraq was now responsible for its own security "in a manner that ensures a successful transition of responsibility to Iraqi security forces." (President of the United States, 2009a) This statement sought to portray Iraq as a situation that could be managed through normal political processes rather than through extraordinary military measures. This was emphasized by listing the merits of the U.S. in establishing a democratic government in the United States. He emphasized the improved security situation, increased political stability, and economic development.

One of the significant speeches of his presidency, not only in the context of Iraq but also for the U.S., was the 2010 Oval Office address. Obama announced the end of combat operations in Iraq, stating, "Operation Iraqi Freedom is over, and the Iraqi people now bear the primary responsibility for the security of their country." (President of the United States, 2010) Obama emphasized the success of U.S. efforts in building the capacity of Iraqi governance and security forces, moving the issue from the military to the political sphere. However, in the same statement, he noted that the end of the operation did not mean an end to aid to the new Iraqi regime. Under the agreements, the U.S. was leaving its contingent to cooperate and train Iraq's military in dealing with terrorist activity in the country. "Our efforts are aimed at supporting the Iraqi government so they can secure and govern themselves." (President of the United States, 2010).

Like his predecessor, B. Obama, he has often appealed to the cohesiveness of U.S. citizens. In his 2011 speech at Fort Bragg, Obama used the phrase "fewer of our sons and daughters are in a war zone" (President of the United States, 2011c) when announcing the final withdrawal of troops, referring to U.S. soldiers. By emphasizing the reduction of the U.S. military presence, Obama sought to reassure the American public and highlight the progress made in stabilizing Iraq. Obama made a special reference to the efforts and sacrifices of the U.S. military in his speech, emphasizing their significant contribution to security and stability in Iraq. He noted that thanks to their actions, "the tide of war is receding." Obama noted that the military drawdown allowed the U.S. to focus on "diplomatic

and economic support for Iraq," an important step toward stability and prosperity in the region. The statement was intended to demonstrate U.S. willingness to work with international partners and support Iraq in its journey toward reconstruction and development. (President of the United States, 2011c)

Several key aspects of Obama's rhetoric during this period can be noted. First, Obama sought to shift the focus from military action to diplomatic and political processes. He repeatedly emphasized the importance of placing responsibility for security and governance in the hands of the Iraqi people. Second, Obama's rhetoric was aimed at reassuring an American public tired of the prolonged war. He emphasized successes in rebuilding Iraq and reducing the number of U.S. soldiers in the conflict zone. Third, Obama tried to build international support by demonstrating U.S. willingness to cooperate and assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

5.5. Analyzing the discourse on Afghanistan and Iraq in the documents of B. Obama's presidency.

At the beginning of Barack Obama's first presidential term, two important documents were released at once: Quadrennial Defense Review 2010 and National Security Strategy of the United States 2010. At this point, Obama had already announced the end of the military operation Iraqi Freedom, but despite this, both documents paid much attention to the conflict.

In the context of Iraq, QDR 2010 emphasizes the importance of transitioning from direct combat involvement to support and training of Iraqi security forces. The document states, "Our strategy in Iraq will focus on helping the Iraqi government build its capacity to address the challenges it faces and secure the country's future." (Secretary of Defence, 2010). This approach reflects Obama's strategic vision that Iraq's long-term sustainability and security depend on the country's ability to self-secure and manage its institutions. Another element of Obama's strategy outlined in the document was to reduce the number of U.S. troops and increase support in the form of training and equipping Iraqi security forces. This allows Iraq to take more responsibility for its security and reduces the risk of a prolonged U.S. military presence, which could lead to antagonism from the local population and regional forces. In addition, the development of Iraqi institutions has been recognized as critical to sustainability. Obama emphasized that without effective state structures that can provide law and order, governance, and basic services, any military successes will be short-

lived. Efforts, therefore, focused on strengthening Iraqi state institutions, which included support for elections, building good governance, and fighting corruption.

While the Iraq conflict was coming to an end, the Afghan issue was still high on the American foreign policy agenda. In Afghanistan, the paper proposes a more comprehensive and multi-layered approach. The paper emphasizes the need for a combination of military and civilian efforts to achieve U.S. objectives in the region. The main goal is to destroy al-Qaeda and its safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan. "In Afghanistan, our forces fight alongside allies and partners in renewed efforts to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda and the Taliban." stated the President. This strategy involves utilizing various instruments of state power, from military operations to civilian initiatives. The military component includes counterinsurgency operations aimed at disrupting Al Qaeda's infrastructure and ability to plan and execute attacks. However, military force alone is not enough to achieve sustainable peace. QDR 2010 emphasizes the importance of parallel strengthening of the Afghan government and socioeconomic development. Strengthening the Afghan government includes measures to increase its legitimacy and effectiveness. This is accomplished by supporting democratic processes, improving governance, and fighting corruption. Supporting socio-economic development includes investments in education, health, and infrastructure, which in turn should improve the quality of life of the population and reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies.

In the same year, the National Security Strategy document was published, which also addressed the priorities of the U.S. government in resolving the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As in QDR 2010, one of the main tasks in conflict resolution is "to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida and its violent extremist affiliates." This quote appears repeatedly throughout the document. The ideas in the document echo much of the narrative of the 2010 QDR but in less detail and more of an overview of accomplishments and strategy for Afghanistan and Iraq. The document emphasizes an integrated approach that combines military, development, and diplomatic efforts to create effective capabilities for the Afghan government.

By the release of the 2014 QDR document, the U.S. had ended its military operation in Iraq and significantly reduced its military presence in the country. In Afghanistan, the 2014 QDR outlines the planned transition to Afghan security leadership by the end of 2014. The document emphasizes the importance of sustained stability and long-term U.S. commitment to support Afghan forces. The document states, "As we end combat operations

in Afghanistan, we are prepared to transition to a limited mission focused on counterterrorism and training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces." (Secretary of Defence, 2014). The QDR emphasizes continued U.S. support through training and advising, reflecting the transition from direct combat operations to Afghan support for security and governance initiatives.

The 2015 National Security Strategy reflects the administration's adjustments to the changing situations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, the 2015 strategy emphasizes the transition to Afghan-led security and the continued U.S. commitment to support Afghanistan in counterterrorism and stabilization operations. The strategy states: "We will continue to support Afghanistan as long as it assumes full responsibility for its own security and governance" (President of the United States, 2015). This reflects a shift from direct combat operations to advisory and support roles, ensuring that Afghan forces can maintain stability and prevent the resurgence of terrorism. The NSS emphasizes the importance of sustained U.S. engagement in support of Afghan institutions and governance structures to build long-term resilience.

3. Transformation of U.S.-Afghan relations during the presidency of D. Trump.

Donald Trump's presidency marked a new turn in American foreign policy, especially in the context of counterterrorism operations. Trump came to power with a promise to "make America great again," focusing on domestic issues and reducing the U.S. military presence abroad. Despite these promises, however, his administration has been forced to continue the fight against international terrorism launched by previous presidents.

From the first days of his presidency, Trump has been faced with the need to respond to global threats and maintain American leadership in the world. Unlike his predecessor, Trump has emphasized the swift and decisive use of force, which is reflected in his policy in Afghanistan. He has expanded the use of drone airstrikes and special operations in an effort to eliminate key leaders of terrorist groups and undermine their ability to carry out attacks.

This chapter will examine President Trump's discourse to justify and legitimize the counterterrorism operation in Afghanistan, as well as the rationale for withdrawal. Documents such as the National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) will also be analyzed. It is worth noting that this chapter will not address the military operation in Iraq, as the U.S. officially withdrew troops from the country under the Obama administration. Instead, the focus will be on the operation in Afghanistan.

3.1 U.S. military presence in Afghanistan 2017-2021.

D. Trump has become one of the most odious American presidents. Having no experience in his political career, the businessman managed to win the 2016 election and become the 45th President of the United States. However, along with the leadership of the superpower, Trump got the unresolved problem of the deployment of American troops on Afghan territory and strengthening the positions of the Taliban. The American president faced the problem when he needs to put an end to the protracted hostilities and correct the mistakes of his predecessors B. Obama and G. Bush.

During his election program, D. Trump paid less attention to foreign policy than to domestic policy. His slogan “America first” was also reflected in the politician's views on international relations.

At this time, the situation in Afghanistan continued to worsen, and as mentioned earlier after the drawdown of the US allies in 2014, the influence of terrorist groups began to grow. From 2016-2017, a record number of terrorist attacks occurred, resulting in a high number of civilian casualties (Shafiq, 2017). The northern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan continued to experience unrest due to the rise of terrorist groups ISIS and Taliban. The Taliban were able to control much of the rural areas, which had typically remained uncontrolled and unconsolidated due to the continued absence of local government. The local population began to suffer first of all: economic instability, which was further exacerbated by the return of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries. This severely affected the country's economy and led to an increase in unemployment. The political situation also worsened, and corruption increased.

At this time in Washington D. Trump delegates much of his authority to the Department of Defense including the possibility of increasing the number of US troops by 9,000 (Benen, 2017). Under the leadership of the U.S. Department of Defense command in April 2017. States strikes the U.S. Army's most powerful non-nuclear bomb, Mother Of All

Bombs, against suspected militants of the self-proclaimed Islamic State in a cave complex in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province.

Months after the August 2017 strike, during a speech in Arlington, Virginia, the president announces his intentions to continue the war in Afghanistan (NYTimes, 2017). In his statement, Trump announced that he does not intend to limit the presence in Afghanistan to a time frame and that troop withdrawal will begin when the main objectives of the counterterrorism operation are achieved. He also announced a military buildup and plans to increase the U.S. presence in Afghanistan by 4,000 soldiers. Meanwhile, instead of recognizing Pakistan's sacrifices in the war on terrorism, as part of the new policy, Trump said that he will pursue a tough policy towards Pakistan. According to Trump's statements the Pakistani government is providing safe haven to terrorists and therefore he is cutting off all funding towards Pakistan.

As part of the implementation of the new concept in Afghanistan in the winter of 2018, U.S. commanders begin deploying military units to rural areas to resist Taliban forces (Nickel, 2018). The Americans bomb narcotics production facilities and advise local Afghan police forces to counter terrorists. In response, the Taliban respond with a powerful series of terrorist attacks in Kabul, killing more than 100 people.

These events demonstrated the inability of the Afghan government to ensure the security of citizens and the integrity of the state. Afghan President A. Ghani was interested not so much in suppressing terrorist movements as in his own political career. At that time, his attention was mainly occupied with the confrontation with his main political opponent A. Noor (Mackenzie & Sahak, 2018). In an attempt to eliminate his rival in the next presidential election in 2019, A. Ghani is no longer in control of the situation, causing the Taliban and other organizations to strengthen their position.

Along with the powerlessness of the Afghan government in the face of terrorism, it is becoming increasingly clear to the Americans that ignoring the Taliban is impossible to succeed. Therefore, in February 2019, for the first time in the history of such a long conflict, open talks were organized between the United States envoy Z. Khalilzad and Taliban Mullah A. Baradar in Doha . The talks centered on the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in exchange for the Taliban's promise to ban international terrorist groups from operating on Afghan territory. At the same time, Z. Khalilzada stated that the United States intended to insist that the Taliban agree to participate in a dialog on the political structure of the country, as well as agree to a cease-fire. However, after several months of long negotiations in

September 2019, U.S. President D. Trump announces the termination of peace talks, although a week before the chief U.S. negotiator Z. Khalilzad announced that an agreement in principle had been reached with Taliban leaders. Trump explained his decision to cancel the secret talks with the Taliban and Afghan President A. Ghani by the fact that the attack on the Taliban and the Afghan President. Ghani by the fact that an American soldier was killed as a result of a Taliban attack. In turn, the Taliban responded by threatening that canceling the meeting would increase the death toll.

By February 2020. The states and Taliban representatives do manage to reach an agreement: Z. Khalilzad and a Taliban negotiator sign an agreement in which the U.S. commits to significantly reduce the presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan and the Taliban guarantees that the country will not be used as a terrorist camp (US Department of State, 2020). However, the US-Taliban agreement did not provide for an immediate ceasefire, and within days of its signing, Taliban fighters launched dozens of attacks against the Afghan military, in response to which US forces launched airstrikes against Taliban fighters. Later in September 2020, the first intra-Afghan talks are held in Doha between Taliban representatives and the Afghan presidential administration. During the negotiations, the parties express their desire to achieve peace on Afghan territory but offer different ways of resolving the situation - secular and religious. Therefore, the negotiations are dragging on and the fighting between the two sides is gaining momentum.

In January 2021, the Trump administration, prior to the inauguration of J. Biden, announced the reduction of U.S. troops in Afghanistan to 2,500 (Clayton, 2020). The announcement was made as part of a U.S.-Taliban agreement under which, in exchange for the full withdrawal of international forces, the Taliban pledged to prevent other groups from using Afghan territory . Skeptics, however, say that the Taliban will continue to negotiate until they can secure a full U.S. withdrawal. Subsequently, the Taliban will be able to use their advantage on the battlefield and seize control of the country by force.

D. Trump's approach to solving the problem was indeed strikingly different from his predecessors. He managed to initiate a negotiation process between the United States, the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban organization, which goes against the policy of the previous Republican representatives of power. However, the innovative approach did not help D. Trump to achieve a complete withdrawal of troops and establish peace on Afghan territory. Therefore, the conflict cannot be called complete.

3.2 Evolution of the discourse on Afghanistan of President D. Trump.

D. Trump is a charismatic businessman and politician, and speeches have become his calling card. Therefore, it is particularly important for our study to examine how the politician has spoken out about the conflict in Afghanistan, terrorist movements and interactions with allies.

The most significant for the study was D. Trump's speech at the Fort Myer military base. In the summer of 2017, the politician addressed the nation from the city of Arlington, Virginia, where he outlined the main plans for the armed conflict in Afghanistan. The politician stated that he understands how exhausted the people of America are by the protracted military operation, as well as shares their frustration over a foreign policy that has “spent too much time, energy, money and, most importantly, lives - on trying to reshape countries in our own image instead of pursuing our security interests above all other considerations” .

As part of the speech, D. Trump outlined 3 main points of his new policy in Afghanistan:

The need for a clear strategy: Trump believed that without defeating terrorism all the sacrifices of the American people will be wasted. Therefore, a clear “victory plan” was needed. because Americans “deserve the necessary tools [to achieve victory], the credible tools to fight and win” ;

Continued military action on the territory of Afghanistan: the politician specified that although his “initial instinct was to withdraw the troops” , having given numerous briefings on Afghanistan. ; Having had numerous briefings on the Afghan issue with the U.S. Secretary of Defense, they concluded that “the consequences of a rapid withdrawal are predictable and unacceptable. September 11, the worst terrorist attack in our history, was planned and directed from Afghanistan because that country was run by a government that gave comfort and sanctuary to terrorists” and without American control, a repeat of 9/11 is likely;

Harsh criticism of Pakistan: unlike other politicians, D. Trump has stated that he considers the Pakistani government hostile because “there are 20 U.S.-listed foreign terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the highest concentration in any region of the world. Pakistan, for its part, often provides sanctuary to facilitators of chaos, violence and terror” . And the situation is exacerbated by the fact that Pakistan possesses nuclear

weapons, so the country's government should be more involved in countering terrorism (NYTimes, 2017).

The politician also announced that he expected the Afghan government to “resolve and make progress” in domestic politics and to finally “shoulder the military, political and economic burden,” as the country was under daily threat of terrorist attacks and the economy was in urgent need of modernization. as the country was under daily threat of terrorist attacks and the economy needed urgent modernization.

D. Trump's new strategy showed the politician's intention to set not the final terms of the operation, but to limit himself to achieving specific goals. Also, the politician showed that he did not intend to engage in nation-building in Afghanistan. Moreover, it was emphasized that the support of the United States for the Afghan government depends on its effectiveness and intention to develop the state. It became clear that Trump does not share the views of previous Republican politicians and considers their strategies flawed, although he agrees on the necessity of military action.

3.3 Transformation of the discourse on the conflict in Afghanistan in official documents 2017-2021.

During D. Trump's presidency, there have been changes not only in the military operation in Afghanistan, but also in the discourse broadcast in official documents of the United States.

It is also worth noting that this chapter will use a new source for analysis - the National Defense Strategy of the United States (NDS). The NDS became the 2018 successor to the Quadrennial Defense Review, which was canceled two years earlier. This document examines the military and political aspects of U.S. policy, specifically military planning and strategy guidance. Like its predecessor, this document is released every 4 years.

The text of the updated version of the National Security Strategy released in 2017 states from the preface of the document that the United States government and the U.S.

Department of Security, which produces the NSS, continues to see itself as a key fighter against terrorism, particularly in the Middle East: “The United States faces an extremely dangerous world, encompassed by a wide range of threats that have intensified in recent years. [...] Radical Islamist terrorist groups have flourished. Terrorists have seized control

of vast areas of the Middle East” (President of the United States, 2017), ‘U.S. interests in the region include countering terrorist threats that affect the security of the United States and our allies, preventing cross-border terrorism that raises the prospect of military and nuclear tensions, and preventing nuclear weapons, technology, and materials from falling into the hands of terrorists’ (President of the United States, 2017). At the same time, within the framework of the document, the Trump administration decided not to single out Afghanistan as a separate problem, although the Taliban's positions were still strong on the territory of the state. The state was considered only as one of the problems of the Middle East region and was mentioned in conjunction with other problematic territories such as Iran and Pakistan. The problem of terrorist organizations in the territory of the country was planned to be solved comprehensively, including because the groups have long gone beyond the borders of one country and have already strengthened their influence in other states.

Interestingly, this document changed the rhetoric regarding the Afghan Taliban terrorist movement. In the text of the document, the organization was still equated with such terrorist groups as ISIS and al-Qaida. The justification for the deployment of the U.S. military contingent on the territory of Afghanistan still sounded like “strengthening the combat power of the Afghan security forces” (President of the United States, 2017), but the basis for this was used a completely different motive: “to convince the Taliban that they cannot win on the battlefield and to create conditions for diplomatic efforts to achieve lasting peace” (President of the United States, 2017). This is fundamentally different from the position of President J. Bush, who completely denied the possibility of a negotiation process with terrorists. One can interpret these excerpts from the document as a desire to find a compromise in the protracted conflict.

The document also focused on the relationship between the United States and the American-recognized Afghan government: “[The Americans] will continue to promote anti-corruption reform in Afghanistan to increase the legitimacy of its government and reduce the appeal of extremist organizations” (President of the United States, 2017) and will help “strengthen states whose weakness or failure would increase threats to our homeland [America]. For example, [Americans'] activities in Afghanistan are designed to prevent terrorist camps from strengthening” (President of the United States, 2017). Despite the fact that Trump stated that he would stop investing in nation-building in Afghanistan, the text of the document still shows the intention to support the regime put in place by the

Americans to prevent the threat of the Taliban taking over.

As in previous documents, special attention is paid to U.S. cooperation with other countries in countering terrorism. However, the main attention was paid not to European colleagues and partners of world organizations, but to Pakistan and India as Afghanistan's closest neighbors.

After a year of D. Trump's presidency, the National Defense Strategy, developed by the Department of Defense, is released in 2018. The document is a refinement of the already existing National Security Strategy of 2017.

One of the main messages of the document is the realization by the United States that military advantage alone cannot achieve the desired goals: “Today we are emerging from a period of strategic weakness, realizing that our competitive military advantage is waning. We face a growing global disorder characterized by a weakening of the long-established rules-based international order, resulting in a more complex and volatile security environment than we have faced in the past” (President of the United States, 2018). In turn, this statement has also affected the United States' policy in Afghanistan. The Trump administration has realized that even with the most powerful military capabilities, it is impossible to eradicate the cause of military confrontation in Afghanistan - terrorism, and it is necessary to look for alternative approaches to solving the issue.

This is also why the text of the document emphasized the need to enlist the support of countries in the region. Like Afghanistan, they also suffer from terrorist attacks and militant violence, so it is in their interests to reduce the influence of terrorist organizations and thus strengthen their power: “Forming strong coalitions in the Middle East. We will foster a stable and secure Middle East that does not allow terrorists to take refuge in safe havens, that is not dominated by any power hostile to the United States, and that contributes to the stability of world energy markets and the security of trade routes” (President of the United States, 2018). For the Americans, this made it possible to gain allies in the region and reduce cash injections and military presence in Afghanistan.

In both documents, it is possible to trace the change in American attitudes towards the issue of relations with political forces in Afghanistan and allies in countering terrorism. It becomes clear that even at the level of official documents the U.S. is ready to transform its views on the issues of resolving the protracted conflict.

Discussion of Empirical Findings

Based on the results of the content analysis, we can form 8 tables corresponding to two topics summarizing the discourse of presidents in their speeches and official documents regarding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. For convenience, the tables are divided by chapters corresponding to the presidential terms of J. Bush, B. Obama and D. Trump and by military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Bush's discourse on wars

The first table examines the securitization of the issue of intervention in Afghanistan and the rationale for the presence of U.S. troops in the country throughout G. W. Bush's presidential term.

Securitization		
Category	Code	Example
Existential threat	Threat to the existence of the U.S.	Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. (President of the United States, 2001a)
	A danger not only to the US, but to the entire world	America and our friends and allies join with all those

		who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism (President of the United States, 2001a)
The friend-enemy discourse	The Taliban has ties to al Qaeda terrorists	The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country. (President of the United States, 2001b)
	Those who are not allies of the U.S. are enemies	Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. (President of the United States, 2001b)
	The inhuman nature of the enemy	Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. (President of the United States, 2001a)

Table 1: Bush’s discourse on war in Afghanistan

The second table shows how Bush was able to securitize the problem of Iraq and Saddam Hussein's regime.

Securitization		
Category	Code	Example
Existential threat	The threat of weapons of mass destruction	Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening

		America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction (President of the United States, 2002b)
	An “axis of evil” threatening the entire world.	States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world (President of the United States, 2002b)
The friend-enemy discourse	Iraqi regime links to terrorism	Iraq has become the central front in the global war on terror. Victory there is critical to the future security of the United States (Secretary of Defence, 2006)
	The authoritarian regime of Saddam Hussein	Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us (President of the United States, 2002c).

Table 2: Bush’s securitization discourse on war in Iraq

At the end of the president's second term, the rhetoric regarding Iraq shifted to securitization of the conflict, which was necessary to end an unpopular war.

Desecuritization		
Category	Code	Example

Reducing the threat level	Fewer terrorists	While the enemy is still dangerous and more work remains, the American and Iraqi surges have achieved results few of us could have imagined just one year ago (President of the United States, 2005a).
Transfer of responsibility	Iraq's security depends on its government	Iraqis have already begun to deliver on some of these promises. ... And now Iraq's leaders must meet the other pledges they have made (President of the United States, 2007a).

Table 2: Bush's desecuritization discourse on war in Iraq

Obama's discourse on wars

Securitization		
Category	Code	Example
Security threats	Ongoing terrorist threat	to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida and its violent extremist affiliates (Secretary of Defence, 2010)
Humanitarian and democratic goals	Focus on recovery and development	And it includes Afghan commitments to transparency and accountability, and to protect the human rights of all Afghans -- men and women, boys and girls

		(President of the United States, 2012).
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Table 4: Obama’s discourse on war in Afghanistan

Desecuritization		
Category	Code	Example
Reducing the threat level	Fewer terrorists	We will not police its streets or patrol its mountains indefinitely. That is the responsibility of the Afghan government, which must step up its ability to protect its people (President of the United States, 2011a)
Transfer of responsibility	Afghanistan's security depends on its government	We will not police its streets or patrol its mountains indefinitely. That is the responsibility of the Afghan government, which must step up its ability to protect its people. (President of the United States, 2011a).

Table 5: Obama’s discourse on war in Afghanistan

Desecuritization		
Category	Code	Example
Reducing the threat level	Fewer terrorists	“Al Qaeda in Iraq has been dealt a serious blow by our troops and Iraq’s Security Forces, and through our partnership with Sunni

		Arabs“ (President of the United States, 2009a).
Transfer of responsibility	Iraq's security depends on its government	Iraqi Freedom is over, and the Iraqi people now bear the primary responsibility for the security of their country. (President of the United States, 2010).

Table 6: Obama’s discourse on war in Iraq

Trump’s discourse on war

President Trump focused on the desecuritization of Afghanistan, highlighting successes in the fight against terrorism and the development of Afghan security forces. His rhetoric included plans for troop withdrawal, a shift to a supporting U.S. role, peace talks with the Taliban, and an emphasis on economic and political reconstruction of the country.

Securitization		
Category	Code	Example
Instability in the region	Failure of the Afghan Government to provide for its own security	The government of Afghanistan must carry their share of the military, political, and economic burden (NYTimes, 2017).
	Residuals of terrorist organizations	U.S. interests in the region include countering terrorist threats that affect the security of the United States and our allies, preventing cross-border terrorism that raises the prospect of military and nuclear

		tensions, and preventing nuclear weapons, technology, and materials from falling into the hands of terrorists (President of the United States, 2017).
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Table 7: Trump’s discourse on war in Afghanistan

Desecuritization		
Category	Code	Example
Moving away from the “us-them” concept	The start of negotiations with the Taliban	to convince the Taliban that they cannot win on the battlefield and to set the conditions for diplomatic efforts to achieve enduring peace. (President of the United States, 2017).

Table 8: Trump’s discourse on war in Afghanistan

The discourse of securitization of Afghanistan has undergone significant changes during the presidencies of George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. Each administration brought different emphases and priorities to the approach to the Afghan conflict, reflecting both domestic and international political realities.

Under President George W. Bush, the discourse of securitization of Afghanistan was tightly linked to the global war on terrorism. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Bush argued that Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, provided a safe haven for al Qaeda and thus posed a direct existential threat to U.S. security. President Barack Obama inherited the war in Afghanistan but sought to change its strategy and rhetoric. His approach included attempts to balance military action with diplomatic efforts. President Donald Trump has made sweeping changes to the discourse on securitization of Afghanistan, focusing on America's national interest as well as initiating a negotiation process with the Taliban.

The change in the discourse of Iraq securitization from Bush to Obama reflects the evolution

of American foreign policy and public sentiment. From aggressive intervention and attempts at democratization under Bush, through Obama's balanced approach emphasizing devolution of responsibility and political settlement, each administration has brought unique elements to this complex and ongoing conflict. Bush presented Iraq as an immediate threat requiring immediate and decisive action, while Obama sought de-escalation, devolution, and diplomatic settlement, emphasizing reconstruction and the long-term stability of the region.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the evolution of American presidents' views on the military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 21st century. We attempted to trace the transformation of the discourse of US presidents through the prism of their public speeches and official documents, as well as to identify the main patterns in the texts and how they have changed after two decades.

The author of the study decided to use the securitization theory to achieve the set goal. Securitization theory explores the conceptualization of problems as existential threats. It analyzes what rhetorical tools are used to securitize the problem: building a friend-enemy discourse, justifying the introduction of extraordinary measures, explaining the reason for the adversary's appearance.

Qualitative content analysis was chosen as the research method. First, it allowed us to identify key themes, ideas and messages that politicians sought to convey to the audience. Second, CAC helps to understand how rhetoric was used to shape public opinion and persuade the audience to certain positions. Third, it allowed us to assess changes in rhetoric and emphasis over time, revealing the evolution of political strategies. Fourth, qualitative content analysis helped to uncover hidden meanings and subtexts that may not be obvious from a superficial perception.

As part of the content analysis, the task was to analyze speeches and texts for certain thematic patterns that can be traced in the discourse of politicians. For this purpose, the author selected the following sources: texts of National Security Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review (and National Defense Strategy) documents, as they reflect the main military strategies and threats to US national security. In selecting the speeches of Republican presidents, the author relied on the following criteria: length of speeches, presence of formal discourse. In addition, the topic of the speeches had to correspond to the goals and objectives of the paper (the military conflict in Afghanistan, the war against terrorism and terrorist organizations such as the Taliban, interaction with allies on these issues). In order to analyze the discourse of Republican politicians during the opposition period for the Republican Party, election programs and debates corresponding to the topics outlined earlier were selected.

The initial phase of the operation in Afghanistan was accompanied by the following

assessments by President J. Bush:

- 1) The Afghan Taliban regime was regarded as enemy - no distinction was made between the al-Qaida militants who committed the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 and the Taliban who harbored them in Afghanistan. In American eyes, the existence of the Taliban was supposed to be a threat to American security;
- 2) In order to gain the support of foreign countries, the president interpreted the threat of terrorism not only as a threat to the national security of the United States, but also as a problem for the rest of the world. At the same time, at the beginning of the intervention, G. Bush repeatedly emphasized the importance of allied sacrifices to achieve the final goal of eradicating terrorism;
- 3) The war was presented as a necessity, politicians emphasized the patriotic sentiments of the American society. Politicians justified the necessity of waging war by the nature of the enemy, whose values do not correlate with American values - freedom and democracy. Therefore, the enemies represented by members of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda organization, in the opinion of J. Bush, were incompetent.

President J. Bush, toward the end of his presidency, shifted the discourse on the conflict in Iraq from securitization to desecuritization.

Securitization:

- 1) George W. Bush characterized Iraq as part of an “axis of evil,” arguing that Saddam Hussein's regime posed a serious threat to world security. He emphasized the repeated violation of UN conventions by the Iraqi leader and that Saddam Hussein's values do not align with the democratic ideals of the United States.
- 2) Bush actively promoted the idea that Iraq possessed and was developing weapons of mass destruction. He used this rhetoric to justify the need for preventive military action, arguing that Hussein could use these weapons against the U.S. and its allies.
- 3) President Bush emphasized Iraq's alleged ties to terrorist groups, including Al Qaeda. He argued that Saddam Hussein could give terrorists access to weapons of mass destruction, posing a direct threat to America, which justified the need for military

intervention.

Desecuritization:

- 1) Toward the end of his presidency, George W. Bush began to tone down the rhetoric on Iraq, de-emphasizing the existential threat and emphasizing successes in stabilizing the region. He spoke of progress in building a democratic government and reducing violence;
- 2) Bush began emphasizing the transfer of responsibility for Iraqi security to Iraqi forces and the gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops. He emphasized the successes of Iraqi security forces and the need for diplomatic and political efforts to further stabilization;

President B. Obama ended two operations in the Middle East, which was also reflected in his discourse.

Regarding Iraq, the president used the following rhetoric:

- 1) Obama sought to change the focus from military action to diplomatic efforts and a political settlement. He repeatedly emphasized the importance of placing responsibility for security and governance in the hands of the Iraqi people, helping to strengthen local institutions and the economy.
- 2) Obama's rhetoric was aimed at reducing tensions among an American public tired of a prolonged war. He emphasized successes in rebuilding Iraq and a gradual reduction in the number of U.S. soldiers in the conflict zone to show progress and reduce public anxiety.
- 3) Obama sought the support of the international community by demonstrating U.S. willingness to cooperate and assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. This helped strengthen international coalitions and legitimize U.S. efforts in the eyes of the international community.

To achieve a settlement in Afghanistan, B. Obama pursued two strategies.

At the beginning of his first presidential term, he securitized the issue of the Afghan conflict in his speeches:

- 1) At the beginning of his presidency, Obama argued for increasing the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan as necessary to fight the Taliban and al Qaeda, emphasizing that Afghanistan remains the central front in the war against terrorism and requires enhanced security measures. He emphasized the threat posed by terrorists to the national security of the U.S. and its allies, justifying the need for continued combat and increased military

operations.

Subsequently, to argue for the withdrawal of troops and the end of the military operation, B. Obama gradually desecuritized the problem of Afghanistan:

1) The President emphasized successes in the fight against terrorists and the strengthening of Afghan security forces. He began to shift the focus from military action to diplomatic efforts and support for the Afghan government;

2) In the last years of his presidency, Obama emphasized the importance of Afghanistan's long-term stability and development through civilian and economic measures. He spoke of the need for international cooperation and assistance to sustain the gains made, de-emphasizing military action and increasing the focus on political and economic processes.

D. Trump's policy in many issues differed from his predecessors and the Afghan issue was no exception. Unlike G. Bush and B. Obama, the politician's positions on the issue of warfare in Afghanistan were accompanied by the following discursive paradigms:

1) The Taliban was still classified by the politician as a terrorist organization. However, according to the politician, it was impossible to achieve the establishment of a peace process in Afghanistan without an agreement with the movement's representatives. Therefore, it was necessary to conclude a truce between the US, Afghanistan and the Taliban;

2) Military presence on the territory of Afghanistan was still seen by the politician as necessary, also because the Afghan government had shown its inability to ensure security control on its own territory;

3) Also a distinctive feature of D. Trump's discourse was the fact that the politician openly criticized Pakistan, because, in his opinion, the country had become a safe haven for terrorists. Of particular concern was the fact that Pakistan has nuclear potential and when terrorists seized power, there were reasons to believe that they could use its power. This is also why D. Trump began to point to India as the main ally in the region.

The present study may become the basis for further research on the conceptualization of military interventions conducted by the United States of America and be useful for researchers of the discourse of American politicians.

Certainly, there is still a wide field for research on various aspects of the discourse of

American presidents, including with regard to Middle Eastern countries and, in particular, Afghanistan and Iraq. How the problem of the Afghan conflict is disclosed in mass culture: movies, books, etc., how the intervention is covered in the Republican-loyal media and on the personal pages of politicians in social networks (such as twitter, facebook, etc.), and many other aspects. These issues can be subsequently considered by the author in the framework of other studies devoted to the discourse of presidents on US military interventions in the Middle East.

Summary

[The conclusion also needs to be translated into English. If the thesis is written in a foreign language, it must include a conclusion in Czech.]

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