# Foreign Policy and Critical Security: The US Foreign Policy Towards Israel[*]

## *Dış Politika ve Eleştirel Güvenlik: ABD'nin İsrail'e Yönelik Dış Politikası*

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**Abstract**

Security is defined differently by classical and critical perspectives. The debate on security between classical and critical perspectives illustrates the inadequacy of the classical tradition. This article provides the approaches of classical and critical perspectives towards security and their shortcomings. The article argues that critical perspectives are much more effective than the classical approach regarding the understanding and resolution of security problems. It provides a critical reformulation of Foreign Policy (FP) which has been based on the classical approach. The article also examines the US FP towards Israel regarding the Arab-Israel wars and the US peace efforts, recommending that the US adopt an FP based on critical security for these issues.

*Keywords:* Classical security, critical security, foreign policy, the US, Israel

*Jel Codes:* Y8; Z0

**Öz**

Güvenlik, klasik ve eleştirel perspektifler tarafından farklı tanımlanmıştır. Klasik ve eleştirel perspektiflerin güvenlik üzerine tartışmaları, klasik geleneğin yetersizliğini göstermiştir. Bu makale, klasik ve eleştirel perspektiflerin güvenlik kavramına yaklaşımlarını ve eksikliklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Makale, eleştirel perspektiflerin güvenlik sorunlarına anlama ve çözümünde klasik yaklaşıma göre daha etkili olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Çalışma, klasik yaklaşım temelli olan Dış Politikanın (DP) eleştirel yaklaşımdan yeniden formülleştirilmesini sunmaktadır. Çalışma, Arap-İsrail savaşları ve ABD'nin barış çabaları konularında ABD'nin İsrail'e yönelik DP'sini de incelerken ABD'ye bu konularda eleştirel güvenlik temelli DP'yi benimsemesini önermektedir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Klasik güvenlik, eleştirel güvenlik, dış politika, ABD, İsrail

*Jel Kodları:* Y8; Z0

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Security issues have had a significant place in the foreign policies of states throughout history. Foreign policies have mostly been shaped by mainstream (classical) security perspective throughout history. However, the classical security perspective falls short in meeting security related demands of foreign policies in today's world. Thus, this article aims to demonstrate the competency of critical perspectives regarding security by comparing classical and critical approaches. In addition, the study seeks to reformulate Foreign Policy (FP) based on critical security perspectives because critical perspectives, with their wider and

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more inclusive characteristics, cover security related issues better. Moreover, the article pursues to analyse the US FP towards Israel regarding the Arab-Israel wars and the US peace efforts. In this regard, the study seeks to illustrate how classical security approach has been dominant in the US FP towards Israel regarding the Arab-Israel wars and the US peace efforts, and how and why it should be guided by critical perspectives.

It has three main sections. The first section provides classical and critical security perspectives to see how classical security perspective falls short in today's world, and how critical security perspective can help to overcome these shortcomings of classical perspective. In addition, shortcomings of critical security perspective will also be examined. Second section seeks to see how critical security perspective can help us in FP. Lastly, the third section will examine the US FP towards Israel regarding the Arab-Israel wars and the US peace efforts. In this regard, the section provides how FP based on critical security approaches which has wider and inclusive characteristic can serve better to the US FP towards Israel that has been directed by classical security approach.

## 2. CLASSICAL AND CRITICAL SECURITY PERSPECTIVES

Security has always been a prerequisite for other activities of humans and states. However, security is perceived differently by classical and critical security perspectives. Firstly, this study examines classical (mainstream) security perspective by considering criteria (security definition, referent object, areas, methodology, and opinion on morality/ethics). Then, the study provides shortcomings of mainstream perspective. After that, critical security perspective will be examined through the same criteria. Lastly, following issues will be examined: (1) How critical perspective can overcome shortcomings of mainstream security perspective, and (2) what shortcomings critical security perspective has.

### 2.1. Classical Security Perspective

What is security from classical perspective? Security is defined as 'physical survival' by classical logic, particularly by realism. Whose survival or security? Mainstream security theories see 'state' as the main referent object of security (Hough, 2008: 3). In addition, state is also security provider according to mainstream security theories as security is a public good (Kirshner, 2010: 55). So, state's survival must be secured from threat in the classical security perspective. How does a state lose its survival? According to classical perspective, state dies because of losing its sovereignty in a war. The main security threat comes from military realm according to classical logic. Hence, state security is absence of military threat from others (Acharya, 1997: 299).

Scholars of classical security perspective, especially realism, believe in universal knowledge and universal laws which governs social interactions (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1997: 4; Walt, 1991: 221). In social sciences, these knowledge and laws can be detected and tested by scientific methods (positivist methodology) like methods of natural science (Walt, 1991: 222; Hurd, 2008: 306-307). As these laws and knowledge are unchanging, trans-historical, and universal, they can be applied to analysis of security issues faced by former states (like Athens, Romans, and the Ottomans etc) in the history as well as analysis of security issues of modern states (the USA, Russia, and Afghanistan etc). Classical security also sees inclusion of morality/ethics in security related issues as dangerous. Classical security perspective sees the nature of state as untrustworthy because they may use morality as a disguise of their national interests (like security) to justify these hidden goals (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1997: 13). Hence, security (or interest) must be separated from morality although classical security perspective accepts existence of morality (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1997: 12-13; Hurd, 2008: 307-308).

During the Cold War, classical logic reigned over other logics of security due to rivalry between two poles: the USSR and the USA. Two sides focused on state survival and so-called high politics (military related issues) in the rivalry. In security realm, their priorities mostly were arm race, nuclear weapons, military operations, strategic studies and policies, arm reduction agreements. So, classical security perspective focused on material factors (Navari, 2008: 42). Other dimension and areas were also raised by scholars during the Cold War. During the 1960s and 1970s, increased economic interactions led IR scholars to think about economic dimension of security (Hough, 2008: 3). During the 1960s and 1970s, health issues related to environment also initiated international efforts like the UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in 1972 at Stockholm including 113 countries although the USSR and the Eastern Bloc did not attend (Hough, 2008: 146). Even before the Cold War, Women Peace Activists conveyed a conference at Hague in 1915 (during the World War I) to discuss the role of women in peace, security, and war (Tickner and True, 2018: 1). Marxist tradition pointed out economic inequalities as a source of insecurity; and the use of military by the capitalist states to protect interests of a specific class (bourgeoisie) rather than security interests of all classes or whole nation (Hough, 2008: 5). However, all these efforts and dimensions (areas) were ignored or underestimated by states or mainstream security scholars during the Cold War.

### 2.2. The Critique of Classical Security Perspective

Considering the efforts and dimensions mentioned above and changing conditions over time has led to many criticisms of mainstream security perspective. Firstly, its definition was criticised for being too narrow because it covers only physical survival. However, security requires more than physical well-being such as equality and freedom from oppression. Secondly, its state-centric perspective is also criticised. From the mainstream perspective, the state is the referent object and security provider. This is paradoxical because security provider must be protected from threats. The state as citizens' security provider is problematic. Numerous cases in the history showed that state can also be source of insecurity such as atrocities and oppressions by states against both own citizens and citizens of others in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, and religion and so on. In addition, state as referent object of security is also problematic because security of state does not mostly bring security to humans or the environment (including animals and plants). Moreover, state-centrism (particularly nation-state) brings a top-down process for dealing with security issues, but mostly bottom-up process is needed for dealing with security issues. Furthermore, state-centrism often ignores non-state actors such as individuals, NGOs, social movements, international organisations. Thirdly, its overemphasis on military dimension is also criticised. There are other significant dimensions of security such as economy, class, gender, environment, health, organised crime, and identity.

The pursuit of mainstream security perspective for universal knowledge and laws by positivist methodology is also criticised. The post-positivist perspective includes qualitative methods such as interpretative methods (as coined by Clifford Geertz), practical knowledge (like Feminism uses), situated knowledge (as coined by Harraway in post-colonialist perspective). For instance, practical reasoning can be used as a method to understand rather than explain many issues including security issues (Tickner, 2001: 8). Practical knowledge can be acquired from daily life by working at local the level to deal with daily life problems (Tickner, 2001: 129-138). Daily life problems may cause serious security threats to individuals. Situated knowledge assumes that partial perspective as a starting point for theorising can delimit claims of universality and generalisation about the social world (Epstein, 2014: 298-

299). Hence, post-positivist methods are as scientific as positivist methods in terms of analysis of security issues despite their rejection of the classical security perspective.

As classical security believes in universal and trans-historical knowledge, it is criticised being a-historical. According to Historical Sociology, a-historical characteristic of mainstream brings two problems: chronofetishism and tempocentrism (Hobson, 2002: 7). Chronofetishism assumes that explanation of the present can be sufficiently done by only looking at the present (Hobson, 2002: 6). Tempocentrism reconstructs "all historical systems so as to conform to a reified and naturalised present, they tarnish all systems as homologous or 'isomorphic' (i.e., as having the same structure)" (Hobson, 2002: 9). Hence, classical security perspective sees security analysis of historical cases and modern cases as same. However, today's security cases differ from past cases due to different conditions.

In sum, classical security perspective is criticised from many aspects: its narrow security definition, state-centrism, overemphasis on single area (military), positivist methodology (or so-called scientific methods) by omitting other methods (post-positivist), and ignoring morality (or ethics), ideational factors, and other disciplines (like history). All these critiques showed inadequacy of classical security perspective for understanding and explaining security. In Ken Booth's words (1991: 313), "our words do not work anymore".

### 2.3. Critical Security Perspectives

After the Cold War, critical security perspectives flourished. Booth (2007: 27) argues that critical security perspectives had two stages. In the first stage, they accumulated knowledge on security outside the mainstream perspective before constructing a theory (Booth, 2007: 27). In the second, they constructed critical security theories as an outcome of knowledge accumulation (Booth, 2007: 30). Consequently, many IR theories brought their explanations for security. Therefore, there is no single critical security perspective. However, there are many commonalities among these critical security perspectives. According to Booth (2007: 38-39), critical security perspectives have six characteristics: (1) they are *universalist* as they aim theorising for whole humanity; (2) they are *inclusive* due to their cosmopolitan spirit; (3) they aim *emancipation*; they are (4) *normative* and (5) *progressive* (change in both politics and morality); (6) they are *critical* as they stand outside the status quo. Hence, this paper examines critical security perspectives by focusing on their commonalities based on criteria (definition, referent object, areas, methodology, and view on morality/ethics) instead of one-by-one examination of perspectives.

First, critical security perspectives provided wider security definition. As physical survival is insufficient for security, critical perspective included emancipation into its definition. In Booth words (2007: 102), security is *survival-plus*. The concept of emancipation is basically being secure from all oppressions and restrictions to decide and live in "compatible with the freedom of others" (Booth, 2007: 112). Secondly, critical security perspectives are mostly human-centric rather than state-centric (Hough, 2008: 8). Their referent object is human and even in some cases non-human objects such as environment, animals, and plants. Additionally, critical security perspectives recognise roles of non-state actors in security. Furthermore, in security analysis, critical security perspectives adopt bottom-up approach which is human-centric (Tickner, 2001: 46-47). Thirdly, as critical security perspectives put human and non-human referent objects at the centre of their analysis, they cover more areas such as identity (including class, gender, ethnic, religion etc), military (from state and non-state actors), economy, environment, health, natural and human-made catastrophes.

As a result of critique of positivist methods, critical security perspectives use mostly post-positivist methods. Critical theories are aware of value-laden nature of knowledge and theory. In Cox's words (1981: 128), "theory is always for someone and for some purpose". This does not mean that post-positivist methods are not scientific. According to Patrick T. Jackson, post-positivist IR methods pursue provide full picture of "the research process as a social and ethical process" (Tickner and True, 2018: 10). So, these methods can help us to reach and accumulate other sources of knowledge related to security, which cannot be accomplished by positivist methods because positivism sees these kinds of methodology and knowledge as unscientific. In addition, critical security perspectives include ideational factors with material factors unlike classical perspective's overemphasis on material factors (McDonald, 2008: 61). Moreover, critical perspectives believe that every action has its moral/ethical consequences, so they believe that inclusion of the analysis of moral/ethical consequences of actions is necessary (Hurd, 2008: 307). So, morality/ethics has significant place in critical security perspectives unlike mainstream security perspective, especially realism. Critical security perspectives also cooperate with other disciplines such as history, sociology, economics, psychology and psycho-analytic, anthropology. Hence, critical security perspectives are aware of differences over time and space, and among societies. Critical security is hardly a-historical and a-sociological unlike classical perspective. Hence, all these contributions of critical perspectives can help us to overcome shortcomings of classical perspective.

### 2.4. The Critique of Critical Security Perspectives

Critical security perspectives are not free from criticism. Walt (1991: 213) raises three criticisms due to wider definition and broader agenda; (1) critical perspectives make security studies chaotic and disturb academic coherence; (2) this kind of definition and agenda of security makes solution of important problems harder; (3) most security related published works (including critical ones) do not meet scientific standards because security is highly politicised issue; and most works are propaganda rather than scientific. Walt's criticisms derive from classical security view.

There may be some responses from critical security perspectives to these criticisms. Firstly, un-comprehended, unknown, and undefined concepts and problems bring chaos to the World. Ignoring concepts and problems, working with narrow definition in a limited space do not promote academic coherence. On the contrary, it causes chaos in academia because it leaves many parameters and areas 'undefined' or 'out of security analysis'. Secondly, so-called dichotomy of important and insignificant problems does not help us because importance is a conditional entity. For instance, from classical perspective, health issues are about low politics. An invisible virus (Covid-19) can cause serious security threat to whole globe more than many military threats can. Solution of 'important problems' may require wider perspective which can be reached by wider definition and broader agenda. Thirdly, labelling a published work as unscientific due to its methodological, ontological, epistemological differences may also be called a propaganda rather than scientific. Debate between positivism and post-positivism does not mean that one is scientific and other is not. Post-positivism has also contributed to the security literature. For instance, how would we be able to explain 'why civil wars break out' or 'why some classes and women protest some actions of state' without employing wider definition and broader agenda or without including ideational factors and post-positivist methods? Hence, published works from critical security perspectives enable us to find out answers to these kinds of questions in a scientific way.

As critical security perspectives are not a unified camp, they also criticise each other. According to Ayoob (1997: 127), the notion of emancipation of the Welsh School

(Emancipatory Realism – Ken Booth) may be blamed to be the Western or Liberal value; it may cause misunderstanding and serious security problems in the Third World. Similarly, Bilgin (2008: 100) argues that universally precise description of emancipation is hard in abstract and theoretical terms. Yet, Bilgin (2008: 101) claims that we should not stop rethinking "various dimensions of power (hard and soft, material and representational)" to define what security and emancipation mean in a specific cultural community. So, Bilgin (2008: 101) argues that the Welsh School's response offers "critical engagement rather than despair".

Regarding security, state-centrism and statist attitudes exist strongly in the World. Bilgin (2002: 102) argues that 'state-centrism' (methodologically, treating state as main actor in international relations but not aiming the priority of state's well-being) strengthens 'statism' (normatively, accepting state as reference object and agency of security). Bilgin (2002: p.102) adds that state-centrism was challenged by critical security perspectives, but statist outlook of security studies still stands mostly because of "its status as the dominant agent for security". Hence, critical security perspectives may be criticised for their insufficient efforts to deal with statist outlook of dominant security perspective.

In summary, the debate between classical security and critical security has not yet concluded. In fact, this endless dialogue provides so many benefits to both sides by keeping them alerted. By mutual criticisms, this alertness forces both sides to keep updating their perspectives. Hence, this endless dialogue enables enrichment of security studies.

## 3. FOREIGN POLICY AND CRITICAL SECURITY

What has been the general overview of FP regarding security up to now? FP has always been a state-centric political activity by its very nature due to functional and methodological reasons. State instrument fulfils this responsibility in FP behalf of people by its mechanisms. In addition to state-centrism, FP has been mostly statist throughout the history. This article agrees with Bilgin (2002: 102) on the assumption that state-centrism and statist view reinforce each other. The Gramscian tradition provides valuable concept (capillary power) in this sense. State with capillary power can construct and influence society by its means and actions such as intellectuals, education, architecture, street names and layouts and so on (Morton, 2007: 92-93).

Regarding security, states by their FP have mostly aimed protection of their sovereignty and survival from threats of other states, mostly militaristic threats. So, in matters of Foreign Affairs, leaders have mostly accepted and implemented statist academic and political recommendations. States mostly focused on military dimension of security as high-politics although they recognise other areas of security. In FP, states have mostly underestimated or sacrificed other security areas (so-called low-politics) such as environment, health, global economic inequality, identity (class, gender, ethnic, religion) related discriminations. Statist academic and political recommendations offer using every means (including human, material, and the nature) for assurance of state survival. For instance, realist scholars offered state leaders to pursue state survival, national interest, and relative gain in their FP by all means. Mearsheimer (2010: 390) offers the US leaders to stop the China's rise at any expense. Otherwise, once China reaches regional hegemony in East Asia, Beijing may threaten the US survival or interest (Mearsheimer, 2010: 388). It seems that Trump followed this so-called realist wisdom by trade-wars and increasing military tension at Yellow Sea with China. Falkner (2019: 272-273) points out that less responsibility demands of emerging economies (China, India, Brazil etc) and industrialised states (the USA) caused shift from Kyoto-style equity to the Paris Agreement which makes discussion and negotiation of climate justice

harder. So, in FP, concerns for statist relative gain were once again prioritised over human-centric and nature-centric security concerns.

Considering these examples, we may also say that FPs of states have had exclusionary character because they have mostly focused on security of their own state and citizens excluding other states and their citizens. However, others' security can easily affect ours. For instance, Syrian civil war produced insecurity (people's physical survival, economy, social life etc) not only to Syrians but also other regional and world states.

In conclusion, rather than effectively addressing security issues (including non-militaristic problems), the classical security perspective in FPs of states has either postponed or exacerbated them due to its statist, exclusionary, and narrow sighted nature. The article argues that this kind of FP cannot solve various security issues such as militaristic conflicts (among states, within state), health, environment, global economic inequality, discrimination. Hence, the article argues that critical security perspectives may help us to conduct FP better although critical security is not perfect.

How can we make 'critical security perspective' operational in FP? Firstly, state's FP should not be statist just because states conduct FP for the people and in the name of people. Protecting state at the expense of people and nature is not justifiable, legitimate, and sustainable. It is not justifiable or legitimate because state with its means and mechanisms is a servant of people rather than a master. Treating people and the nature as 'sacrifice' or 'resource' for the state security is not only illegitimate but it also sustainable. Ultimately, so-called classical state security will be at risk when human and natural 'resources' are low or extinct. So, FP as a state's political activity should be human-centric but including the nature. This means that our 'end' must be people and the nature rather than state. We should not treat people and the nature as 'means' which can be used for the sake of state. Instead of security of an abstract entity (in this case, state), FP should aim security of people, environment, and others.

Secondly, state's FP should be non-exclusionary in two senses. In the first sense, state's FP must protect security of whole citizens rather than specific group. Marxist tradition rightly points out that a specific group (bourgeoisie or the elites) can use FP to protect its own interest rather than whole nation. To this end, the article recommends strengthening civil society and bottom-up approach. Strong civil society can put pressure on decision-making mechanisms to represent security of broader social groups (class, gender, ethnic, religious etc). Strong civil society requires bottom-up approach which includes activists, movements, NGOs, and others. By bottom-up approach, we can hear voices of silenced people or the nature in the sense of security. The daily life of people may be disturbed by top-down decision. For instance, Kelemen and Vogel (2010: 439-440; 448) point out that due to declined influence of environmentalist lobbies since 1990s, increased pressure of American firms on the US Government led the US FP makers not to sign any international treaty related to climate change which contradicts interests of American firms. However, these kinds of the US decisions caused insecurity (related to climate change) to the daily life (including production) of so many American farmers and other small producers.

In another sense, the foreign policy (FP) of states should be humanist by including security of citizens of other states. Thus, state's FP should reject inside and outside dichotomy by following holistic approach. States should cease adopting realist concept of 'relative gain concern' excludes so-called 'others' to protect 'our' interest. This self-serving concept cannot foster harmony (or security) to the world. For instance, Brozus and von Farkas (2012: 57) point

out that Germany contributed to the NATO intervention of Kosovo in 1999 to protect its interest from destabilisation of the Balkans, but Berlin did not support Responsibility to Protect (R2P) mission on Libya in 2011 because Libya is outside the Europe which is not core interest of Germany. Hence, the lives of the Libyans should not have been sacrificed for German interest considering humanist character (inclusion of security of 'others') of FP.

Thirdly, as human (and the nature) must be at the centre of FP and security, anything threatens human and the nature should be on the agenda of FP. Global warming, global economic inequality, discrimination (gender, ethnic, religious etc), health problems (local or global) and other non-military dimensions are no less security threats than wars and conflicts. Covid-19 pandemic and global warming can sometimes be more dangerous security threats than wars by blocking whole globe. So, dichotomy of so-called high-politics and low-politics should not be accepted in state's FP. Hence, state's FP should be designed to effectively deal with a great variety of security threats because sources of insecurity cannot be limited to military dimension in a globalised world. Otherwise, whole human interaction and international activities (economic, diplomatic, social, touristic and others) may either stop or reach the lowest level. Lower or non-existence of these activities may cause further security problem for different group of people. For instance, many workers had to work even during the Covid-19 pandemic by facing risk of getting infected. Most workers lost their economic independency by losing jobs. Some medicines which are vital for many sick people could not be delivered due to Covid-19 restriction of international delivery.

Fourthly, politics (or FP choices) cannot be divorced from ethics/morality. So, the article believes that every FP action has its ethical/moral consequences. Potential moral/ethical outcomes of a FP choice should be calculated before implementing this FP choice. The state should accept responsibility for these outcomes. There are some minimum concerted moral/ethical expectations among people of the Earth although the article does not believe or offer universal moral/ethical norms, rules, and values. For instance, human rights are universally accepted ethical/moral and legal rules. These rights guarantee physical well-being, social and political rights of humans regardless of class, gender, race, religion. These kinds of universal ethical/moral norms neither should be ignored nor should be sacrificed for interest (or security) of a specific society or state. For instance, the US FP makers and the Americans should have opposed the US invasion of Iraq not because it would harm the prestige or interest of USA (like reason of realist Mearsheimer to oppose invasion) but because the invasion had ethical/moral consequences like death of people, destruction of people's social life, humiliating local culture. The US FP choice caused serious security problems for millions of Iraqis for decades.

FP makers should also be sensitive to local ethical/moral norms and values in order to avoid offending or threatening local people. In this sense, communitarian (anti-cosmopolitan) ethics argue that liberal cosmopolitan ethics is hostile to local cultures and ethics/morality due to liberal claim of impartiality (Shapcott, 2010: 55-56). Communitarians claim that liberal cosmopolitanism aims to impose its own morality/ethics to the rest of the world as if it is universal (Shapcott, 2010: 56). In fact, these kinds of arrogant FP attitudes have seen many times in history such as so-called civilising process of colonial people by colonisers, democracy promotion in the US FP agenda. These kinds of FP attitudes caused many wars, resentments, tensions among people of the Earth as a source of insecurity. However, this does not mean that FP makers should tolerate a kind of oppression as a source of insecurity for the sake of sensitivity.

Fifthly, FPs of state should be cooperative with others to overcome security issues in the world. However, this cooperation is not in the sense of Liberalist notion of 'cooperation' for absolute gain although it seems like goodwill. Whose absolute gain are we talking about? Does this absolute gain represent a specific group of state and people (elites) or whole humanity? Unfortunately, Liberalist cooperation has mostly served to global North and liberal elites rather than whole humanity. Some states have enjoyed so-called absolute gain by being secure from physical, economic, oppressive, discriminatory threats while others have suffered this so-called cooperative relation by being targeted to be exploited, killed, humiliated, and discriminated. In a globalised world, most security problems have become trans-national whose solutions require collective FP actions. In this sense, FP makers of states should focus on common threat perception such as provision of daily needs of people, global economic inequality, local and global health diseases, discrimination, terrorism, global warming. To this end, once again we need strong civil society and bottom-up processes at home and at the globe for cooperation against security problems. Strong local and international civil society and bottom-up processes can also give us power for cooperation against local and international violators and strong resistant (like the USA and China in the Kyoto Protocol).

In summary, FP reformulation based on critical security perspectives has human-centric and the nature sensitive, non-exclusionary, cooperative characters. This FP reformulation also recognises broader security agenda without separating high-politics and low-politics. In addition, this reformulation involves consideration and inclusion of morality/ethics in the decision making and implementing process. Most importantly, this reformulation requires and encourages strong civil society and bottom-up process at home and at the globe.

## 4. THE US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL

The close relationship between the US and Israel is a well-known phenomenon in international relations. The US FP towards Israel has been supportive because Washington has assumed that the US support to Israel serves the US security and interest in the Middle East and the world. This section examines the US FP towards Israel in the context of FP reformulation based on critical security perspectives. Analysis will be limited to the US support to Israel regarding the Arab-Israel wars, and the US peace efforts.

The US has aimed to achieve favourable status quo in the Middle East during and after the Cold War. During the Cold War, the US and the USSR competed for dominance in the region. Washington and Moscow perceived each other's potential dominance as threat to their security and interest because their FPs were overwhelmingly guided in line with classical security approach at that time.

In the region, the Arab states and Israel had many wars during the same period. The first Arab-Israel war took place when Israel declared independence in 1948. Then, the sides went war in 1967 (Six-Days War), in 1973 (the Yom Kippur War/the October War). Israel with France and Britain invaded Egypt in 1956 after Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956. The US supported Israel during these wars, except for the Suez Canal Crisis, while the USSR backed the Arab states. The Soviets sought to reinforce their position in the Middle East by cooperation with regional states, including Arab states such as Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Washington did not welcome policies and actions of the Soviets and rise of Arab nationalism (especially with Nasser of Egypt). Thus, the US backed Israel against these Arab states to defend American position in the region. The US reaction differed from other wars during the Suez Canal Crisis. The Soviets threatened to use military means against the British and French governments. Moscow proposed a joint military operation to Washinton to end invasion; otherwise, it would conduct unilateral operation (Armaoğlu, 2017: 451). In fact, the US and its

public did not welcome the British, Franch, and Israeli joint invasion, so Washington warned them to end invasion (Armaoğlu, 2017: 452). The US and Soviet efforts to end invasion elevated their image in the region (Armaoğlu, 2017: 452; Sander, 2017: 305). Yet, overall US image among the Arab world was damaged due to its pro-Israel stance during the Arab-Israel wars. During the Yom Kippur War/the October War, Arab members of Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) targeted the US and other pro-Israel states by oil embargo in 1973 (Schulze, 2017: 48).

During the Cold War, Egypt and Israel sought to resolve conflict peacefully in 1978. Washington also welcomed and encouraged their peace efforts. Washington pledged financial aid to Israel and Egypt in return of a peace deal (Sander, 2017: 544). Ultimately, Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accords in March 1979 under US mediation. Since the Camp David Accords, Egypt and Israel have become the largest recipients of US aid (Dunn, 2009: 290). The Jordan-Israel peace emerged a peace case after the Cold War. Jordan and Israel pursued peaceful resolution of conflict in 1994. The US, once again, supported the peace process between the sides. In October 1994, Tel Aviv and Amman signed Jordan-Israel peace treaty under US mediation (Quandt, 2005: 333). In 1994 and 1995, Washington supported Jordan by waiving Jordan's debt to the US due to peace (Amara, 2009: 347). The US annual aids to Jordan (around 225 million US Dollars) continued between 1998 and 2002 (Amara, 2009: 343). In September 2020, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain agreed to normalise relations by signing the Abraham Accords under the Trump government's mediation (US Department of State, 2020).

The wars and conflicts between Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have not ended during and even after major Arab-Israeli wars. These conflicts intensified especially since 2000s. Gaza conflicts between Israel and Palestinians groups in Gaza (Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and others) broke out in many times such as 2006, 2012, 2014, 2020, 2021, 2023. Indiscriminate attacks by both sides destroyed civilians, mostly Palestinians. According to the UN (2006; 2023), conditions for Palestinians in Gaza reached humanitarian disaster due to blockades by Israel. Israel continued persecutions of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and to build and expand settlements which are illegal under international laws and agreements. On the one hand, the US expressed its unwavering support for Israel's security and survival by many statements. Israel considered its military operations as counter-terrorism actions. Similarly, Washington designates Hamas and Islamic Jihad as terrorist organisations. On the other hand, Washington demanded Israel to restrict civilian losses in Gaza. In addition, the US rejected Israeli illegal settlements on Palestinian territories (such as in the West bank). Yet, the US policies and actions remained in rhetoric because Washington did not seriously force Israel to act according with the US demands.

The last conflict broke out by Hamas indiscriminate attacks on 7 October 2023. Israel launched indiscriminate attacks on Gaza and ruined it. Attacks of the sides took lives of Israeli and Palestinian civilians, mostly Palestinians. As of end of February 2024, more than 30.000 Palestinians in Gaza were massacred by Israeli army (Anadolu Ajansı, 2024). Protests took place all around the world due to Israel's actions. South Africa brought a genocide case against Israel in International Court of Justice. Since the outbreak of Gaza conflict in October 2023, the US expressed its traditional and unwavering support to Israel by referencing self-defence, and by providing arms and other military equipment, by using its military means (such as navy in the Red Sea) to incept attacks on Israel, and by its power at the UN institutions (UNSC, UNRWA - UN Agency for Palestinian refugees). The US President Biden described himself as Zionist. The US Secretary of State Blinken during his visit to Israel said that "I come before

you not only as the United States secretary of state but also as a Jew" (Oran and Karataş, 2023). The US has also been targeted by criticisms and protests around the world because of these statements, and the US support to Israel.

The US put efforts to broker a peace between Israel and Palestine. Since the end of the cold war, almost every US president came up with peace efforts and proposals such as Clinton (in 1993, 1998 and 2000), Bush (in 2003), Obama (in 2010, and 2013), Trump 2020. The Biden administration expressed its willingness and support for peace and proposal (The White House, 2022), but it has not come up with a proposal. These efforts and proposals have paid attention to borders and land swaps, refugees, Jerusalem, recognition of Palestine and Israel by each other and other states, normalisation of relations with third parties. However, these proposal and efforts have not succeeded yet because of uncompromising attitudes and blame-games of the sides, radical constituents from both sides, sabotages, and assassinations, unfair proposals (Dobson and Marsh, 2006: 176; Bickerton, 2009: 174; Quandt, 2005: 366-367; Sawafta and Al-Mughrabi, 2020). In addition, the US has mostly been pro-Israeli during the diplomatic efforts and with proposals although it expressed its support to peace and two-state solution.

The US FP was interest-driven and pro-Israel during these wars, conflicts, and peace initiatives. The US perceives Israel as strategic ally because of convergence of their FP goals in the region. The US governments, in general, have assumed that the US support to Israel serves security and interest of the US and Israel. Has the US security, interest, prestige, and credibility been elevated in the region and world by the US FP goals, actions, and its support to Israel? On the contrary, the US FP goals and actions have not brought security, stability, prosperity, and peace to the region. They have harmed the US FP goals such as security, favourable regional balance of power in the Middle East, credibility, and prestige. Such a FP based on classical security approach has not served well.

At this point, some questions can be asked from critical security approaches. What is interest of ordinary citizens of the US and regional states in destructiveness of these wars? Did these wars and the US support to Israel serve improvement of daily lives of peoples of the US and regional states? Has the US unwavering support to Israel helped reaching Arab-Israel peace? FP based on critical security approaches recommend US to put humans at the centre of its FP rather than state-centric security and interest. Washington is supposed to be impartial instead of taking people's difference (such as ethnicity and religion) and so-called state-centric security and interest into account while approaching the regional issues. In addition, the US should focus on supporting and encouraging for improvement of people's life conditions in the region. People in the region have trouble from many aspects such as economy, politics, sociology, and human rights. This would also be moral/ethical and inclusionary approach. The US FP should also pay more attention to voice of civil societies in the US, the region, and world. In the last Gaza conflict, protests all around the world showed that ignoring will and demands of people at the expense of privileged groups and citizens can easily ruin lives of innocent people (such as Palestinians in Gaza), and the US credibility and image. The US should rely on bottom-up approach by considering voice of people during FP making process and conducting it. Thus, this approach will bring security (defined by critical approaches) to peoples in the US and regional states while improving legitimacy, credibility, and image of the US.

### 5. CONCLUSION

The first section of this paper provided the classical security perspective and its shortcomings. This part tried to show that classical approach may face serious challenges in

the security analysis because of its features such as narrow definition and issue agenda of security, state-centric and positivist methodology, selfish/exclusionary character, omission of morality/ethics, ideational factors, and other disciplines in the security analysis. Then, the first section explained critical security perspectives and their shortcomings, and how it can help to overcome shortcomings of classical security perspective. This part aimed to illustrate that the critical perspectives can be much more effective in the security analysis compared to classical perspective because of its features such as wider definition and issue agenda of security, human-centric (in some cases non-human objects such as environment, animals, and plants) and post-positivist methodology, inclusion of morality/ethics, ideational factors, other disciplines in the security analysis.

The second section illustrated FP based on classical security perspective and its shortcomings. Then, it argued that FP based on critical security perspectives may help us better to deal with security threats. To this end, the article provided some characteristics of FP based on critical security perspectives: human-centrism, non-exclusion, broader agenda, inclusion of morality/ethics, and cooperation. In this regard, the significance of strong civil society, bottom-up approach, and common threat perception was pointed out.

The third section examined the US FP towards Israel regarding the Arab-Israel wars, and the US peace efforts. The study argued that the US FP towards Israel regarding these issues followed classical security approach. Thus, this approach incurred costs for the people in the US and regional states from various aspects. In this regard, the article recommended that the US adopt critical security perspectives in its FP. This, in turn, can bring security in broad terms to peoples in the US and regional states.

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