

INTERVENTIONIST AID AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Igor PELLICCIARI¹

ABSTRACT

Aid policies in the first year of the war in Ukraine constitute a unique and unprecedented historical case destined to leave an “echo” in the international system far beyond those of the individual Ukrainian case and the aid sector alone. Using a realist theoretical approach in which International Aid Public Policies (IAPPs) are a central variable in the history of international relations, this article starts with the eight peculiarities of Ukrainian aid that emerged from a recent comparison with the start of the Bosnian War in 1992. That is proposed to contextualise their political, conceptual, and historical implications within the evolution of inter-state aid. The interaction of these peculiarities has established a new model of *Interventionist Aid* as opposed to the neutralist model that had characterised Western aid in the past: the provision of humanitarian-emergency or development cooperation initiatives. The new type of aid analysed herein is wide-ranging (military, financial, political, etc.), takes an active part in the crisis to condition its course and outcome, and defines primarily political and not humanitarian objectives. Thus, it functions according to the tactical requirements of the scenario. New unregulated practices of *Weaponisation of Aid* and *Aidisation of Weapons* make *Interventionist Aid* an anarchic yet central element of warfare. The prospect of its eventual consolidation among the foundational elements of a new world order prompts speculation about future national scenarios of *Post-Democracy Aid* and international scenarios of *World War Aid*.

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¹ Full Professor of History of International Institutions and Relations, University of Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy. E-mail: igor.pellicciari@uniurb.it, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4514-6498>

Introduction

For those who observe aid between states to decode international relations, the first year following the outbreak of war in Ukraine was a unique textbook case, the characteristics of which were so exceptional that it looks like a tabletop simulation. It saw astonishing innovations in how inter-state aid interventions are understood, communicated, and put into practice. This phase has marked a turning point in the uninterrupted growth of aid as a new channel of international relations at the bilateral and multilateral levels, i.e., an emerging alternative to the classic channels of *war* and *trade*.

Resuming and supplementing the peculiarities of aid at the start of the Ukrainian War outlined in a previous article, the present paper takes the further step of a) contextualising the innovations they introduced within the broader process of evolution of inter-state aid policies and b) formulating some broad hypotheses about the future scenarios that might ensue in the medium to long term (Pellicciari 2022a). In this regard, a theoretical approach is followed here to examine inter-state aid from an integrated, descriptive, and past-oriented historical, conceptual, and political perspective that fits into the general framework of realist thinking in international relations (Pellicciari 2022b, 4-5, 13-21; 2022a, 63).

The assumption herein is that, contrary to their institutional narratives, most donor states use aid in foreign policy first and foremost as instruments of their power politics. Naturally, these instruments aim to pursue the donors' national interests, i.e., to receive overall political benefits that are generally greater than those enjoyed by the recipients themselves (Morgenthau 1962; 1978; Huntington 1971; Furia 2015). The result is an analysis that is less focused on aid intervention as such and more on the dynamics and bonds of political obligation established between donor states and recipient states; in turn, emphasis will be placed on the competition among donors themselves to gain primacy of action in areas of geo-political interest (Milner and Tingley 2013).

Seeking the political implications of inter-state aid, this approach has led to a preference for the new concept of International Aid Public Policy (IAPP) over the classical concept of Foreign Aid because the former:

a) Focuses primarily on the foreign policy interests that drive donor states and the dynamics of their relationship with recipient states, and

b) Considers any transaction carried out on favourable terms between donor states and recipient states to be inter-state aid, regardless of the area of assistance and whether this is formally labelled as Foreign Aid (Pellicciari 2017; Pellicciari 2022b).

Unprecedented Aid in the War in Ukraine

An earlier comparison with the Bosnian context of 1992 allowed aid in the war in Ukraine to be identified with several interconnected peculiarities, identifying it as an unprecedented scenario in comparison to previous war scenarios (Pellicciari 2022a). Ideally, these peculiarities can be distinguished according to whether they relate to a) actors on the ground (donors and recipients), b) the type of aid provided, or c) the strategic approach adopted.

a) Donor-Recipient Peculiarities:

1. Response speed of Western Bilateral Donors: At the time of the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Western Bilateral Donors abandoned the reticence to intervene that had characterised their behaviour during the Bosnian case. They immediately converged on the common political and operational strategy of acting directly on the ground and autonomously in order to provide strong support to Ukraine (Trebesch et al. 2023; Szóke and Kusica 2023; Bosse 2022; Grossi and Vakulenko 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Mills 2022; Hashimova 2022).
2. Leading role and primacy of Western Bilateral Donors: There was a clear primacy and leading role of Western Bilateral Donors in defining the framework, content, rules of engagement, and aid narratives (Trebesch et al. 2023; Grossi and Vakulenko 2022; Mills 2022). They marginalised non-governmental actors and multilateral agencies involved in operations during the Bosnian War. Furthermore, aid was openly inspired by an interventionist approach, the primary focus of which was to repel the Russian invasion; humanitarian action was relegated to the background.
3. The Recipient-Partner: Western Bilateral Donors had a single state Recipient (the Ukrainian government) that was treated as an equal partner on the political and operational levels. The latter was highly involved in the *ex-ante* co-definition and *ex-post* co-management/implementation of Western aid and decisively influenced its composition, flow, and tactical objectives (Trebesch et al. 2023; Szóke and Kusica 2023; Grossi and Vakulenko 2022; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Mills 2022; Hashimova 2022).

b) Aid Peculiarities:

4. Quantity and diversification of Aid: An enormous diversification of aid has taken place, mostly concentrated within new areas of intervention in the financial, political-institutional, and military sectors; this situation is unprecedented for the beginning stages of a war. The aforesaid has far exceeded humanitarian aid in terms of resources allocated, objectives, and nature of the political debate (Trebesch et al. 2023; Szóke and Kusica

2023; Grossi and Vakulenko 2022; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Mills 2022; Hashimova 2022).

5. Aid turned into hybrid weapons: By deciding to invade Ukraine militarily, Russia resoundingly renounced the role of re-emerging donor, on which it had spent considerable resources and efforts in the previous two decades (Bakalova, Spanger, and Neumann 2013). On the aid front, the main consequence concerned raw materials and natural resources, which Russia has traditionally placed at the centre of its aid policies (Tsygankov 2016; Pellicciari 2022b). By implementing a strategy that has globally restricted access to these essential commodities (mainly in the energy and agribusiness sectors), Moscow has turned them into a hybrid weapon that, by exerting pressure internationally, has been used to consolidate its military position and war tactics in Ukraine (Pellicciari 2022a).
 6. Weapons as primary aid: Contrary to past wartime foreign aid practices, Western Bilateral Donors have openly prioritised military aid, officially placing it at the top of all aid interventions. The provision of armaments was the largest item of spending in Western support for Ukraine, far exceeding the resources allocated for humanitarian and emergency aid (Trebesch et al. 2023; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Grossi and Vakulenko 2022; Pishchikova 2010; Woehrel 2014).
- c) Peculiarities in the Strategic approach adopted:
7. Premature opening of the post-conflict phase: Western Donors made unusual political decisions regarding the war in its early stages. Above all, a) the acceleration of the process for Ukraine's accession to the EU, expressly granted as a sign of political support; b) the suspension of assessment of the level of transposition and enforcement of the *EU acquis* into the Ukrainian legal system (Bélanger 2022; Sapir 2022, 213-217); and c) an extremely early launch of the planning stage for the country's post-conflict reconstruction process, towards which the donors' attention was strongly directed. The result was that it further diverted them from humanitarian aid (Trebesch et al. 2023; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Pishchikova 2010; Woehrel 2014).
 8. Sanctions as Aid: A systematic, integrated use of sanctions against Moscow and aid to Kyiv took place. The sanctions were coordinated to pursue tactical objectives in the conflict. The latter were continually readjusted and quickly phased into *ad hoc* measures, defined in consultation with the Ukrainian side (Trebesch et al. 2023; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Pishchikova 2010; Woehrel 2014). The imposition of sanctions on the enemy has thus become a different type of aid to one's *Recipient-Partner*.

True Aid Revolution: Political, Conceptual, and Historical

The revolutionary significance of Aid in the war in Ukraine has represented a conceptual, political, and historical turning point for the evolution of the IAPPs.

Table 1: Main political, conceptual, and historical implications of aid in the Ukrainian War

Political Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventionist Aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Success-Oriented Aid – Donor-Recipient Partnership – Recipient-Driven Aid
Conceptual Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realist approach reinforced \ three IAPP spin-offs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weaponisation of Aid – Aidisation of Weapons (and Sanctions) – Aid as a Component of an Anarchical War
Historical Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Interventionist Aid Phase

Source: Authors research.

The Political Dimension: Interventionist Aid

The comparison between Ukraine in 2022 and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1992 war underlines two opposite aid interventions involving the same donors during the respective outbreak phases. The Bosnian case was marked by *Neutralist Aid* implemented by specialised multilateral donors and non-governmental actors who acted in the first person in the field and were supported financially by Bilateral Donors who focused their efforts on external involvement at the political-diplomatic level (Hansen 2006; Hill 2011). *Neutralist Aid* acted almost exclusively with humanitarian interventions to cover the main basic needs of the civilian population; it was apolitical, did not take sides, and aimed to limit the consequences of the war while awaiting a diplomatic solution to end the conflict.

On the other hand, the mix of technical and political peculiarities of the aid supplied at the outbreak of the Ukrainian War introduced a new descriptive model of *Interventionist Aid*, opposite to the earlier neutralist one. The *Interventionist Aid* model:

- a) was determined to achieve strategic objectives to orient the course of events and influence the outcome of the crisis in the intervention scenario;
- b) openly placed tactical aims before humanitarian ones, with the supply of wide-ranging assistance, including the provision of military and financial aid during an ongoing conflict;
- c) featured bilateral donors active directly in the field in unmediated coordination with a single government recipient who, supported by its equal partner status, influenced aid programming, composition, and management at both the *ex-ante* and *ex-post* stages.

From the political perspective of inter-state aid, *Interventionist Aid* was the main novelty of the Ukrainian War; as stated, it was characterised by an unprecedented combination of peculiarities that nevertheless could ideally be replicated elsewhere by the donors in other crisis scenarios of geo-political importance. While *Interventionist Aid* not only confirmed but even reinforced the structural intersection between the IAPPs and foreign policy interests, it also presented several crucial exceptions from the IAPPs that had marked the post-war transitions in the Western Balkans and the post-Soviet transitions in the former USSR (Pellicciari 2022a; Furia 2015; Hall 2006). Such exceptions were related to new IAPP aspects such as a) *Success-Oriented Aid*; b) *Donor-Recipient Partnership*; and c) *Recipient-Driven Aid*.

Success-Oriented Aid

The first major turning point in *Interventionist Aid* was the special attention paid by donors to the actual achievement of the expected results of their IAPPs. Unlike the transition scenarios in the 1990s, where the simple provision of assistance was sufficient to achieve the realist objective of exerting influence on a geo-political target, in the Ukrainian crisis, the interests of the donors depended directly on the effectiveness of *Success-Oriented Aid*. The latter aimed to achieve the declared objectives of the assistance.

The geopolitical *general objective* of keeping the *Recipient-Partner* in the Western area of influence required that aid delivered to Kyiv, particularly in the military and financial sectors, be actually effective in achieving the *specific objective* of countering the advance of the Russian army on the ground. In other words, the effectiveness of the aid being provided was crucial to defining the donors' geopolitical success in the intervention scenario. This trend was in stark contrast to the attitude of donors in the post-bipolar period, who, aiming to gain access to post-conflict and post-Soviet transitions, paid more attention to the negotiation of aid with the Recipients than the effectiveness of its implementation. This was after the provision of aid had been contracted to

external Implementing Agents, who were mostly private, non-state actors (Pellicciari 2022b, 110-111, 118).

Donor-Recipient Partnership vs. Recipient-Driven Aid

A consequence of *Success-Oriented Aid* was the strengthening of a new, tighter form of political and operational interaction between Western Donors and the Ukrainian *Recipient-Partner*. It was characterised by the active involvement of Bilateral Donors in the management of the IAPPs in the crisis scenario, due to the marginalisation of the role of multilateral organisations, a minor recourse to external Implementing Agents, and the presence of a single governmental recipient active in the aid cycle management together with (eventually on behalf of) the donor.

In other words, *Interventionist Aid* pushed for an unmediated donor-recipient relationship that, compared to the past, increased the Bilateral Donors' sense of ownership and political control over their own IAPPs, while the Recipient-Partner saw its political authority grow. A new *Donor-Recipient Partnership* model emerged that was profoundly different from the transition scenarios of the 1990s; the latter models were heavily skewed in favour of donors at the political level of aid and Implementing Agents at the operational level.

The strong and continuous connection between Western Bilateral Donors and the governmental *Recipient-Partner* in Kyiv has helped to preserve intact the political strength of the IAPPs, precisely because of the reduced presence of non-state Implementing Agents to mediate the relationship between the two. In particular, being the sole recipient of all Western aid has multiplied Kyiv's strategic importance in the scenario: militarily, as the only bulwark against Russia's invasion; logistically, as an indispensable partner in the distribution of aid in the crisis scenario; and politically, as the *de facto* arbiter of the Western Donors' competition in the race to position themselves in the management of future post-conflict reconstruction (Trebesch et al. 2023; Dhawan et al. 2022; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Mills 2022; Hashimova 2022).

As the only authority continuously present in the war crisis field, the *Recipient-Partner* has developed a strong capacity to influence the strategic orientation and concrete implementation of aid on the field. The influence exerted on the composition, timing, and distribution of aid by the Ukrainian Recipient-Partner concerned both the flow of armaments and financial aid to Kyiv as well as their intersection with the wall of Western sanctions erected against Moscow.

However, rather than weakening the donor's role, the above was indicative of a systematic strengthening of the Recipient-Partner relationship as an effect

of its strategic importance in the *Success-Oriented Aid* context. This has resulted in an increasing number of cases of *Recipient-Driven Aid*, in contrast to the exclusively unidirectional nature of the *Donor-Driven Aid* trend of post-war and post-Soviet transition scenarios of the 1990s.

The Conceptual Dimension: Anarchical Aid as a Key Component of War

Regarding the conceptual dimension of aid, the first considerations are methodological and concern the usefulness of the realist theoretical approach to analysing inter-state aid, which emerges vigorously in the Ukrainian case.

First, this approach facilitated the identification of the technical-political peculiarities of aid interventions in the Ukrainian outbreak of the war, systematising them in the new descriptive model of *Interventionist Aid*. Second, the realist perspective traced the donors' actions within their own foreign policy strategies and in accordance with precise geopolitical objectives. (Morgenthau 1962; Morgenthau 1978; Huntington 1971; Furia 2015; Hall 2006; Wight 1978). Third, the IAPP concept, inclusive of eventual flows of assistance between donor states and recipient states, is best applied to the reading of aid diversity in the unconventional, wide-ranging sectors of assistance decidedly witnessed in the Ukrainian case (Trebesch et al. 2023; Bosse 2022; Dräger, Gründler, and Potrafke 2022; Grossi and Vakulenko 2022; Pishchikova 2010; Woehrel 2014). Though donors re-proposed the same institutional narratives as in *Neutralist Aid*, the prioritisation of military aid in an ongoing war has moved the current model away from the classic idea of Foreign Aid. Humanitarian aid in emergency crises and development in transition contexts have traditionally characterised the latter.

Meanwhile, the realist meaning of IAPP has strengthened thanks to three spin-offs of the concept that emerged precisely in the Ukrainian case: a) *Weaponisation of Aid*; b) *Aidisation of Weapons*; and c) *Anarchical Aid as a Key Component of War*.

Weaponisation of Aid vs. Aidisation of Weapons

In institutional narratives and chronicles of the Ukrainian War (difficult to distinguish from one another), a discussion emerged on the *Weaponisation of Aid* without a precise definition of its contours (Hall and Lang 2023). Instead, vague general references were made to the frequent intersections between assistance measures and hybrid war tactics. In fact, in the literal sense of the term, the use of aid for war purposes seemed to only apply to the Russian tactic of restricting access to key assets such as raw materials and natural resources for geopolitical and military objectives. The *Weaponization of Aid* was the direct

and most obvious expression of Russia's choice to renounce the dual "diplomacy + aid" strategy that had characterised its foreign policy two decades before the war. In particular on the multilateral level. The *Weaponization of Aid* has resulted in an at-times-blatant abandonment of the entire multilateral Foreign Aid framework developed since the end of World War II (as in the case of Russia's exit from the Council of Europe). From a conceptual point of view, the *Weaponization of Aid* was one of the consequences of the hyper-realist bilateral involution of Russian foreign policy, which downgraded aid to a mere tactical asset, even when used for offensive purposes.

Western Bilateral Donors can be placed on the same footing but in the opposite direction as Russia; they have reversed the previously existing relationship between arms and aid, rendering the former part of the latter. Putting military assistance and the supply of weapons at the top of aid policies is defined here with the neologism *Aidisation of Weapons*, which is a useful title to mark the difference between this term and the *Weaponisation of Aid*, while both retaining references to *Interventionist Aid*. Because Western Donors moved within the formal framework of classical Foreign Aid, *Aidisation*, unlike *Weaponisation*, has stronger conceptual implications for aid.

- a) Donors have attempted to subject military aid, particularly that provided in a choral conflict, to a process of moral legitimacy by emphasising its criteria of necessity, urgency, and ethical justice. They were presented not as an alternative to other "good" humanitarian interventions but ideally as being at their core. (Masters 2023; Mills 2022; Sayapin 2022; Pellicciari 2022a).
- b) Having declared military assistance a priority in times of emergency has equated the right to self-defence with a classic primary need for survival, giving it the status of a basic human right and putting armaments on the same level as primary humanitarian aid, such as food and shelter.
- c) The centrality of military and financial aid, though subjected to moralising treatment, still confirmed the realist assumption that inter-state aid can openly involve any kind of transfer on advantageous terms between donor states and recipient states.
- d) The idea has emerged that in the context of warfare, *Aidisation* is also extended to sanctions, coordinating their use systematically with aid policies.

Anarchical Aid as a Key Component of War

The processes of *Weaponisation* and *Aidisation* carried out systematically and in the open have conceptually changed the very placement of inter-state aid among the main channels of international relations, beginning with *war* and

trade. In particular, *Interventionist Aid* did not fit into the previous categories of aid as the preferred and sustainable alternative to diverting any inevitable state power-political competition onto non-military terrain.

The Ukrainian War interrupted a decades-long continuum of aid considered a viable alternative to military confrontation to such an extent that, paraphrasing Carl von Clausewitz's maxim about war being a continuation of politics by other means, the geopolitical multiple competitions between donors in the transition and development scenarios had been defined like *Aid Wars* (Pellicciari 2022b; Echevarria II 2007). After decades in which the IAPPs had been in fact a continuation of war by other means, *Interventionist Aid* was officially framed as an organic, necessary, institutionalised part of an ongoing military conflict. It was an even more important turning point when linked to an apparently marginal historical fact. Drawing on the classical categories of realist thought, this fact can shed light on a particularly interesting and useful aspect that will be dealt with in the final pages of this article, i.e., those dedicated to the future of *Interventionist Aid*.

From a purely historical-political perspective, the harsh cross-criticism of the *Weaponisation of Aid* and the *Aidisation of Weapons*, respectively, by the West and Russia could be dismissed as the effect of a frontal clash between two warring sides. In reality, this was also a sign of a clear mutual refusal to recognise and accept the very idea of Russian *Weaponisation* and Western *Aidisation*, i.e., of new aid practices introduced by each side under the impetus and pressure of the war simply by dropping them into their respective classical institutional narratives of aid policies.

Delegitimised because it lacked an international agreement regulating the minimum conditions of engagement, *Interventionist Aid* has taken a decisive step backwards compared to the one that animated the past *Aid Wars* in transition and development scenarios, fought with no holds barred but within a framework formalised by the multilateral dimension.

The rules of the game in the decades of *Aid Wars* have been more descriptive than prescriptive and have been broken more than once by the donors involved; nevertheless, they have had the merit of identifying shared broad limits within which inter-state aid could be expressed, whether that be humanitarian aid, development cooperation, or in "other" fields such as military, financial, and technological assistance, etc.

Using realist categories, it could be said that the rules regulating *Aid Wars* were an expression of an international order in the system of inter-state aid that was shattered by the Russian military invasion and the *Interventionist Aid* that followed, calling into question the minimum thresholds that had been agreed in the past.

Paraphrasing a pillar of Hedley Bull’s realist thought, one could hypothesise that *Interventionist Aid* was born anarchic insofar as it lacked a shared minimum regulatory principle, the definition of which, according to the parties in the conflict, had not been preventively delegated to the classic “neutral” multilateral institutions such as the UN (Bull 2012). These entities were actually excluded from being among the donor-protagonists in the Ukrainian War. Therefore, due to the unregulated nature of its many peculiarities, the *Weaponisation of Aid* and the *Aidisation of Weapons, Interventionist Aid* ideally marked the end of the non-military *Aid Wars* era; in doing so it defined itself a key yet anarchical component in an ongoing military conflict (Morgenthau 1962; Furia 2015; Hall 2006; Wight 1978).

The Historical Dimension: The New Interventionist Aid Phase

The final consideration concerns the place of *Interventionist Aid* within the historical process of uninterrupted growth in the relevance of the IAPPs over the last seven decades. It has been marked by an increase in public expenditure for the activation of the IAPPs and the institutionalisation of management structures both at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

While the political value of this aid has remained constant, the types of assistance and the characteristics of the actors have evolved in accordance with the general priorities declared by the interventions in each historical phase. It took place over a timeframe that, in 2021, was simplified into three different historical periods: the *Reconstruction Aid Phase*, the *Development Aid Phase*, and the *Transition Aid Phase*; this categorisation was carried out based on the main key word for aid in each period. Each of the phases circumscribed periods of varying duration during which the predominant type of aid was not completely replaced but instead overlapped with previous ones. Thus, new characteristics were added to those already entrenched (Pellicciari 2022b, Furia 2015).

Reconstruction Aid Phase: Predominant until the mid-1950s, it was a short and intense phase that largely coincided with the Marshall Plan launched in the aftermath of World War II in response to the destruction left by the war. Reconstruction was the keyword of aid, understood more as supportive lending than giving, and was instrumental to the declared primary objectives of US foreign policy (Hogan 1987).

Development Aid Phase: This phase coincided with the long and steady period of Third World development cooperation policies of the 1960s and 1970s to assist the de-colonisation processes of newly independent countries. In this period, aid policies became a prescriptive category, and the myth of Good Aid with the overlapping idea of Foreign Aid with binomials: “*cooperation +*

development” and “*emergency + humanitarian*” were consolidated (Middleton and O’Keefe 1998).

Transition Aid Phase: This was the long phase that opened with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the bipolar world order; it was mainly defined, from the 1990s onwards, by post-war Transition Aid in the Western Balkans and post-Soviet Transition Aid in the former USSR area. The afore-mentioned were unprecedented scenarios of intervention in European territory with high geopolitical value. These aid programmes led to a change of pace in the growth of the use of aid in foreign policy, in the complication of the dynamics between donors and recipients, and in the different types of intervention carried out (Carbonnier 2015).

Drawn up while the pandemic was still in progress and before war broke out in Ukraine, this periodisation highlighted how *Pandemic Aid* could not be fully assimilated into the three phases that preceded it, though it retained accentuated political significance. Health-related emergency aid and Vaccine Diplomacy were treated as separate moments within the *Transition Aid Phase*, leaving open the question of whether *Pandemic Aid* was an isolated case or whether it could mark the beginning of a new historical phase of inter-state aid. Two years on, formulating a hypothesis in this regard seems less arduous, considering the historical, seamless transition carried out from health emergencies to war emergencies and from *Pandemic Aid* to *Interventionist Aid*.

Indeed, although the crises affecting them were profoundly different, their shared political matrix underscores some important commonalities between aid in the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the pandemic (Pellicciari 2021; Pellicciari 2022b; Kobayashi, Heinrich, and Bryant 2021; Chohan 2021; Fidler 2020, 749):

1) *IAPPs were a central driver of international relations.*

Pandemic: Vaccine Diplomacy dominated and conditioned relations between states involved in the so-called Western Economic-Commercial Vaccine and those involved in the Eastern Geopolitical Vaccine.

Ukraine: International alliances and balances have depended on donors’ decisions regarding aid for Kiev.

2) *IAPPs were determined to actively impact the crisis.*

Pandemic: Vaccine Diplomacy has followed foreign policy *modus operandi*, pursuing geopolitical interests.

Ukraine: Western Aid was the main external factor in containing the Russian military invasion.

3) *IAPPs were wide-ranging, predominantly in unconventional areas compared to classical aid.*

Pandemic: Upon the viral outbreak, aid covered emergency medical equipment and later the various phases of vaccine management (research, testing, discovery, negotiation, production, distribution, and administration).

Ukraine: Interventionist Aid has been structurally focused on wide-ranging military and financial assistance.

4) *IAPPs were driven and guided primarily by bilateral donor states and governmental single recipients.*

Pandemic: Sovereign states acted independently, while multilateral institutions were unable to formulate a rapid response and marginalised in the operational management of the pandemic.

Ukraine: The EU and NATO played a central role in the initial definition of *Interventionist Aid*. However, in the long run, their role stood out as constituting joint liaison and coordination efforts for bilateral donor states rather than being autonomous decision-making centres.

5) *IAPPs have been largely operating in an unregulated framework, with no shared agreement among donors on the related general rules of engagement.*

Pandemic: The lack of agreement on minimum vaccine standards has fuelled the clash and opposing vetoes between the Western Economic-Commercial Vaccine States and those representing the Eastern Geopolitical Vaccine States.

Ukraine: Western Donors and Russia have, respectively, expressed cross-criticism of the practices of *Weaponisation of Aid* and *Aidisation of Weapons*.

The common points highlighted between the two indicate a clear relationship between the scope of change in *Interventionist Aid* and the fact that it was preceded chronologically by *Pandemic Aid*. Seen from a historical perspective, the former fit into a path traced by the latter, bringing to fruition and consolidating with technical and political peculiarities a new approach to the IAPPs. It continued along the same lines, i.e., influencing the course of events and the outcome of the crisis with unconventional aid disguised as classical Foreign Aid. Yet, the *Interventionist Aid* model significantly increased the determination, systematicity, and spectrum of the aid mobilised.

Having characterised the two major global crises at the turn of the century, *Pandemic Aid* during COVID-19 and *Interventionist Aid* in the war that broke out in Ukraine had implications far beyond their respective crisis contexts, and as such, they became models that can ideally be applied by Bilateral Donors in other future contexts of geopolitical interest to the latter. The kind of consequential synergy between *Pandemic Aid* and *Interventionist Aid* suggests

that the two were not merely passing historical parentheses but rather the initiators of a new historical phase of the IAPPs. The latter can ideally be defined as the *Interventionist Aid Phase*, underscoring the main feature of the IAPPs in the pandemic and the Ukrainian war, namely, the donors' determination to intervene by any means useful to affect the course of events in the crisis scenario. The new phase therefore followed that of the *Transition Aid Phase*, and yet, as in the previous phases, the imposition of the new *Interventionist Aid* model did not necessarily replace the previous ones but simply supplemented them. Furthermore, depending on the target scenario the donors' action was intended to bring about, *Interventionist Aid* was able to coexist with the others in a predominant or simply complementary position.

Conclusions: The Future of Interventionist Aid

Marking a departure from the *Transition Aid* of previous decades, *Interventionist Aid* in Ukraine offered observers a privileged perspective to frame the main political dynamics of the international system at the time. While the conflict in question was territorially circumscribed, what had an impact on a global scale was the positioning of the main state actors, precisely with respect to the aid given to Ukraine and the sanctions imposed on Russia (Sayapin 2022; Gioe and Styles 2022).

After the initial, almost unanimous condemnation of the Russian invasion, the Ukrainian War also marked a global redefining of power relations that reserved considerable surprises, such as the announcement in March 2023 of the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia mediated by China. Considering the long lead times required for such initiatives, the high risk of the aforesaid blowing up for the slightest reason, and, specifically, that the agreement followed the outbreak of war in Ukraine by one year, it speaks of how the latter accelerated rather than curbed diplomatic processes that were already underway. (Krickovic and Sakwa 2022; Sperling and Webber 2017; Mearsheimer 2014).

Once again, in the first half of 2023, the significance of non-extemporary events such as Finland's entry into NATO and Syria's return to the Arab League spoke of the long-term changes underway in international balances. Fourteen months after the start of the war, it seems only a matter of time before these new balances consolidate into a new world order (Krickovic and Sakwa 2022; Gehring 2022; Haroche and Quencez 2022). As the latter encompasses among its constituent elements *Interventionist Aid*, the said order could be characterised by:

- particularly pronounced impact of the IAPPs on international relations;
- systematic recourse to *Interventionist Aid* models, not necessarily limited to emergency crisis scenarios;

- the normalisation of the tactical use of broad-based aid to achieve political objectives over primary humanitarian ones;
- the predominance of the bilateral state dimension over the multilateral one;
- in the Western context: as a consequence of the *Aidisation of Weapons* process, a contraction in classical Foreign Aid, the non-governmental sector, and related service-providing consultants would occur; meanwhile, the private sector producing *Interventionist Aid* assets (mainly military and technological supplies but also health services, etc.) would be strengthened.
- in the Eastern context: as a consequence of the *Weaponisation of Aid*, the IAPPs remained firmly in the public sector and increased systematic use of primary goods and natural resources as offensive factors in hybrid wars on a bilateral basis; meanwhile, a further contraction of political and financial resources allocated at the multilateral level would occur.

Post-Democracy Aid

Aid policies would make it much more complicated for donor states to moralise and build popular consensus around their realistic foreign policy choices. Initially limited to bilateral state aid alone, the phenomenon would, over time, extend to nongovernmental and multilateral aid as well. Thus, there would be a crisis in the legitimacy of international aid due to its stronger politicisation, the symptoms of which initially manifested during the pandemic but then re-emerged with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. Their epicentre was not so much in the concrete aid policies as in the inadequacy of the accompanying narratives and the media system charged with disseminating them.

While the pandemic and the war in Ukraine introduced radical changes in aid policies, the related public and institutional communication remained anchored in the old development cooperation categories of the 1960s and 1970s, which have remained virtually unchanged ever since. Faced with the difficulty of getting foreign policy choices accepted by a domestic public that is less ideological and participatory but more plagued by uncertainty and economic distress, donors have chosen the easiest option of relying on purely emotional and self-generated narratives of pandemics and war.

These narratives have largely experienced overexposure in the mainstream media and have backfired, having a negative effect on messages; the latter, even when useful and necessary (as in the COVID-19 vaccination campaigns), at some point have been experienced by the public as being so recurrent as to generate doubt and a rejection crisis among a growing number of donors' national public opinions.

Future systematic reliance on the IAPPs in an interventionist sense would re-propose a widening of the gap between political and civil society, not so much because of the specific interventions involved *per se* but because of the inability of classic international aid narratives to frame the new interventionism credibly. De-idealised in its purposes and rapidly becoming a politically divisive issue in both donor and recipient countries, *Interventionist Aid* will not be welcomed by a growing section of the public opinion, given that it will be perceived as imposed from above.

The orientation today that views inter-state aid through a negative lens, i.e., with both disenchanted and sceptical eyes criticising it as the result of post-democratic decision-making, will emerge stronger and more widespread than ever (Crouch 2020). Whether real or perceived, *Post-Democracy Aid* is slated to be a problem that will mainly concern Western donors, i.e., those that have historically faced the problem of framing their state power politics in coherence with their own liberal-democratic founding values and the classical Foreign Aid narratives.

World War Aid

The final projection herein concerns the possible future consequences for the international system of a world order dominated by *Interventionist Aid* practices. In a nutshell, one can foresee a future in which the shift from (non-military) *Aid Wars* towards *War Aid* will be brought into the system and become a basic dynamic of international relations.

The mobilisation of bilateral aid with overtly tactical and offensive strategies has legitimised its use as a necessary key component of the war itself, thus drawing a future scenario in which *Interventionist Aid* could be the first choice applied by donors to all major scenarios of geopolitical interest. This would lead to a global-scale mushrooming of a multiplicity of real, long-lasting conflicts of alternating intensity fought by recipient-partners on behalf of the respective donors, thanks to the broad-spectrum aid provided by the latter. In such a scenario, much of the International System could progressively slide into a future stage of *World War Aid*, somewhat reminiscent of the Cold War in terms of the widespread level of circumscribed conflicts fought over various crises, with the big players playing remotely.

However, it is a context that would present considerably more complicated structural and political elements compared to the past. On the one hand, we would have the impact of the enormous increase and development of technological, military, and financial assets that could potentially be used as aid. Moreover, the growth in demand for—and therefore the importance of—raw

materials and natural resources on a global level would be a factor. Indeed, the latter are destined to grow in the future rather than decline.

On the other hand, compared to the simplified rigidity of the past US-USSR balance of power, *Interventionist Aid* would feature a larger number of various-sized actors among the protagonists who have, in recent decades, sought (and often managed) to increase their international status through prominence in inter-state aid. As the case of the Republic of San Marino demonstrated, in a geopolitical competition played out on the interventionism of vaccines sent as aid, even a few thousand doses distributed over a 61-square-metre sovereign micro-state had sufficient global relevance to earn headlines in the Washington Post (Pellicciari 2022b, 92-96).

Politically, the main problem will remain the lack of shared minimum rules of engagement for the major *Interventionist Aid* practices such as the *Weaponization of Aid* and the *Aidisation of Weapons*, exacerbated by the shift in geopolitical axes from Central Europe westward to the United States and eastward to Asia and a Chinese-driven Greater Eurasia (Krickovic and Pellicciari 2021). Unlike past *Aid Wars*, *Interventionist (War) Aid* would sanction the total incompatibility between a Western front framing its intervention as defence of the liberal rules-based order and an Eastern one contextualising its own intervention as the explicit foreign policy goal of reducing Anglo-Saxon international predominance in favour of a new multipolar order (Geis and Schröder 2022; Freedman 2022; Way 2022, 5-17; Lukyanov 2023, 5-10, Karaganov 2022; Sakwa 2017).

Should this scenario take root, i.e. widespread low-intensity conflict fought by donor states through proxies, one of its few positive effects would at least be a World War fought through aid instead of nukes. Such a prospect would be no less harsh, but at least the world would be less at risk of ending.

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ИНТЕРВЕНЦИОНИСТИЧКА ПОМОЋ И РАТ У УКРАЈИНИ

Апстракт: Политике помоћи у првој години рата у Украјини представљају јединствен историјски случај без преседана који ће се одразити на међународни систем далеко изван појединачног случаја Украјине и сектора помоћи. Користећи реалистички теоријски оквир у којем Јавне политике међународне помоћи (ЈПМП) чине централну варијаблу у историји међународних односа, рад почиње са осам особености помоћи Украјини које су се издвојиле на основу поређења са почетком рата у Босни и Херцеговини 1992. године. На тај начин се контекстуализују њихове политичке, концептуалне и историјске импликације у оквиру еволуције међудржавне помоћи. Интеракција ових особености успоставља нови модел *Интервенционистичке помоћи* насупрот неутралистичком моделу који је карактерисао помоћ Запада у прошлости: обезбеђивање неопходности за хуманитарну помоћ или развој иницијатива за сарадњу. Нови тип помоћи који се анализира је обухватан (војна, финансијска, политичка итд.), има активну улогу у усмеравању правца и исхода кризе и одређује примарно политичке а не хуманитарне циљеве. Последично, функционише према тактичким захтевима сценарија. Нове нерегулисане праксе *вепонизације помоћи* и *коришћења оружја као помоћи* чине *Интервенционистичку помоћ* анархичним али централним елементом ратовања. Могућност њене консолидације међу темељним елементима новог светског поретка подстиче размишљање о будућим националним сценаријима *Постдемократске помоћи* и међународним сценаријима *Помоћи у светском рату*.

Кључне речи: спољна политика; страна помоћ; међународна помоћ; ЈПМП; интервенционистичка помоћ; вепонизација; коришћење оружја као помоћи; Украјина; Русија; рат.