

Marketing the Iraq War: Manifest Content Analysis of US Executive Framing

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the manifest content of the U.S. Executive framing effort intended to persuade the U.S. Congress, United Nations Security Council, and the American people that there was no greater threat to US national security than the continuing reign of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Through analysis of individual and group contributions to the three dominant themes created by the executive leadership, namely, the link between the regime of Saddam Hussein and terrorism, the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and the status of the regime and Saddam Hussein as an outlaw, I illuminate the process used to gain support for the unprecedented policy of preemptive war. The results of my analysis differ with previous literature on the subject which primarily considers the Bush administration's effort to be a campaign of lies, intended to lead the American people and the international community to believe a threat existed that the Bush Administration knew was not credible. In contrast to that conclusion, my analysis of the framing effort indicates that the marketing campaign for the Iraq War capitalized on world events, timing, the credibility of the particular speaker and their office and the amplifying effect of the media, making a campaign of lies unnecessary and the process they used replicable. Therefore, this analysis may justify heightened scrutiny for comparable policies in the future, even when the statements and argumentation an administration makes are primarily accurate and verifiable.

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I. Introduction

At the time of this writing, the Iraq War has ended and all American combat troops have left Iraqi soil. There are no longer “no fly zones” as a permanent fixture in the skies of Northern and Southern Iraq, and the Patriot Missile Batteries residing in Kuwait, Qatar, and throughout the region no longer stand ready to mitigate the threat posed by their aggressive neighbor to the north, Saddam Hussein. This time stands in stark contrast to the days between the inauguration of the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush, and March 19, 2003, the day the United States Armed Forces set out to depose the “outlaw regime” of Saddam Hussein. Unlike previous conflicts, Operation Iraqi Freedom, whose name itself indicates framing, was unique in that the United States was neither compelled by a dramatic act of hostility, such as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor December 7th, 1944, nor by pressure from the international community, such as Operation Desert Storm. To commit American lives, treasure, and credibility to war is always a serious decision, but Operation Iraqi Freedom was unique as it represents the first, and so far only, exercise in the doctrine of preemption. Despite the seriousness of the undertaking and the unprecedented nature of the practice of preemptive war in the US, the executive leadership successfully persuaded a large enough percentage of the American people that war was an appropriate course of action. This thesis is an exploration of that successful effort to maintain a centrally organized storyline, and a humble attempt to reconcile the disparate memories of the Bush administrations marketing effort possessed by those viewing it from the front lines of the impending war, like this author, and those who viewed the effort from the homefront.

Few would question that the Iraq war was a significant departure from traditional policy, because preemptive war had never been practiced before in US history. Such a significant change in the criteria for expending American lives and resources was accompanied by a clear effort to frame the policy justifications by the executive leadership, and is therefore deserving of inquiry. This thesis focuses on an area that has received a great deal of attention, i.e. Executive Branch rhetoric, but contrasts the predominate method of analysis employed by other scholars. Thus, there is value in expanding the analysis and determining what was actually stated, as well as the forum and frequency with which the statements were made, in the period so critical in facilitating the conflict. In other words, there is a need for analyzing what individuals filling the most critical leadership roles were purposefully telling the American people about the threat that uniquely justified this drastic departure from American war policy, and how their argument was constructed.

To date, there has been a gap in the analysis related to the topic this thesis explores. Much of the literature thus far has focused on the effort to convince the American public of something that was untrue and accomplished through the use of latent content analysis, which is a process of subjectively determining an underlying message or characterizing intent. Beginning with bias and utilizing a subjective form of analysis has, in this authors view, left the study of the Iraq War's justification open to further analysis. This author intends to provide a contribution to the subject by focusing on the manifest content of the Executive Leadership's framing effort, the timing of their engagements with the public, and the component themes they used to support the frame in order to learn more about the process of marketing significant policy decisions. Herein, the accuracy of the statements the Executive Leadership made and the structural development of

the frame are both areas of inquiry because they are inherently linked, with the marshaling of facts and argumentation considered framing.

Conducting this analysis serves to elucidate the rhetorical devices that the Bush administration used to frame its desired policies in order to get support from the Government, the American people, the United Nations, and international allies. In doing so, this thesis will give greater clarity to the purposeful application and structural development of frames used to persuade the public to embrace war policies that are contraindicated by the make-up of the American psyche, perhaps indicating the need for greater depths of inquiry in the event that a similar effort is undertaken by the executive leadership to persuade the public to support policies with comparable risk to American life, treasure, and credibility in the future.

It is important to note that the relations between Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the United States were strained far before the Bush administration took office. Some of the cabinet members, including both the Secretary of State and the Vice President held key leadership roles, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Secretary of Defense respectively, when the state of war began with Operation Desert Storm. The state of war remained, despite a cessation of ground based hostilities, throughout the remainder of George H.W. Bush's term, both terms of the Clinton administration, and until the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In fact, it was during the Clinton administration that the US government concluded that the only way to ensure removal of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capability Iraq possessed would be regime change, and subsequently made regime change the official policy of the US government.

Weapons of mass destruction were never enough, however, to justify a preemptive war and were not a threat serious enough to motivate the US to invade Iraq and depose the regime of Saddam Hussein. Other threats were at the center of the Bush administration's focus far before September 11th, 2001 or March 19th, 2003, the date of the beginning of war operations in Iraq. With no Cold War, the world's only remaining superpower was in a position where its strength no longer served as a guarantee against a comparable foe for her allies and the power that came from such deals was no longer as palpable. There was largely a sense that the survivability of the nation was certain, yet the need was paramount to identify a threat to US national interests to plan against. The two most likely candidates were clear, terrorism and tyrants with weapons of mass destruction. Those threats could impact America's ability to project power and protect her interests while limiting the response options the US government would have. These key points were in the thoughts of US leadership as this young nation embarked upon a new century.

“Our nation needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21st century—threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants in rogue nation's intent upon developing weapons of mass destruction.”

-(Bush, 2001a)

While far before the precipitating events to the Iraq War, most shocking of which being the attack on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 on September 11th, 2001, the shift in view toward the nature of world conflict was seen as clearly as it is today within the National Security Strategy of the United States:

“And there is no greater threat to the American people than weapons of mass destruction, particularly the danger posed by the pursuit of nuclear weapons by violent extremists and their proliferation to additional states.”

-(US, 2010)

The transition in world affairs which put the United States in a position to reflect upon, and subsequently make drastic changes to, the view of its threat environment is linked to the globalization of the world economy, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and a wave of states making the transition, albeit in many cases incomplete, to democratic governance. These events neither gave rise to terrorism as a method for undertaking political activity, nor did they see a rapid expansion of WMD proliferation. In fact, those threats were always a concern but by and large to a lesser degree than the potential for earth shattering destruction imposed by nuclear war between superpowers.

So what brought these threats to the forefront, other than the obvious decline in the threat posed by traditional war and comparable adversaries? Terrorism subverts defensive measures and traditional responses do not work. If the Soviets launched an intercontinental ballistic missile the United States could see it coming and respond in kind; a buildup of Soviet capability in Cuba resulted in multiple movies rather than multiple deaths. The difference between terrorism and traditional examples is that in both the Cold War in general and the Cuban Missile Crisis in particular, there was a recognizable and apparently unacceptable consequence to the attacker. While terrorism earns its name because of whom it targets instead of numbers of lives lost, it is the fact that there is no finite target that can be hit in response that is cause for fear on the part of governments. Diplomatic pressures have no conduit, sanctions have no diminishing affect, and therefore all of the tools that a powerful nation like the US has at its disposal are nearly useless.

Meanwhile, weapons of mass destruction are even more insidious. Much ado is made about these weapons, yet if one pays attention to those who detail the threat the reference is frequently made to the tens or hundreds of thousands of people that would perish in an attack. They have, however, overstated their case to a degree. Not because there are no weapons that could have that level of impact, but because only a fraction of the multitude of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons that fall under the weapon of mass destruction umbrella would have anywhere near that level of impact, despite their ability to shift the regional balance of power.

The two most memorable terrorist attacks of this kind testify to the point. For example, the Anthrax letters sent in the weeks after September 11th, 2001, only resulted in 22 confirmed cases, including the five deaths, despite being delivered by an expert in US bio-weapons (Archive, 2004)¹. Apparently, the perpetrator had issues with some news outlets and Democratic members of Congress but despite sending letters to those locations his victims were predominately those who handled mail as anthrax spores escaped the letters. This series of events provide an excellent indicator that despite all of the hype associated with bio-terrorism, even a lead US Bio-weapons expert was unsuccessful in reaching his intended goal.

¹ Soon after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, letters laced with anthrax began appearing in the U.S. mail. Five Americans were killed and 17 were sickened in what became the worst biological attacks in U.S. history. The ensuing investigation by the FBI and its partners—code-named “Amerithrax”—has been one of the largest and most complex in the history of law enforcement. In August 2008, Department of Justice and FBI officials announced a breakthrough in the case and released documents and information showing that charges were about to be brought against Dr. Bruce Ivins, who took his own life before those charges could be filed. On February 19, 2010, the Justice Department, the FBI, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service formally concluded the investigation into the 2001 anthrax attacks and issued an Investigative Summary(FBI, 2004).

The most memorable chemical terrorism attack on the other hand included the use of Sarin gas in the confined spaces of the Tokyo subway system (Fullerton, 2003)³. The attack was conducted during the morning rush hour on one of the world's busiest commuter systems, onto five cars on three separate subway lines that converged at the Kasumigaseki station, where several government ministries are located (CFR, 2003). Despite using one of the most deadly and volatile nerve agents in a confined space the event only resulted in 12 deaths. For the two most memorable “WMD terrorism” events to have resulted in so few deaths it is interesting how and why they are even in the same category as nuclear arms.

After September 11th, 2001, the nature of the threats to national security present when the Bush Administration took office remained the same, but the imagination that could be used in characterizing them was no longer constrained. Where on February 27th, 2001, President Bush discussed terrorism and tyrants with WMD as two great threats to the US national interest at a Joint Session of Congress, eight and a half months later he characterized them as one threat which could not only impact the US national interest in general but the survivability of the nation itself. In the aftermath of September 11th, the threats deriving from terrorist attacks and from

² Witnesses said that subway entrances resembled battlefields as injured commuters lay gasping on the ground with blood gushing from their noses or mouths. Twelve members of Aum, including Aum founder Shoko Asahara, were sentenced to death for the subway attack. Japan's longest running manhunt finally ended on June 15, 2012 with the arrest of Katsuya Takahashi, Asahara's former bodyguard. He was tracked down following the arrests of two other fugitives associated with the attack, officially bringing closure to the case. The 1995 attack was the most serious terrorist attack in Japan's modern history, causing massive disruption and widespread fear in a society that is virtually free of crime. But the subway attack also showed the world just how easy it is for a small cult or group of terrorists with limited means to engage in chemical warfare. It illustrated that groups not affiliated with rogue states posed a great national security risk. Sarin, which comes in both liquid and gas forms, is a highly toxic and volatile nerve agent the Nazi scientists developed in the 1930s. Chemical weapons experts say that sarin gas is five hundred times more toxic than cyanide gas. Although sarin is very complex and dangerous to make, experts say that the gas can be produced by a trained chemist with publicly available chemicals(CFR, 2003).

weapons of mass destruction were represented as a combined source of danger looming not only upon the United States but upon the entire world.

“And all the world faces the most horrifying prospect of all: These same terrorists are searching for weapons of mass destruction, the tools to turn their hatred into holocaust. They can be expected to use chemical, biological and nuclear weapons the moment they are capable of doing so. No hint of conscious would prevent it.”

-(Bush, 2001b)

There is no doubt that the prospect of facing another attack by terrorists using any weapon of mass destruction, regardless of its lethality or transmissibility was a horrifying and unacceptable prospect to the Bush Administration. But a decade after the regime of Saddam Hussein was removed the predominant view amongst the American people and many scholars who have written on the topic is that the war was not justified and the public was misled. The question, therefore, is obvious. Was the threat posed by the regime of Saddam Hussein characterized through a campaign of lies, which would only be pursued by an imperial administration, as some have proposed, or was the effort a replicable and common political process undertaken by all US administrations which entails the dissemination of information and creation of cognitive links in order to facilitate the desired public perception of actions, situations, and sequences of events, otherwise known as framing?

To determine which, if either, of those explanations is appropriate for the lead up to the Iraq War, I analyze the manifest content based on the concrete terms contained in

communication. This technique contrasts with latent content analysis which is focused on ascertaining the underlying intent of the communication (Babbie, 2007). I conduct this analysis of the rhetoric, or oratory used by political elites to persuade their audience. This is, in the case of the US democratic system, the American people, the Congress, and the international community. Further, the inquiry is limited to specific communication supportive of the purposeful application of the frame, which is “A central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (quoted in Kinder, 2003), that Iraq and the regime of Saddam Hussein posed a threat significant enough for preemptive war, and the associated cost in lives, treasure, and credibility.

I utilize manifest content analysis because this topic is extremely contentious and emotional for many people. By conducting the analysis using concrete terms I intend to limit the amount of personal bias exerted on the findings and conclusions, despite the additional limiting effect the technique has on the scope and depth of the contribution. Thus, this thesis is offered as a step in the process of scholarly inquiry into the executive framing effort to gain support for the Iraq war and can benefit from subsequent inquiry using a more comprehensive methodology.

This thesis begins with a review of some of the literature on the subject, method of inquiry, or both. I begin with a sample of the literature by other scholars who have analyzed the Iraq Wars justification, then transition to some who have explored framing as a general concept, follow with literature containing analysis of framing in the media, and proceed to literature on executive framing. The focus then transitions to a comparable sample of literature employing manifest content analysis and a summation of how this thesis will fill a gap in the scholarly inquiry for this important chapter in US history.

Once I review the appropriate scholarly literature, I proceed in Chapter III to detail the methodology employed to conduct my analysis. First, I identify data collection sources and techniques and then clarify the process employed to condense the data. After the data collection process is complete, I detail the analytical process used to identify the elements composing the frame and the technique employed to conduct data analysis. Chapter IV begins the transition to the findings of the inquiry. The findings are separated into three general areas beginning with analysis of individual engagement by each of the four gentlemen included in the U.S. Executive Leadership during the time period in question, followed by analysis of the group, and finally analysis of the accuracy of the statements they made to contribute to the component themes and the central organizing storyline, or “frame.” Meanwhile, in Chapter V I discuss those findings and some of the implications they may have for frame construction by U.S. leaders and, potentially, the opportunities for real time frame analysis by the American people. Finally, Chapter VI includes a recap of the process of inquiry, the contrast shown between previous scholarly analysis and this thesis, and provides some conclusions to the research questions posed.

II. Literature Review

A great deal of public debate has surrounded the Iraq War, with public support for Operation Iraqi Freedom being high during the initial phase and showing a continual decline. To date there has been a significant amount of scholarly inquiry about the effort to foster and maintain public support for what has been categorized as America's first preemptive war. In this scholarly effort, a number of concepts, ideas, and methods have been explored to determine how the doctrine of preemption was sold to the American people, and the implications that experience would have. The following literature review provides a sample of those scholarly works with a focus on the Iraq War, framing in political rhetoric, and some examples of how manifest content analysis has been previously utilized.

Justifying the Iraq War

Much of the literature on the Iraq war embraces the notion that the U.S. government perpetrated a fraud when they spoke about the danger associated with the regime of Saddam Hussein. Kull et al. (2003) concluded that the Bush Administration disseminated information directly and by implication, in order to lead the public to believe that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and that the state was "providing substantial support to the Al Qaeda terrorist group" (Kull, Ramsay, & Lewis, 2003). Similarly, Calabrese (2005) stated that the United States government's imperial aim was to topple Saddam Hussein, and the only question was how to "sell" it to the American people. This "selling point," in Calabrese's estimation was "twofold, one being that the regime of Saddam Hussein had continued to store, produce, and find ways to further develop the capacity to produce biological, chemical, and nuclear 'weapons of mass destruction' and the other being that there were covert links between the Iraqi government

and members of the Al Qaeda network, perhaps even implicating Iraq in the terrorist attacks on U.S. targets on September 11th, 2001” (Calabrese, 2005).

Meanwhile, Kumar (2006) goes one step further, stating “few would disagree that the Bush administration resorted to propoganda in order to justify its war on Iraq and that the news media simply presented as fact information that they should have carefully scrutinized” (Kumar, 2006). Kumar (2006), however, was not alone in his assertion, with others having stated “The invasion of Iraq was justified to the American people by a sophisticated propoganda campaign that reflected a think tanks vision for a new foreign policy” (Altheide & Grimes, 2005), and “Iraq’s alleged weapons programs were laced with ambiguities and contradictions. Yet President Bush turned this contested intelligence into a heroic rhetoric of certainty, hence dragging the U.S. into war on the basis of lies” (Hartnett & Stengrim, 2004).

While many of the conclusions drawn vary only by degree of condemnation, the concepts vary a great deal. Altheide & Grimes (2005) examine “the planning, rationale, and organization of misinformation and propoganda that fueled public passion and provided much of the legitimacy for the Iraq War” (Altheide & Grimes, 2005). The authors propose that the “current structure of policy and critique is now institutionalized and formatted as War Programming, which connects criticism within a narrative sequence, including critiques and reflections about journalistic failings.” More explicitly, the authors operationalize War Program as “a sequence of reports that blends imagery and language of the current conflict with previous wars, and incorporates critiques of war policy within the news frame about movement toward war” (Altheide & Grimes, 2005). Altheide & Grimes’ stated goal is to “set forth a theoretical argument for analyzing modern propoganda campaigns as a feature of mass mediated discourse” (Altheide & Grimes, 2005). In order to accomplish that goal they utilize a blend of “interpretive,

ethnographic, and ethno methodological approaches with media logic, particularly studies of news organizational culture, information technology, and communications formats” (Altheide & Grimes, 2005).

Jamieson (2007) takes an in depth look at the idea Altheide & Grimes (2005) put forth by exploring “verbal leakage and Freudian slip, shifts in the burden of proof, strategies that minimized evidentiary accountability, assertions of the presence of convincing evidence that could not be publicly revealed, and tacit concessions that the case for WMD was a patchwork” (Jamieson, 2007). The analysis conducted using public statements made by the Bush administration in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq led the author to conclude that the “available evidence did not warrant the administrations confident claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD)” (Jamieson, 2007).

By no means is the moderate tone used by Jamieson (2007) for presumptions or conclusions the norm, when the issue of the Iraq War is explored. Kellner (2007) explicitly states that “The Bush administration, aided and abetted by U.S. corporate media, manipulated a politics of fear to push through a right-wing agenda that included the Patriot Act, massive changes in the legal system, a dramatic expansion of the U.S. military, and U.S.-led military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq” (Kellner, 2007). Kellner’s conclusions did not stop there, however, and to reinforce his assertions the author “dissect(s) Bush-Cheney administration rhetoric in the period following the 9/11 terror attacks, George W. Bush’s “axis of evil” speech and the lead up to the Iraq War, and the discourse and spectacle of the war itself” (Kellner, 2007). He goes on to state that “The Bush doctrine in foreign policy has signified freedom for the United States to wage preemptive strikes anywhere it wishes at any time, and the unilateralist Bush administration

foreign policy has signified freedom from major global treaties ranging from Kyoto to every conceivable international effort to regulate arms and military activity” (Kellner, 2007).

Kellner’s analysis highlights an excellent example of how contentious issues impede scholar’s propensity to curtail bias in their analyses. Statements within his article demonstrate how significant an emotional response is elicited when the issue of justifying the Iraq War is analyzed. Some examples are included below.

1. *The media became weapons of mass hysteria that created tremendous fear in the population, which made the public look anxiously to the government for protection, rendering the population malleable to manipulation (Kellner, 2007).*
2. *The Bush-Cheney administration used a fearful population and Congress to push through its extremist agenda, and the media were their weapons to help continually generate fear and ready the public to accept curtailment of their freedoms to protect them and make them secure (Kellner, 2007).*
3. *Bush administration discourses, like those of bin laden and radical Islamists, are fundamentally Manichean, positing a binary opposition between Good and Evil, Us and Them, civilization and barbarism (Kellner, 2007).*
4. *As 2002 unfolded, the Bush administration intensified its ideological war against Iraq, advanced its doctrine of preemptive strikes, and provided military buildup for what now looks like inevitable war against Iraq. While the explicit war aims were to shut down Iraq’s WMD and thus enforce UN resolutions which mandated that Iraq eliminate its offensive weapons, there were many hidden agendas in the Bush administration offensive against Iraq (Kellner, 2007).*
5. *Increased control of the world’s oil supplies provided a tempting prize for the former oil executives who maintain key roles in the Bush administration (Kellner, 2007).*
6. *Bush’s rhetoric, like that of fanaticism, deploys a mistrust of language, reducing it to manipulative speechifying, speaking in codes, repeating the same phrases over and over (Kellner, 2007).*

7. *From the beginning, the Bush administration has practiced the Goebbels-Hitler strategy of the Big Lie, assuming that if you repeated a slogan or idea enough times the public would come to believe it, that words would become reality (Kellner, 2007).*

It is clear, with the previous quotes from Kellner (2007), that when a scholarly analysis demonstrates the same tone of rhetoric which it seeks to condemn the result is that bias is highlighted more than the point they seek to make, especially when the scholar employs latent content analysis which is by its very nature subjective.

Using a less heated tone, Christie (2006) examines the rationale for the Iraq War using “agenda setting and agenda building approaches and a model for understanding the interaction of public opinion with public policy and mass media agendas.” For his purpose, an ‘agenda’ is defined “as a collection of issues or events viewed at a point in time; a public agenda is defined as those issues or events present in the public at a given time; a media agenda consists of those issues or events present in media products or content; and a policy agenda refers to those issues or events addressed by the government, as reflected in high level government speeches or briefings” (Christie, 2006). The author went on to examine key issues in policy statements and mass media coverage related to the “rationale for war provided by President Bush in a radio address on 22 March 2003” (Christie, 2006). Christie (2006) concluded that “In his address to the American public and world at the start of the Iraq War, the rationale for war focused on (1) Iraq’s having weapons of mass destruction (WMD); (2) the need to remove Iraq’s ‘outlaw’ or illegitimate government; (3) Saddam Hussein’s support for terrorism; (4) the goal of freedom for the Iraqi people; and (5) the formation and use of a coalition of American and other forces to war the war” (Christie, 2006). This study is important to understanding the subject of this thesis

because it is less susceptible to bias, but it fails to provide any depth to the process used for constructing the Bush Administration's argument.

Calabrese (2005) utilized a combination of secondary sources of quantitative analysis, and content analysis that were aimed at supporting his premise and argument. The premise, which he clearly stated, was "that the Bush administration's foreign policy has been guided by imperialist aims," and that this desire was manifested in their case for the Iraq war (Calabrese, 2005). He concludes that "by the sheer force of relentless repetition, the public came to accept that it was true, or at least become worn down to the point of no longer caring that it was untrue, that Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein not only shared a common mission to destroy the United States but that they had joined forces to do so" (Calabrese, 2005). The author then went on to clarify the media's role, stating "the Bush administration used the media to tap into public fear and sentiment among Americans following 9/11 to create a public discourse that would support an imperialist war (Calabrese, 2005).

Kumar (2006) shared the premise and the conclusions about the Bush administration presented by Calabrese (2005), but his argument departs in two ways: First, Kumar argued that the media was not used by the Bush administration, but that "the propagandistic coverage of the war on Iraq reveals the extent to which the media are complicit with the aims of the military industrial complex," and second, that it was the responsibility of academics to champion the anti-war cause and use their research to support the rebuilding of an anti-imperialist movement (Kumar, 2006).

Clearly, the tone of the scholarly inquiry on the subject has either been less than civil or has failed to clarify the process utilized to construct the administrations narrative with any depth.

This thesis intends to remedy that fact by focusing on maintaining a civil tone and providing analysis of what actually was stated by the Bush administration in their effort to frame the justification for the Iraq War and characterize the regime of Saddam Hussein as an unacceptable threat to the US national interest. With such a clearly contentious issue, the value of manifest content analysis as a starting point for in depth scholarly inquiry becomes apparent. As a technique of inquiry it is subject to less bias when analyzing the construction of a frame due to its focus on the development of argumentation versus the subjective analysis of intent present in latent content analysis, provides additional depth of analysis on the process of marshaling argumentation when compared to agenda setting studies, and has not been previously employed in the analysis of the Iraq War's justification.

Framing

Framing is a concept which has been frequently explored, and it has often been said that only a matter of degree separates education, framing, and propaganda. Parmalee (2001) states that "framing in political communication has been used mostly to understand what story lines journalists use in presenting news on political issues and activities" (Parmalee, 2001). Similarly, Lovell (2003) identifies that journalists play an important role in the way that information is relayed and received by the general public (Lovell, 2003). Lovell (2003) goes on to quote Goffman (1974) who stated "we actively classify and organize our life experiences to make sense of them. These schemata of interpretations are labeled frames; they enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label" and Snow and Bedford who define a frame as "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action within ones present or past environment" (Lovell, 2003). Ultimately, the premise upon which media

framing lies is that the media function as disseminating filters that put information in context and attempt to make sense of it for their audience.

A number of scholars have explored the connection between the framing of the Iraq war and the media (Calabrese, 2005; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; Kull et al., 2003; Kumar, 2006; Lewandowsky, Stritzke, Oberauer, & Morales, 2004). In studying three typical misperceptions about Iraq, Kull et al. (2003) utilized nationwide polling data with questionnaires administered through the internet. Their inquiry focused on the pervasiveness of the misperceptions, particularly: that since the war began the US forces have found WMD; that clear evidence has been found that Saddam Hussein was working closely with Al Qaeda; and that world public opinion was in favor of the US going to war with Iraq. Kull et al. (2003) concluded that there was a significant difference in the misperceptions held by those who got their news from Fox News and individuals who got their news from public sources (PBS/NPR), with Fox News being much higher level of misperception than public sources and other major news outlets (ABC, NBC, CNN) falling in between.

Like Kull et al. (2003), Dimitrova and Stromback (2005) studied the media's role in framing the Iraq war. In contrast, however, they employed systematic content analysis of the "elite newspapers" in Sweden and the United States, applying the most different systems design within the framework of advanced (post) industrial democracies (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005). Their use of contrast led to some interesting conclusions, including: the tone of the war coverage differed significantly between the two countries, with Sweden's being more negative, and that the United States based newspaper (The New York Times) relied much more heavily on official government and military sources than their Swedish counterpart (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005). It is, however, significant to note that Dimitrova & Stromback (2005) only

used one newspaper example per country, in which there are many, and that the vast majority (~80%) of respondents in the Kull et al. (2003) study reported getting their news from television.

Lewandowsky et al. (2004) investigated the effects of “retractions and disconfirmations on peoples memory for and beliefs about war-related events in two coalition countries (United States and Australia) and one country that opposed the war (Germany) (Lewandowsky et al., 2004). They employed random sampling within each of the countries and used questionnaires which presented the individual with true, false but retracted, or fictional information and proceeded to contrast the results. The study resulted in “three pragmatic conclusions: First, the repetition of tentative news stories, even if they are subsequently disconfirmed, can assist in the creation of false memories in a substantial proportion of people. Second, once information is published, its subsequent correction does not alter people’s beliefs unless they are suspicious about the motives underlying the events the news stories are about. Third, when people ignore corrections, they do so irrespective of how certain they are that the correction occurred” (Lewandowsky et al., 2004).

Employing a different tactic, thereby exploring a different yet critical aspect of the issue, Borrelli & Lockerbie (2008) analyze the impact of poll questioning on public support for the war. In doing so, they employ general insights from framing theory and identify how framing can impact all aspects of the academic process in exploring political communication relating to the Iraq War (Borrelli & Lockerbie, 2008). In order to achieve their results, the authors employed multivariate OLS regression to gauge the impact of specific question wording variations on the percentage of respondents expressing support for war using a database consisting of two collections of aggregate poll results drawn from the prewar and major combat phases of the Gulf War (1990–1991) and the Second War with Iraq (2002–2003), controlling for systematic time

and pollster effects. They concluded that mentioning: WMDs, terrorism, Saddam, hostages, and international support for war boosted aggregate war support in one or both wars; mentioning the president, oil or gasoline, international opposition to war, and U.S. or Iraqi casualties depressed support. Interestingly, they also conclude that seemingly non-substantive decisions like mentioning Saddam or President Bush by name had a significant impact on public support. Ultimately their results indicate that framing effects are based more on emotion and/or symbolism than more rational analysis of issues presented (Borrelli & Lockerbie, 2008). This point is critical to this analysis, as well as scholarly analysis of framing efforts on other contentious issues, because scholars are not exempt from this phenomena and it is apparent in their analysis of the subject.

Media framing

While the previous review focused on the issue of framing by the media, and the reflection of perceptions, the following focuses on why this phenomenon occurs. Altheide & Grimes (2005) clearly assign a focus on the medium by which the public gathers information, when they state “The American public’s window on the world of foreign affairs is framed by what is presented on the nightly newscasts of ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN. This does not mean that the only source of foreign affairs news is TV, but that it is the most consistent and widely used source of information for the American public” (Altheide & Grimes, 2005). Given the face validity of the statement, it is important to recognize that media can be both a tool and an impediment to the construction of a central organizing narrative to justify contentious policies.

In order to examine the extent to which institutional versus environmental effects explained the observed dynamics of news streams, Dooley (2004) analyzed “the dynamics of news streams produced by the electronic news organization Reuters, immediately following the

terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11th, 2001, in terms of (a) how often news was produced; (b) how the content within a single news stream evolved over time; (c) how writers framed the events as the day passed; and (d) the “themes” that were present in the content, how these themes behaved dynamically, and how they related to one another dynamically” (Dooley, 2004). Analysis was confined to Reuters articles released from September 11th, 2001, 9am EST (USA) to September 12th, 2001, 9am EST which were available on Yahoo.com’s news websites. Dooley (2004) determined that “During the time immediately following the emergence of a crisis, news organizations primarily focus their attention on surveillance and correlation, tracking what is going on, and connecting various pieces of information together in some coherent fashion through sense making” (Dooley, 2004). He goes on to say that the news “also seeks to reflect the collective sense making that is going on in society concerning the act, its context, and its effect” (Dooley, 2004). The author concludes that “sense making by media insiders impacts media messages through the insiders’ selection of words and themes embedded in their communications,” thereby framing the issue, and notes that “framing is present in all media artifacts” (Dooley, 2004).

Schwalbe (2006) explored a similar issue, namely, the transitional frames portrayed by the media about the Iraq War as it progressed. His inquiry was focused around visual frames presented by photojournalists as they traveled with troops to Baghdad in the first five weeks of war in contrast to the frames applied by news websites on the second, third, and fourth anniversaries of the conflict (Schwalbe, 2006). The author performed content analysis of 526 images on the home pages of 26 mainstream news sites which indicated that during the first five weeks of the Iraq War, the visual emphasis shifted from the official U.S. war machine to the more personal face of those touched by war, both Americans and Iraqis, as photojournalists

traveled with the troops to Baghdad. Schwalbe (2006) identified five main frames that emerged to reinforce the patriotic, government-friendly war narrative: conflict, conquest, rescue, victory, and control, however, by the first, second, and third anniversaries of the war, the visual coverage of hostilities had dropped dramatically. After discussing some of the reasons why online news sites did not feature many anniversary commemorations of the Iraq War, the author concludes that public opinion, political leaning, and framing effects have a relationship with identifiable impact on media presentation of the Iraq War (Schwalbe, 2006).

Similar to Schwalbe, Harmon & Muenchon (2009) analyze framing by the media as it relates to support for war, but approach it from the rhetorical framing present in major broadcast news, as opposed to the visual framing present online. Their methodology is notable, given their use of text analysis software to document the use of semantic framing by the U.S. government and how that framing may have been picked up by U.S. broadcast news organizations. The work looks at the one month period of September 11* to October 11*, 2002, which included 1172 usable files from thirty-four programs totaling 1,832,405 words, including 23,656 unique words and then compared against three "dictionaries" of words and phrases: the Luther/Miller pro-war and anti-war Frame Words derived from activist groups, a list of words and phrases suggested by the frames identified by other authors in the literature review, and a set of keywords and phrases derived from a QDA Miner analysis of twelve Bush Administration briefings during the time period under study. In order to consolidate data the transcripts were imported into the QDA Miner text analysis program and then further analyzed using WordStat, Microsoft Excel, and SPSS, using "Lemminization" to group together stems and stem words (e.g. America, American, America's) (Harmon & Muenchen, 2009). They come to a number of conclusions about frames present during that period, such as framing "Iraq as Saddam Hussein, and then demonizing him

(an admittedly easy task) in all government pronouncements,” fitting the nation-as-person metaphor and allowing the hero (the U.S. and any allies) to confront a dangerous, evil and irrational villain they must defeat in order to liberate his people (Harmon & Muenchen, 2009). Harmon & Muenchen (2009), like the vast majority of their colleagues who have conducted analysis on the Iraq War, also note that “Weapons of Mass Destruction and Iraqi links to al-Qaeda were frequent topics, most often viewed through the prism of administration sources, pending military action, and events on Capitol Hill and at the United Nations” (Harmon & Muenchen, 2009).

Continuing in the vein of the previous authors, Vliegthart & Schroder (2010) and Kolmer & Semetko (2009) attempt to identify the media’s role in framing the Iraq War, but do so from a cross-national perspective. Vliegthart & Schroder (2010) look for framing present in the newspapers of four western countries (US, UK, Germany and the Netherlands) during the period September 2002 until August 2003. Using computer assisted coding based on wordlists constructed by human coders, they analyzed more than 70,000 articles from 12 newspapers, and found that “the national political context, the political leaning of newspapers and the stage of the conflict can account for a large amount of the variation in the attention for the issue and in the way it is presented” (Vliegthart, 2010). In order to analyze the data they used, a combination of identified words to determine the presence or lack of presence of a given frame was based on Snow & Bedford’s definition of framing which distinguishes three core elements of social movement framing: diagnostic framing (problem identification and attributions), prognostic framing (articulation of the proposed solution) and motivational framing (mobilization of collective action). Ultimately they conclude that there was the presence within the media of four distinct frames, namely:

- Legitimization: the coverage focuses on reasons that do or do not legitimize an intervention in Iraq.
- Intervention: the coverage focuses on plans to go to war or on the intervention and its progression.
- Consequences: the coverage focuses on the possible consequences of the intervention in Iraq.
- Protest: the coverage focuses on protest against or support for the intervention in Iraq (Vliegenthart, 2010).

Similarly to Vliegenthart & Schroder (2010), Kolmer & Semetko (2009) found, by conducting content analysis of flagship main evening news programs in five countries during March and April 2003, that there were major lines of cross-national difference in the coverage (Kolmer & Semetko, 2009). This remained consistent in the subtopics emphasized in the coverage, the tone of the coverage of the opposing sides, and the volume of news devoted to the Allies (the United Kingdom and the United States), causing them to conclude that “the reporting of the war was conditioned by the national and international contexts in which the news was produced,” thereby raising serious questions about the credibility and impartiality of TV news in the reporting of the war (Kolmer & Semetko, 2009). Their finding is key, given the media’s propensity to either serve as a catalyst or impediment to the executive’s attempts to frame policy options.

Executive framing

Though much of the emphasis in the scholarly literature explored thus far has been focused on the impact of how frames are received or presented in the media, there has been notable contributions to the issue of framing that is done by the source, namely, the political

actors and leaders themselves. Parmalee (2001) notes that “framing’s journalist centered approach can be enriched by broadening framing research to include the story lines constructed in political ads”, given that “framing is deliberate, daily activity” (Parmalee, 2001). The definition of framing theory that Parmalee puts forth holds that “humans (whether they be private individuals, journalists, interest groups, or advertisers) create story lines to organize large amounts of information into an efficient package for audiences to interpret” (Parmalee, 2001). In order to broaden framing theory the author explores the primary videocassettes of the Democratic and Republican Presidential candidates—Gary Bauer, Bill Bradley, George W. Bush, Steve Forbes, Al Gore, and John McCain—who released presidential primary “meet the candidates” videos during the 2000 presidential primary. With the desire to determine the impact these self representations (frames) might have, the author employed a multiple method approach—which included frame analysis, quantitative content analysis, in-depth interviews with the producers of these videos, and historical analysis (Parmalee, 2001). In particular, the six presidential primary videos of the 2000 race were systematically analyzed using Entman’s (1993) framing conceptualization that looks at how keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, and sources of information can provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts and judgments (Entman, 1993; as referenced in (Parmalee, 2001)). His findings indicate that framing was most effective when the candidate presented a recognizable image and built upon existing perceptions.

Parmalee (2001) was not alone in his effort to expand framing theory to executive rhetoric, for example, Schonhardt-Bailey conducted comparative analysis of President Bush’s and Senator John Kerry’s speeches during the 2004 Presidential race. The author utilized computer-assisted text analysis to “measure statistically and map spatially the key themes” in Bush and Kerry’s speeches, concluding that the themes espoused were significantly different,

and that President Bush focused on the “Global Order” while Kerry focused on “US Specific” themes (Schonhardt-Bailey, 2005). Zagacki (2007) also analyzed the speeches President Bush made, but utilized the concept of “constitutive rhetoric” to describe what Schonhardt-Bailey had described as “Global Order” in her analysis. To accomplish his aims, the author utilizes Charland’s theory of constitutive rhetoric and applies it through content analysis to President Bush’s speeches before the Iraq war and after the Iraq elections of 2006 (Zagacki, 2007). The author argues, based on his analysis that “the process of trying to create identification between Americans and Iraqis, making them partners in a democratic founding, Bush’s discourse contributed to the emergence of conditions that were in many ways diametrically opposed to the democratic transformation he was promoting, creating several troubling constitutive paradoxes” (Zagacki, 2007). Meanwhile, Mintz & Redd (2003) explore framing and framing effects in foreign policy settings with an emphasis on U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War, the Persian Gulf War, the current "war on terrorism", and other IR/foreign policy settings in order to highlight the extent to which presidents and other significant world leaders use framing to shape policy debates and national security choices (Mintz & Redd, 2003). Their focus is on the many “subtypes and variations of framing: thematic vs. evaluative; successful vs. failed; productive vs. counterproductive; purposeful, structural and interactive framing; counterframing; loss frames vs. gain frames; revolving framing vs. sequential framing; framing by a third party; and framing vs. priming, as it relates to prospect theory” (Mintz & Redd, 2003).

Though not exclusively dealing with the concept of framing, Christie (2006) makes a significant contribution to the subject at hand as the author explores the linkage of public opinion to public policy by incorporating key ‘agendasetting’ studies. The study employs a time-lagged correlation based on content analysis of White House briefings, two major national/international

newspapers and a major television network's news coverage, examining the key rationale for the Iraq War in mass media and policy agendas (Christie, 2006). The results are interesting, as they find correlation of policy and media agendas on central issues of the war – terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and the assembly of a coalition to prosecute the war – during a period of high public support and not during a time of low public support, thereby shoring the notion that it is critical to establish and maintain favorable public support during war in order to assure a successful outcome (Christie, 2006). These findings are important to this analysis because they show the criticality of successful framing to justify a policy decision, as well as the necessity for an accurate narrative and practical expectations for policy to be successful.

Manifest content analysis

At this point, I have explored a sample of the literature related to this thesis' central topic (the Iraq War), as well as the central concept used (framing), but will now transition to a review of how manifest content analysis has been previously utilized in scholarly literature. Manifest content analysis is based on actual terms used in communication (Babbie, 2007), or, in other words, the explicit content on the surface of communication (McCallum, 2005). This technique diverges from much of the literature previously reviewed, given that on its face it is less susceptible to data collection bias than latent content analysis which requires the researcher to pick up subtle clues and infer intent.

The technique has been utilized in multiple ways, including by itself (see Lovell, 2003; Miljan, 2006), in conjunction with latent content analysis (see Dooley, 2004; McCallum, 2005), and as part of a multi-method approach (see McNamara, 2010; Rigby, 2001). Lovell (2003) uses

the technique to address the relationship between corporate sponsorship and naming rights concerning sporting venues by examining media coverage in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette newspaper of articles concerning naming rights of Heinz Field and PNC Park. Meanwhile, Miljan (2006) used a classic “before and after” research design, with manifest content analysis as the primary research tool to explore the impact of ideological political leanings of newspaper owners on the news they report in large Canadian newspapers.

As previously mentioned, Dooley (2004) and McCallum (2005) used a combination of manifest and latent content analysis to achieve their research objectives. Dooley (2004) utilized centering resonance analysis, a representational method that is a form of network text analysis of Reuters articles released from September 11th, 2001, 9am EST (USA) to September 12th, 2001, 9am EST available on Yahoo.com’s news websites to analyze the manifest content and determine the institutional versus environmental effects of news streams (Dooley, 2004). Meanwhile, McCallum (2005) explored a very different issue, namely the strategic mobilization of images, visual metaphors, and other forms of graphical rhetoric related to Vancouver’s successful bid for the 2010 Winter Games (McCallum, 2005). Beginning with manifest content analysis (an examination of the visible, surface content of the promotional materials used for the bid) and then moving on to latent content analysis of the technological, compositional, and social “modalities” the author coded raw data, the images, based on six major categories: nature, sports, people, culture, temporal, and symbols (McCallum, 2005).

It is clear that there are a number of issues that have been explored using content analysis, both manifest content analyses exclusively, and a combination of latent and manifest content analysis. The multi-method approach, however, cannot be overlooked given that both Rigby (2001) and McNamara (2010) focus their use of manifest content analysis on the frames

created around the issues they address. Rigby (2001) utilizes content analysis and semi-structured interviews in an attempt to examine potential connections between the framing of stories concerning immigration in print media and the expression of negative prejudice by domestic laborers competing in a split labor market with Latin American immigrants. The author began by analyzing newspaper articles to determine whether (a) they were framed in such a way that the dimensions of group-threat were emphasized, and (b) the discussion of these issues correlated inversely with measure of economic well being, utilizing quantitative manifest content analysis of articles selected from the New York Times and Chicago Tribune through systematic random sampling (Rigby, 2001). Meanwhile, McNamara (2010) used discourse analysis, content analysis (both latent and manifest) and structured surveys to examine how the Torres Strait region is constructed and represented, largely in relation to climate change, in a variety of forums: policy and discussions, popular media and public opinion (McNamara, 2010). For the content analysis two policy documents were selected for critical scrutiny as part of their report, including both an international and national policy document to assess the print media, while the Factiva database, which allows news publications on any given topic, was used to trace news media coverage. These methodological approaches allowed the researchers to characterize the narrative which the proponent was projecting in more fixed terms, giving greater depth to the analysis.

Conclusion

A strong foundation of inquiry has been established by scholars who have shown interest in the Iraq War, which is not surprising given the unprecedented nature of the US engaging in preemptive war and the contentious nature of the conflict. Much of their emphasis was on the demonization of the Bush administration for their public statements regarding the nature of the

Saddam Hussein regime, the regime's capabilities and intent related to weapons of mass destruction, and inferences about the underlying and preexisting desire to preemptively engage in invasion of a sovereign nation. Though the language used by the authors included in this review is frequently much more divisive, essentially they are focused on how the justification and execution of the Iraq War was framed.

The sample of literature which utilized the framing concept covers a wide array of the concept's application. While the review begins with the general concept of framing, it proceeds to focus on framing in the media and framing effects that are identifiable in the population after information is disseminated to the public. This information undoubtedly influenced how the Iraq War was perceived and is remembered, given the "disseminating filter" of the media's propensity to attribute salience to specific information and take liberties with their analysis of the words and actions they attempt to make sense of on the public's behalf. Due to this phenomenon, which is well known and easily recognizable, the review includes some examples of how framing has been analyzed using specific messages from the source, namely, the politicians themselves. The referent review makes the bias present in other scholar's analysis apparent and the need for the employment of a methodology less subject to bias clear.

After both the topic and the concept central to this thesis' inquiry were reviewed I shifted focus to the primary analytical technique employed in this thesis, manifest content analysis. I provided examples for the techniques utilization as a standalone, in combination with latent content analysis, and as part of a multi-method technique. In each case, it was used very differently, but all of them highlighted the potential value for the analysis of framing.

Clearly, there are a number of gaps present in the literature about the Iraq War. As previously discussed, the focus has been on how it was “sold” or framed for the American people and the world, but without comprehensive analysis of executive rhetoric that contributed to the frame. To date, much of the application of framing theory and manifest content analysis of the Iraq War was selective, and more focused on presenting a case than analyzing what frames were created by the executive leadership throughout the phases leading up to the conflict. However, this thesis is not intended to critique the body of literature reviewed, but rather benefits from studying the issue after the completion of the central topic, the Iraq War.

Therefore, my intent going forward is to utilize the Iraq War as a case study, which, at the time of this writing stands alone as America’s first and only preemptive war. The goal is to analyze the three dominant themes created by the executive leadership using manifest content analysis, namely, the link between the regime of Saddam Hussein and terrorism, the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and the status of the regime and Saddam Hussein as an outlaw. My analysis will include timing, frequency, proponent, accuracy, and method. By doing so, this author contends that the body of knowledge related to executive rhetoric and warfare, as well as the role of the executive branch in shaping public support for their desired policies will be given greater depth, especially as it relates to unprecedented policies and, in the most serious case, preemptive war.

Despite the value of conducting manifest content analysis on this contentious issue, the technique has limitations and is not comprehensive. Manifest content analysis does not attribute value to particular statements or characterize the emotional attachment the population has to individuals or concepts, and fails to recognize symbolism present in the location, timing, and tone of the communication. Regardless of those shortfalls, this thesis and the use of a less biased

technique than has been employed by other authors on the subject, is intended to provide a basis for more comprehensive analysis to be conducted in the future. It does so by providing in depth analysis of the constituent elements of the frame, the statements that make up the specific elements, the accuracy of those statements, and provides insights into the method of presentation and timing of frame construction.

III. Methodology

This thesis is concerned with executive marketing of the Iraq war, but more specifically, the statements that were intentionally and explicitly communicated to inform the American public about the threat posed by the outlaw regime of Saddam Hussein, the association of that regime with terrorism, the regime's unabated pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and the process they used to communicate their narrative. To accomplish those aims, statements by the executive that reference Iraq were collected from three categories: (1) speeches, (2) television interviews, and (3) press conferences. The purpose of using the three stated categories is straight forward and primarily based on practical considerations. The three communication mediums noted are those that are televised, the primary medium by which the American public receives information from the executive leadership (Kinder, 2003). Kinder (2003) notes that this remains true for newspaper commentary as well, and given the lower level of newspaper readership they do not seem an appropriate place for the executive leadership to conduct mass dissemination of a message to the American public, or a place where the full content of the presentation would be available for analysis. Similarly, radio audiences are much smaller and not a frequent mode of information dissemination for all members of the executive leadership so they were excluded as well. I observed that even in the event that the message is conveyed via some other medium it will undoubtedly be followed up with further dissemination via television when it constitutes a salient issue or contributes to a central theme for the frame or part of the effort to persuade the public to support a particular policy. When there is the potential for conflict it immediately becomes an item of interest for the media which will undoubtedly inquire and subsequently serve to support the desired theme in press conferences, interviews, or post-remark question and answer segments in the case of speeches.

First, I captured the content to be analyzed for President Bush. The primary source for President Bush's speeches, news interviews, and press conferences data was (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/briefings/>) where the official data for the eight years of the Bush Whitehouse is "frozen in time." I collected the data in transcript form for the speeches made between Inauguration and March 18th, 2003, the day before the official start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In the same archive the transcripts for interviews given throughout the tenure of the 43rd President were held, along with press conference transcripts. Similarly, the information on Vice President Cheney's speeches, press conferences, and television interviews was available at (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/index.html>). Therein, lays a comparable collection of transcripts to that collected from President George W. Bush's tenure for the period. While I acquired all of the pertinent transcripts from one archive for the President and Vice President in office, the information for the first Secretary of Defense under the Bush administration (Donald Rumsfeld) came from multiple sources, including the Department of Defense speech archives (<http://www.defense.gov/speeches/SecDefArchive.aspx>), and the Department of Defense transcript archives (<http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/archive.aspx>) for press briefings and interviews. Meanwhile, I acquired Secretary of State speeches, interviews, and press conferences from (<http://2001-2009.state.gov/>), the archived website of the State Department during the Bush administration.

To ensure transcript accuracy, I cut the documents into a Microsoft Word file and every 20th time "Iraq" was found in the document using the "find" function, I checked the transcript against the record of another internet source. The only exception to this frequency was with Vice President Cheney's speeches, interviews, and press conferences which were only checked every

50th time “Iraq” was found, because his data was acquired from the same official source as President Bush’s. My primary source was the official archive of the major media outlet in the case of interviews. When the selected statement was a major speech, I performed confirmatory analysis of the transcript from an additional source, including official sources when available. There were no significant discrepancies found in any of the transcripts as it relates to the manifest content pertinent to this analysis.

The data collection included all speeches and television interviews that were given by the executive leadership while they held the appointed or elected offices during the referent time period. I was more selective in my collection of press conferences, and based the decision to include or exclude the transcript on the focus and circumstances of the press conference. I included all of the press conferences that were specifically focused on Iraq, as well as press conferences where Iraq was a dominant theme in either remarks or questions. I excluded the press conference when it was clearly focused on other topics (e.g., trade policy with another country or the United States economy), even if there was a question related to Iraq and the respondent either avoids the question completely or fails to explicitly contribute to a central story line or frame. The purpose for this exclusion is twofold: there is a lack of specific intent on the part of the executive leadership to use that forum to inform the American public on the threat posed by Iraq, and the sheer number of press briefings that were given during the time period undergoing analysis (20 January, 2001-18 March, 2003) made conducting content analysis impractical for anything but the most pertinent comments. Then, all of the statements were compiled as raw data in text form to facilitate the analysis.

The raw data I collected reached nearly 35,000 pages and for that reason, I performed further curtailment of the content. To do so, I analyzed the internal content of each of the

speeches, interviews, and press conferences. I read each example and all statements, questions and answers which were not explicitly focused on the subject of the frame, e.g., Saddam Hussein or the Iraqi regime, were removed from the analysis. In the event that an entire speech, interview, or remaining press conference failed to explicitly make mention of the Iraqi regime I removed it in its entirety so as not to skew the analysis related to the frequency of engagement on constituent parts of the frames construction.

This curtailment was conducted successively, with the entirety of the transcripts attributed to President Bush done first, followed by those focused on Vice President Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and finally Secretary of State Colin Powell. Once completed, approximately 1,000 pages of exclusively Iraq focused raw data remained for analysis.

The literature review and data analysis conducted up to this point in the process confirmed that there were three primary areas of focus, or constituent parts of the central story line or “frame,” specifically:

- The link to terrorism
- Pursuit of weapons of mass destruction
- The Iraqi regime and their leader himself as an outlaw

Given that each step in the process after the raw data was collected was designed to pare down the massive amount of content into a form that is supportive of the analytical goals, I monitored those three constituent elements of the applied frame throughout the rest of the analysis.

The first step was the utilization of manifest content analysis to identify statements that were made about Iraq or, to put it more simply, what the executive leadership actually stated about those constituent elements or themes which contribute to the frame. This provides a

contrast with other analytical efforts and subsequent inferences based on what the Bush administration implied about Iraq throughout their tenure. Next, each statement was attributed to one of the four individuals previously identified as Executive Branch leadership, and categorized based on the element of the frame that the statement supports. This was done for analytical as well as practical value, in that it allows for the identification of focal points in the frames construction based on the events that were transpiring during the period. To assist with that effort, I added the statements that share the same or very similar tone and content (e.g., “Iraq probably possesses WMD,” and “Saddam most likely possesses WMD”) to determine which message the administration was utilizing the most, second most, etc., thus giving an implied amount of priority or salience to that specific element of the frame, as well as perceived level of confidence and reducing the total number of elements contributing to the framing effort that required analysis.

Table 1. Statements Supporting Each Theme

Terrorism theme	WMD theme	Outlaw regime theme
Presence of the regime on the terrorist list	Pursuit of WMD	Invasion of neighboring countries
Relationships with terrorist networks	Historical development of WMD	Aggressive behavior against neighbors
Harbor terrorist networks	Historical WMD capabilities	Attacks against US persons
Support terrorism	Historical use of WMD	Not playing by international rules
Presence of Al Qaida in Iraq	Presence of an Active Program to develop nuclear weapons	Dangerous nature of the regime
Praising September 11 th attacks	Possession of biological weapons	Oppressive nature of the regime
Ordering terrorist attacks	Possession of chemical weapons	Totalitarian character of the regime
Close relationship with Al Qaida	Probably more lethal and dangerous today	Untrustworthy nature of the regime
Provided Al Qaida with chemical and biological weapons training	Biological capability moving around in vans	Filing false declarations
	Advanced their WMD programs	Pursuit and possession of unauthorized military capability

Note: Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) include all manner of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and any specific reference to a particular type, including: nerve agents, blister agents (mustard), anthrax, plague, botulinum toxin, poisons, etc.

At this point in the process, with a list of statements that contribute to each of the three main elements of the frame, I mapped the frequency, timing, forum, and context of the statements. This facilitated their presentation, by priority, based on the number of times the statement was repeated by the executive leadership, the timing of specific statements, and the context and forum in which it was made, e.g., in a major speech to a national audience, speech to the United Nations General Assembly, interview on a major news outlet during primetime, or in response to a question during a press conference on a plane in route to another country.

The numbers of willing engagements on the subject were grouped into the category in which they fit most appropriately and each engagement was given a value of one so that the number and type of engagements is properly depicted. I used a comparable process for the statements contributing to the themes as well. Each is coded into the theme it contributes to so that the individual contributions to each element or theme supporting the frame can be depicted. Once discerned individually, the types of engagement and contributions to each theme were compiled to depict the combined framing effort of the Bush administration during the referent period.

The statements were maintained in whole and context so that the specific intent and implications are more discernable. When two statements were close enough that one determination of accuracy can be made they were categorized as the same (for example, “Iraq could have weapons of mass destruction” and “Iraq might have weapons of mass destruction,” would be in the same category) as noted above. Where subtle differences in a statement are compiled together it is noted as such.

There are, however, cases in which the accuracy of two statements that contribute to the same element of the frame is significantly different. For example, making the statement that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction is true based on the fact that the regime used chemical weapons on the Kurds in Northern Iraq and the Iranians during the Iran-Iraq War, but it is not accurate to state that they definitely had a nuclear capability. Determining the accuracy of the statements made is critical, even without it being evident in traditional frame analysis. This is the case because of the contentious nature of the issue and the fact that true statements that contribute to a persuasive argument and the associated frame may not always create an accurate frame or justify a desired administration policy.

The accuracy of the statements and the construction of the frame are treated separately, but both are subject to the content analysis. The rationale for analyzing them separately is based on the inherent credibility of a statement that is made by the executive leadership. They have access to a great deal of sensitive information that most Americans never will, and are therefore entrusted with the benefit of the doubt. That is why this analysis and the determination of accuracy are important, especially when trying to determine if this effort was an everyday process of framing an issue so the arguments persuaded the American people or if it was a deliberate campaign of lies intended to fool the public into supporting a policy with nefarious intent.

I then analyzed each statement to determine which of three categories the statement fit into. These categories were: accurate, inaccurate, or undetermined. An “accurate” determination means that the claim made, meaning the statement on the current or previous situation, was at the time of the statements broadcast true. An “Inaccurate” determination means that a claim was false, but not necessarily intentionally deceptive. However, this highlights one of the limitations

of this analysis given the inability to determine intent. An “undetermined” classification means that evidence is unavailable at this time, but a claim or promise may be proven accurate at some point in the future.

To determine accuracy of the three themes the content analysis continued, but broadened in scope to include manifest content analysis of speech, and interview data for the subjects that occurred after the “phase” the statement was made, including upon the completion of their tenure in office. Outside sources were also utilized, with particular emphasis on the historical record and analytical efforts of specialized groups. This included the Iraq Survey Group Final Report, United Nations inspection data, and Human Rights Watch data, and other official documentation from U.S. and international government bodies to determine the accuracy of the threat data on weapons of mass destruction and the regime of Saddam Hussein. Meanwhile, political rights, civil liberties, and governance progress was acquired from Freedom House and their tracking of freedom in the world data at (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world>). Finally, information on troop levels, casualties, and less prevalent claims or promises that were not apparent tools of the executive framing effort for the specific time period were verified in the public record by mainstream media outlets when the accuracy is not determined by one of the primary sources.

The result of this thesis is five contributions to the scholarly analysis of the Iraq war, a major event in the history of United States foreign policy: (1) the characterization of the explicit “frame” communicated from the executive leadership of the country with the intent of persuading the American people to support their desired policy for Iraq; (2) the categorization and specification of themes supportive of the frame; (3) the coding of the messages into those

specific themes; (4) the determination of the executive leaderships rhetorical accuracy; and (5) a roadmap to the construction of an effective frame for unprecedented policies.

Each of the determinations could potentially have a significant impact on the amount of control that is placed on American war policy by the American public, and the threshold for evidence required for committing American forces to preemptive war. Perhaps there will also be implications for how information is framed within the executive branch itself as they are held more accountable to each other and the American public for the information they use to justify expending lives and treasure on their desired political outcomes. At a minimum, this analysis will provide a less biased baseline that can be capitalized on by future scholars employing a more comprehensive technique.

The limitations of this methodology are numerous, but given the contentious nature of the Iraq War and perception of how it was justified it seems appropriate to reengage the topic using manifest content analysis. Future efforts that weighted each of the statements based on the salience of the comment in the media, which could be determined by frequency of replaying clips or repetition of the particular statements by pundits and surrogates, would give the analysis greater depth. There is also the opportunity to employ available polling data to ascertain the level of support there was for war immediately following particular speeches or other engagements, and which of the particular themes was perceived to be most critical to individual support. Ultimately, this thesis is intended to start the process of scholarly inquiry about the marketing of the Iraq War anew in order to serve as a cautionary tale for those who view preemptive war as an isolated incident which could only be undertaken by an imperialist administration.

IV. Findings

The Iraq War and the official frame attributed to the Bush administration in order to justify the doctrine of preemption did not occur in a vacuum, isolated from external events. In contrast, this thesis finds that the Bush administration's central organizing storyline did not emerge as a clearly deliberate effort to depict the regime of Saddam Hussein as the number one threat to the American people until well into the administration's tenure. Perceived desire to undertake the policy or subtle indications are not the focus of this inquiry, so latent content analysis which seeks to characterize a subtle desire on the part of members of the US executive leadership will not be dealt with herein. Thus, the findings of this manifest content analysis are quite remarkable when compared to the scholarly literature surrounding the case study in question (the Iraq War) and the dominant, yet inherently subjective memories of the events.

Individual Analysis

President Bush

“Our nation also needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21st century—threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants in rogue nation's intent upon developing weapons of mass destruction.”

-(Bush, 2001a)

It was nearly a year after President Bush made his first speech to the Joint Session of the US Congress that his first contribution to the justification frame occurred. In that speech, commonly referred to as the “Axis of Evil” speech, he made two explicit contributions to the terrorism theme, two to the weapons of mass destruction theme, and four to the outlaw regime

theme, but did not do so in a manner that created a central organizing storyline or establish the frame indicating that Saddam Hussein's regime was the most dire threat to the US national interest. Rather, it was two speeches, three press conferences, and nearly eight months later where the President of the United States established the frame that Iraq and the regime of Saddam Hussein posed the greatest threat to the US national interest. In doing so he put together the disparate themes that were being echoed by his key cabinet members and established the frame which would result in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The following chart shows the frequency in which President Bush engaged with the public on the issues his administration saw with Iraq and the regime of Saddam Hussein. The chart is organized by month from inauguration day through March 18th, 2003, the day before Operation Iraqi Freedom officially began. Each time the President entered into the public sphere and contributed to any constituent theme supportive of the central organizing narrative, e.g., terrorism theme, WMD theme, or outlaw regime theme, the statement was included and each was given a value of one regardless of the depth or number of themes he contributed to the frame during the referent speech, or press conference. As noted again below, the President did not participate in any interview during the referent time period that resulted in a contribution to the frame. See Figure 1 below.

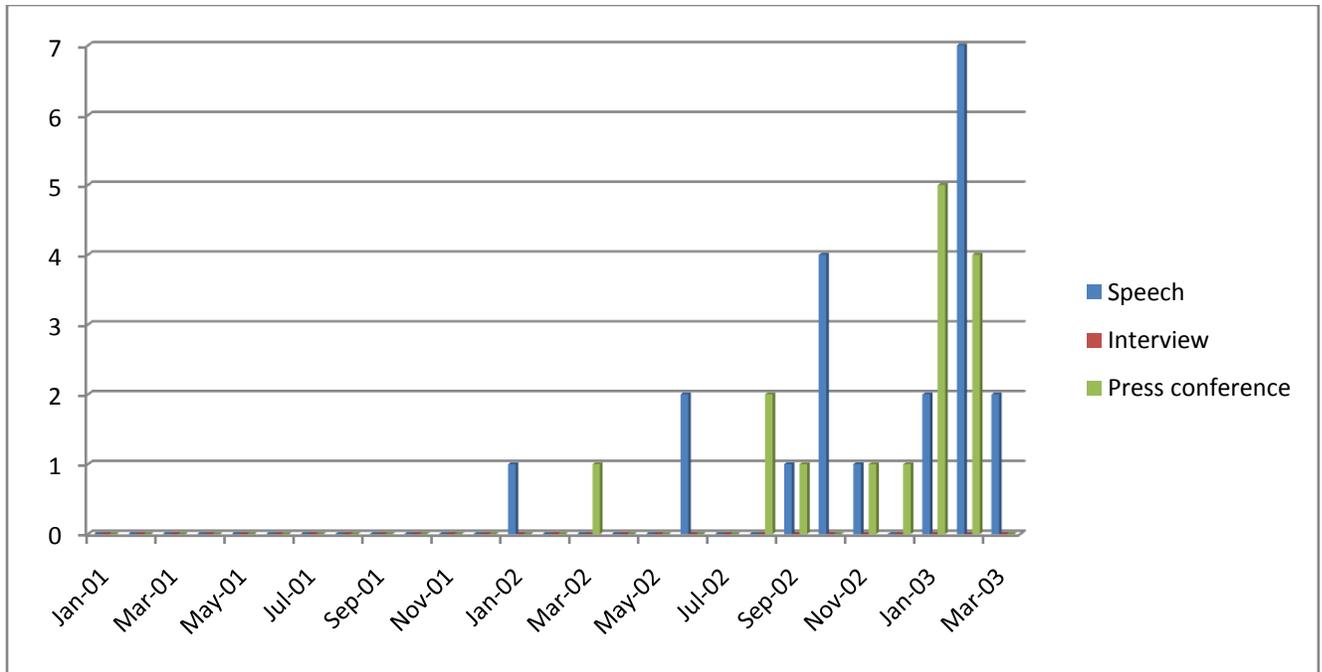


Figure 1. President Bush’s Media Engagements. This chart depicts the frequency and method by which the President engaged with the media between inauguration and the start of the Iraq War.

Total: (20) Speeches, (0) interviews, and (15) Press conferences.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, President Bush made no explicit mention of the Saddam Hussein regime in any speeches, or press conferences until his speech on 29 Jan, 2002. There were no interviews that he participated in during the period in question in which he contributed to any of the three themes that would ultimately contribute to the central organizing narrative marketing the Iraq war, or “frame.” There were, as is depicted in Figure 1, spikes in activity where he was willing to answer questions, in the case of press conferences, or chose to contribute to the frame in the form of speeches. Most notably, the timeframe leading up to each of the three key events in the process, namely, the vote in the US Congress authorizing his effortsⁱ, the vote in the United Nations Security Council for resolution 1441ⁱⁱ, and the months immediately preceding the invasion on 19 March, 2003.

On 29 January, 2002 President Bush addressed the nation in the State of the Union Address to the 107th Congress. This speech would come to be known as the “Axis of Evil” speech in which he identified by name the rogue nations he had so frequently referenced in the preceding months. They were described as harbingers of terror, all on the list of terrorist states, proliferators of weapons of mass destruction, and otherwise rogue regimes that operated outside the bounds of acceptable international behavior. The months leading up to that point had been filled with rhetoric about the bounds of the Global War on Terrorism and how rogue nations who could supply terrorists with weapons of mass destruction, the “tools to turn hatred into holocaust” (Bush, 2001b) would be treated and pursued as terrorists themselves.

The next significant spike in activity and the defining moment in the establishment of the frame, which would serve to characterize Iraq as the number one threat to the US national interest and one that had to be dealt with came on September 12th, 2002. The day after the anniversary of the September 11th, 2001 attacks by Al Qaida President Bush made the case to the international community that Iraq was the most likely of the terrorist states to serve as the nexus, or link, between terrorists focused on attacking US interests and the weapons of mass destruction which could have the most significant impact. This speech established the frame and it was followed by peaks in activity which correlated the subsequent efforts by his administration to achieve congressional, international, and public support for the desired policy ends.

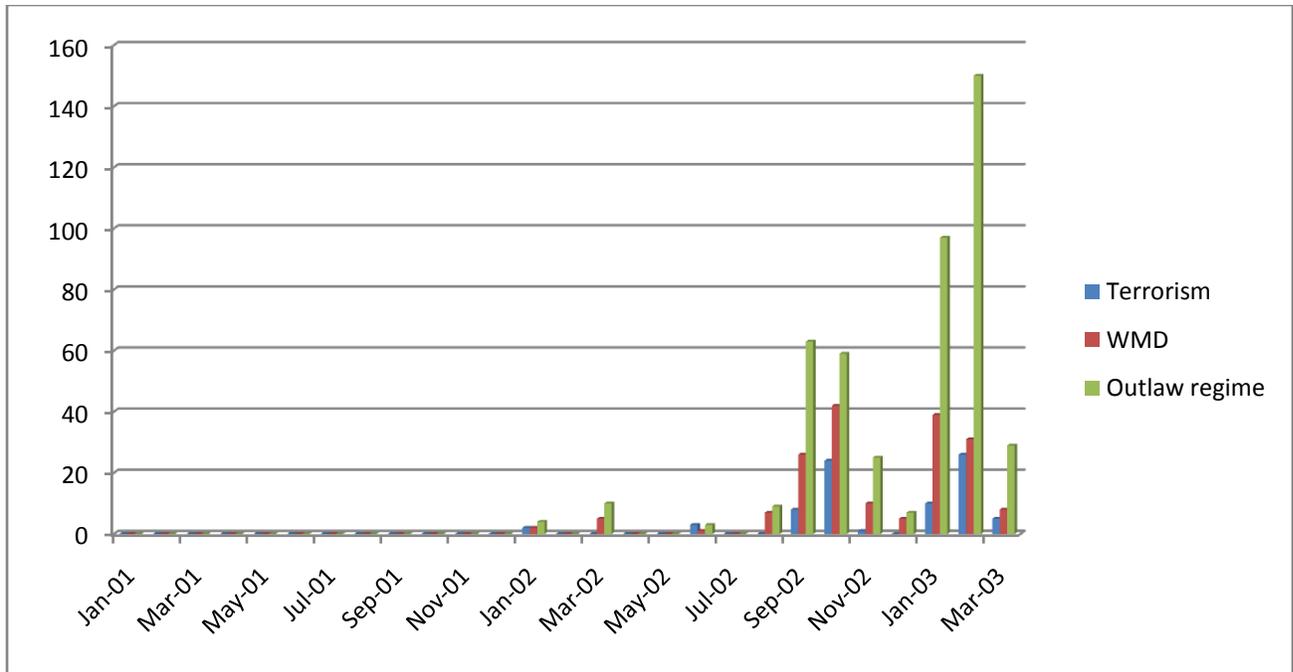


Figure 2. President Bush Theme Contributions. The chart depicts the frequency in which the President made statements that contributed to the constituent themes of the justification frame.

Note: Overall totals for the time period in question were: (79) Terrorism theme, (176) WMD theme, and (456) Outlaw regime theme. For a list of statements included in the theme see Table 1.

As clearly demonstrated in Figure 2, the President made no contribution to establishing the constituent themes to the framing effort until after the September 11th attacks. His first contribution took place in the “Axis of Evil” speech and in that instance he combined the general threats posed by rogue nations, particularly North Korea, Iran, and Iraq, but spent significantly more time on the characterization of the Iraq regime than he did with the other two. Between that time and his eventual establishment of the frame on September 12th, 2002 he did address the

issue in a couple of press conferences, and made mention of the rogue nation in a few speeches, but it wasn't until he said the following quote that he established the frame:

“And our greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies to kill on a massive scale. In one place—in one regime—we find all these dangers, in their most lethal and aggressive forms, exactly the kind of aggressive threat the United Nations was born to confront.”

-(Bush, 2002a)

This speech and the quoted statement separated Iraq from the other regimes in the “Axis of Evil” and established the frame which would ultimately serve to justify America’s first preemptive war.

From that point there was an increase in rhetoric and frequent repetition of the themes supportive of the frame until the war itself began on March 19th, 2003. There is a marked increase in public statements as demonstrated in Figure 1, which is explainable by the increased frequency of engagement on the subject as well as the need to gain the requisite support in the US Congress for the passage of House Joint Resolution 114ⁱⁱⁱ, support in the United Nations Security Council for UN Security Council Resolution 1441, and public support in the months immediately preceding the kickoff of Operation Iraqi Freedom. On the other hand, the lull that occurred during the months after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1441 and prior to the deadlines could be attributed to the need for those same constituencies requiring convincing to perceive that the Bush Administration had fully exercised diplomatic options and invasion was not inevitable.

Vice President Cheney

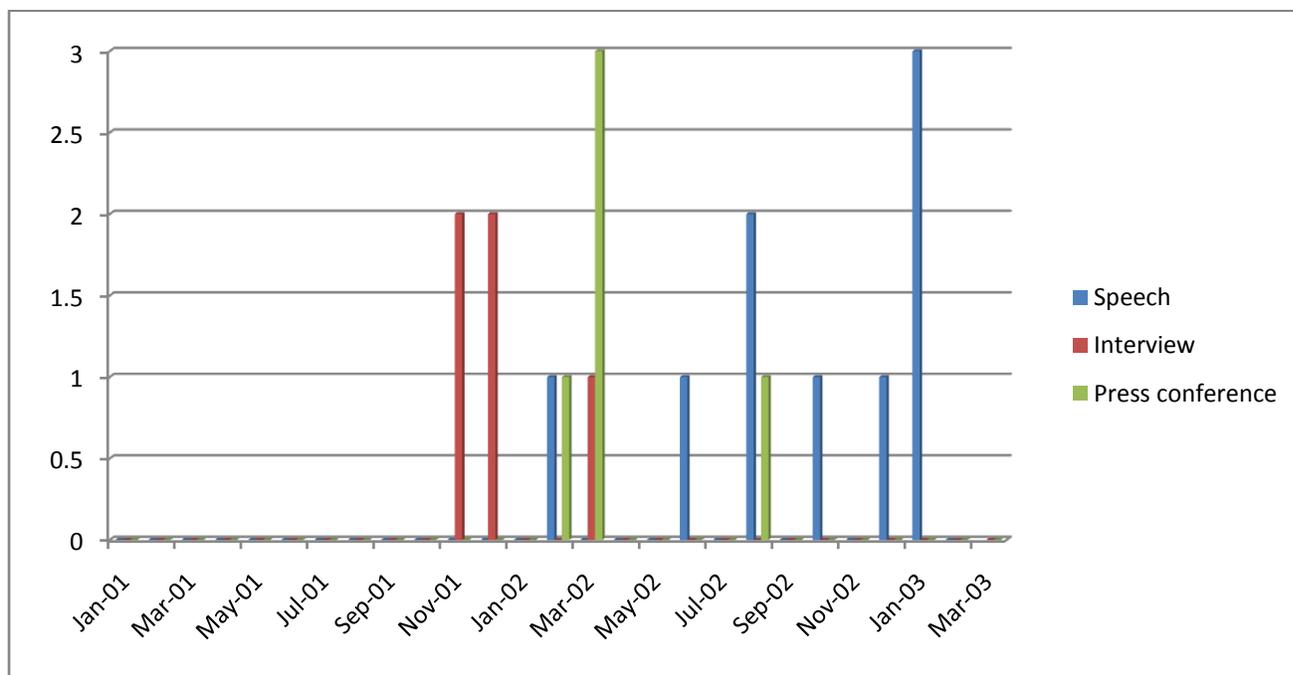


Figure 3. Vice President Cheney Media Engagements. This chart depicts the frequency and method by which the Vice President engaged with the media between inauguration and the start of the Iraq War.

Total: (9) Speeches, (5) interviews, and (5) Press conferences.

As depicted in Figure 3, Vice President Cheney did not deliberately contribute to any narrative on the nature of Saddam Hussein, potential ties to terrorism, or pursuit of weapons of mass destruction until after the attacks on September 11th, 2001. Those initial contributions can be seen as incidental and not as a deliberate framing effort due to their occurrence in television interviews and in response to questions related to the attack. In neither of the first two appearances did the Vice President assign blame or attribute a link between the attacks and the regime of Saddam Hussein but did make mention of previous links to terrorism and terrorist

groups, therefore those interviews were included in the chart as contributions to the broader terrorism theme.

Of particular interest is the lack of engagement by the Vice President with the public and the media after August, 2002. Just as the engagement and rhetoric on the subject increased with other key members of the US executive leadership the Vice President’s role in that framing effort became diminished and was isolated to five speeches, the last of which occurred in January, 2003, two months prior to the war. See Figure 4 for the Vice Presidents contributions to the frame.

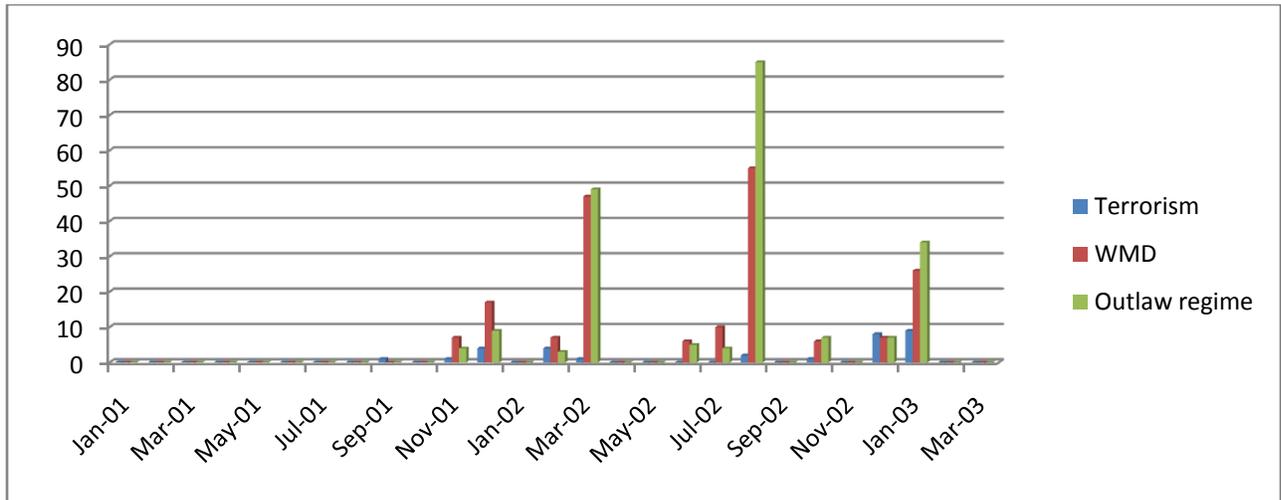


Figure 4. Vice President Cheney Theme Contributions. This chart depicts the frequency the Vice President made statements to contribute to the justification frame during the referent time period.

Note: Vice President Cheney is the only member of the US executive leadership who never completed the frame of the Iraqi regime. His contributions to the component themes totaled as follows: (31) Terrorism theme, (188) WMD theme, and (207) Outlaw regime theme.

As previously noted, Vice President Cheney's role in establishing the frame within the public sphere was minimal and his availability to the media on the subject was minimized after the frame was established by President Bush on September 12th, 2002. Interestingly, while the Vice President never framed Iraq as the nexus between WMD and terrorism, he preceded President Bush by a little less than two weeks in explicitly identifying the nexus between a rogue regime and terrorists seeking weapons of mass destruction as the number one threat to our nation, stating:

“Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network, or a murderous dictator, or the two working together, constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined.”

-(Cheney, 2002)

Thus it is clear that there was a concerted effort to diminish the visible role of the Vice President in framing the justification for the upcoming conflict and minimize the opportunity for him to be questioned about the issue. It is probable that this diminished role was in recognition of Vice President Cheney's hawkish nature and the commonly held view that it was he, rather than the President, who was calling the shots inside the administration. This view was probably held because of President Bush's perceived inexperience, as well as the significant experience and personality advantage held by the Vice President.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld

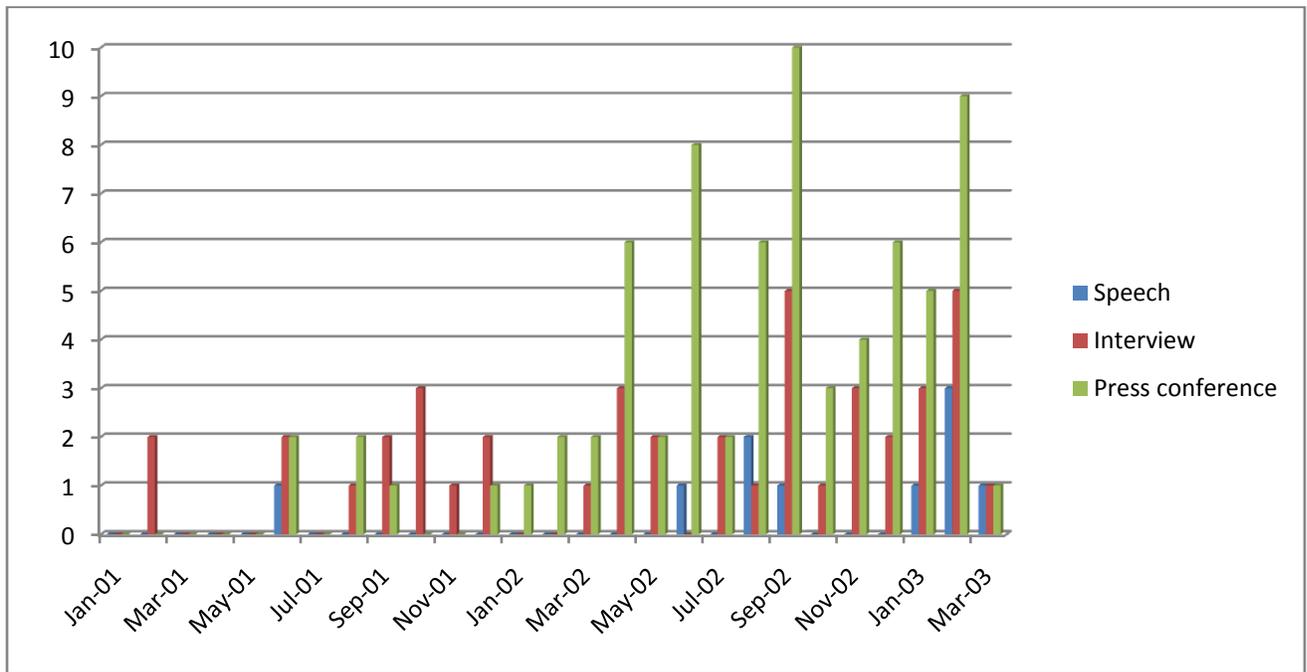


Figure 5. Secretary Rumsfeld’s Media Engagements. This chart depicts the frequency and method by which the Secretary of Defense engaged with the media between inauguration and the start of the Iraq War.

Total: (10) Speeches, (42) Interviews, and (73) Press conferences.

As depicted in Figure 5, immediately following the return to the office of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld began fielding questions on the regime of Saddam Hussein. In two of the initial interviews he responded with contributions to the themes the Bush Administration would eventually use to construct the frame in question. His availability to the public and on the issue of Iraq would maintain fairly consistent from that point until April 2002. The early contributions on the subject make sense apart from a concerted, administration wide framing effort because throughout the timeframe the Department of Defense maintained a state of war

with Iraq and flew missions over Northern and Southern Iraq as part of Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch, respectively. From April 2002 until August 2002 the interest in the subject and willingness to discuss it ebbed and flowed, but after President Bush's September 12th, 2002 speech to the United Nations General Assembly and the establishment of the frame, Secretary Rumsfeld's engagement with the media and the public peaked. Over the next few months in response to the newly established frame, as well as the activities in the US Congress, the United Nations, and the likelihood of war, there were elevated levels of engagement which would slightly ebb prior to peaking again in February, the last full month before the US was again at war with Saddam Hussein.

The number of included engagements are representative of only a portion, albeit the majority of the times Secretary Rumsfeld exposed himself to the media and the public. Many of those speeches, interviews and press conferences are excluded from the analysis because Iraq was not an area of interest or inquiry, Secretary Rumsfeld refused to answer the question, or as a skillful politician with decades of experience referred the question to another member of the administration, in most cases being the President or the Secretary of State. His contributions are notable for a number of reasons including the frequency in which he was subjected to questioning and his role in carrying out the administration's war policy. However, those points, while telling are not the most important. Rather, he can justifiably be credited with the policy of preemption based on statements made far before the Bush administration began the framing efforts, the march toward war, and even the attacks on September 11th, 2001. In fact, he proposed the concept in response to an interview question on threats to US national interest, stating:

“The other thing it could force a President to do is pre-empt. And if you want to sit there and think about it hard some day, that is not a very nice thing, to have to go to a president and say, “look, this is a capability that’s almost there, and they’re very likely to use it on a neighbor. And therefore, Mr. President, you must go in and pre-empt,” as the Israelis did, with respect to the nuclear capability of Iraq some years ago.”

-(Rumsfeld, 2001)

This statement, combined with his experience and position as Secretary of Defense served to make him a key proponent of the frame.

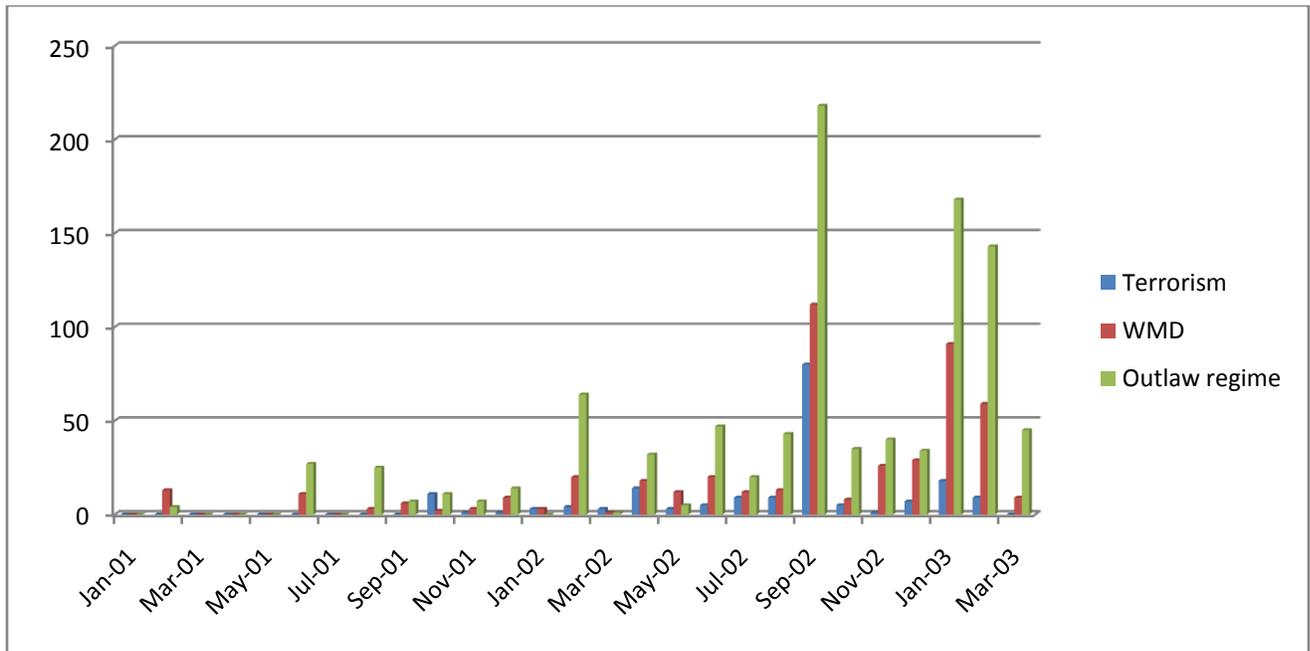


Figure 6. Secretary Rumsfeld’s Theme Contributions. This chart shows the frequency by month that the Secretary of Defense engaged the media and contributed to the frames between inauguration and the start of the invasion.

Total: (183) Terrorism theme, (480) WMD theme, and (990) Outlaw regime theme.

Similarly to the President, and frequently in response to his statements, Secretary Rumsfeld demonstrated an increase in his contribution to the component themes during key timeframes. In contrast to the contributions of the President and Vice President, Secretary Rumsfeld did so primarily in response to questions posed by the media. That fact provides some clarity to why peaks occurred immediately after the President set the tone and established the themes, and eventually characterized the frame itself. The increase did not, however, occur simply because of increased interest due to a major speech, but also because Secretary Rumsfeld frequently refused to comment about the subject unless and until the President made the case first. This indicates that his role was designed to be perceived as a supporting one despite significantly more exposure than the President and Vice President.

It is justifiable to question whether that perception was by role or simply by design. Indications of a leading role being played by the Secretary of Defense go beyond the previously mentioned reference to the doctrine of preemption as well. In interviews in May and July 2002 he made the other side of his argument which would eventually be echoed by the Vice President in August 2002 (quoted above) and be attributed to the Iraqi regime on September 12th, 2002 in the establishment of the frame.

He stated:

1. “And that is that there are a series of terrorist states that everyone know which ones they are that have weapons of mass destruction. They have chemical weapons. They have biological weapons, for the most part. Some have or shortly will have nuclear weapons. And they have close relationships with terrorist states. It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that because of those close relationships and that nexus, that connection, that we have to expect that global terrorist networks that we know are trying to get these weapons will, in fact, be successful at some point in the future” (Blitzer, 2002).

2. “That is the issue that our society, and our friends and allies around the world, and the American people, and our President, have to address. And it is the nexus between weapons of mass destruction, and terrorist organizations, and terrorist states” (CNBC, 2002).

The evidence indicates that the themes which would eventually be used to constitute the frame, or the central organizing storyline, and the policy of preemption were in place well before the frame was applied to Iraq, essentially serving as the foundation for a new war policy in a new threat environment.

Secretary of State Powell

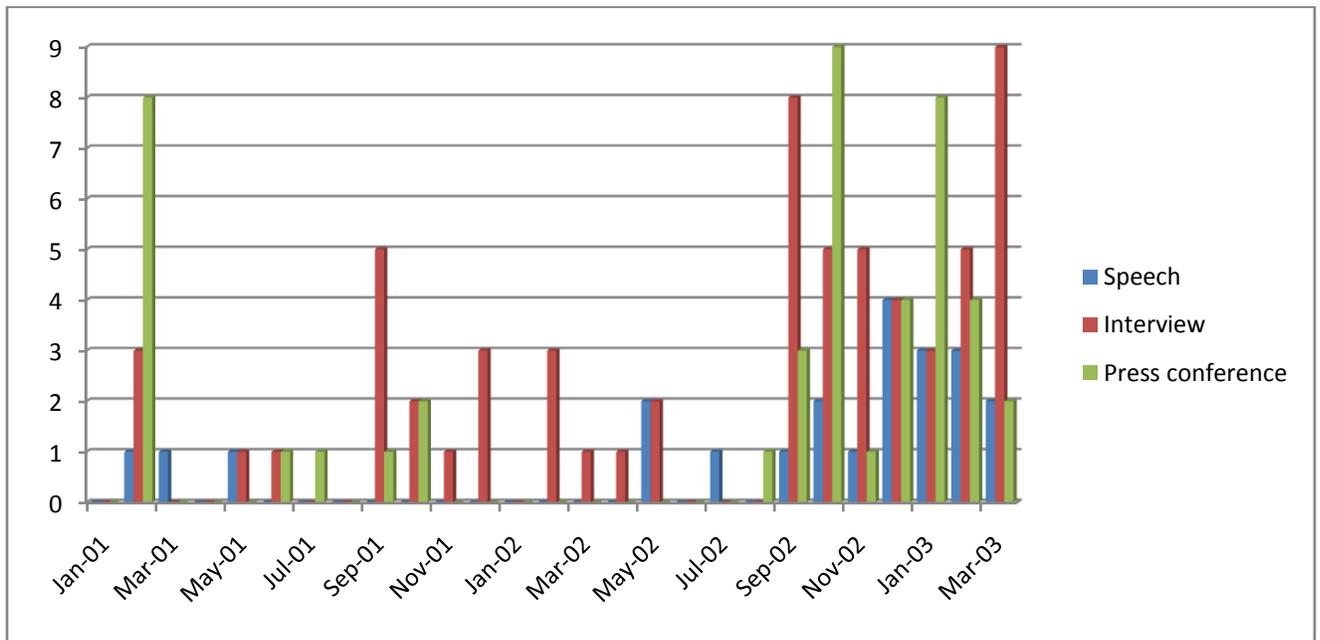


Figure 7. Secretary Powell’s Media Engagements. This chart depicts the frequency and method by which the Secretary of State engaged with the media between inauguration and the start of the Iraq War.

Total: (22) Speeches, (62) Interviews, and (44) Press conferences.

Immediately after taking office as Secretary of State, Colin Powell began having to engage on the issue of Iraq and the regime of Saddam Hussein. This task was inherent in his role as the Secretary of State and unsurprising given his involvement with Operation Desert Storm as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After the initial interest on the subject of engagement on the issue, as well as media interest ebbed until the attacks on September 11th, 2001. At that point he began fielding questions on the topic and expressed themes that would eventually contribute to the Bush administrations desired frame. It was not, however, until May 2002 that he included reference to concerns with the regime of Saddam Hussein in speeches. Like Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney, however, the establishment of the frame cannot be attributed to Secretary Powell's efforts but his efforts were critical to achieve the desired framing effect. Thus, his involvement in and contribution to the effort to frame Iraq as the number one threat to the US national interest required significantly more exposure after the President's September 12th, 2002 speech to the United Nations. This contribution was so significant that 85 of the 128 occurrences of public engagement that included mention of themes supporting the frame happened in the 6 months leading up to the war.

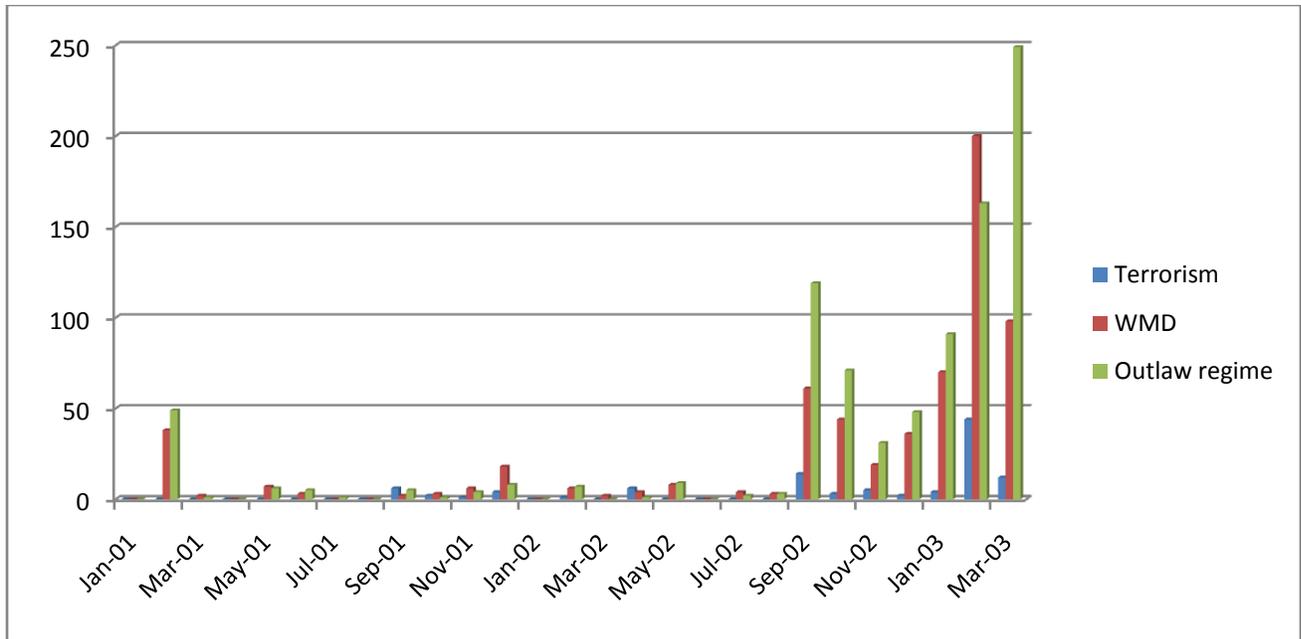


Figure 8. Secretary Powell’s Theme Contribution. This chart demonstrates the frequency in which the Secretary of State made statements supportive of the themes that composed the frame.

Totals: (104) Terrorism theme, (634) WMD theme, (874) Outlaw regime theme.

Trend lines for the Secretary of State’s contribution to the theme that provided the foundation of the frame are closely associated to the frequency in which he willingly engaged on the subject within the public sphere. Like the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Powell’s contribution frequently occurred after the establishment of the central narrative by the President but differs in respect to the contribution made through speeches. Where Secretary Rumsfeld made general contributions to maintaining the narrative and on balance presented the frame itself on a more frequent basis than any other contributor, Secretary Powell was primarily responsible for actual development and passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441. This role was critical to the Bush administration in their efforts to justify their desired policy.

Group Dynamics

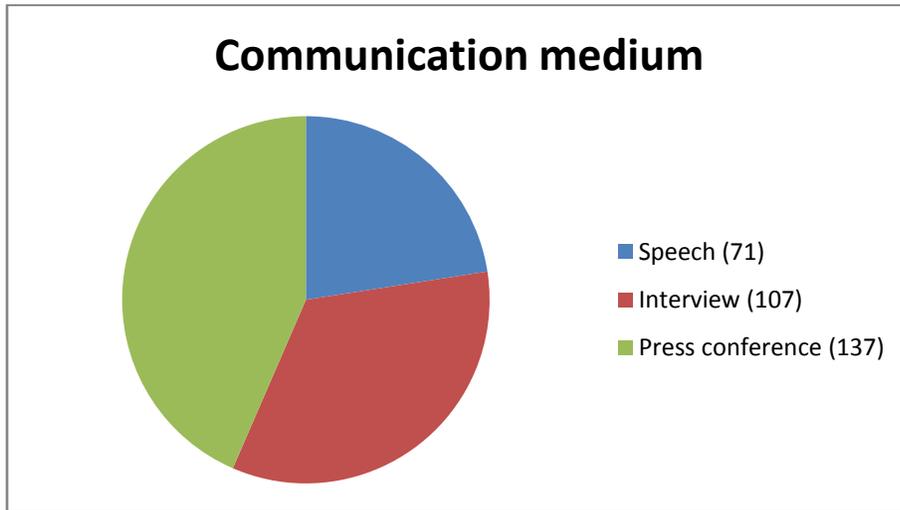


Figure 9. Media Engagements. This chart depicts the frequency of each method of public engagement during the referent time period for all members of the US executive leadership analyzed in this thesis.

It is apparent in Figure 9, that some level of balance was achieved between the four members of the US executive leadership in the method used to communicate the themes, foundation for the policy shift, and weaving the central organizing narrative required to achieve the framing effect. Nearly 85% of the public contributions to the frame were from the Secretaries of State and Defense while, as previously highlighted, the frame itself was first articulated in whole by the President himself.

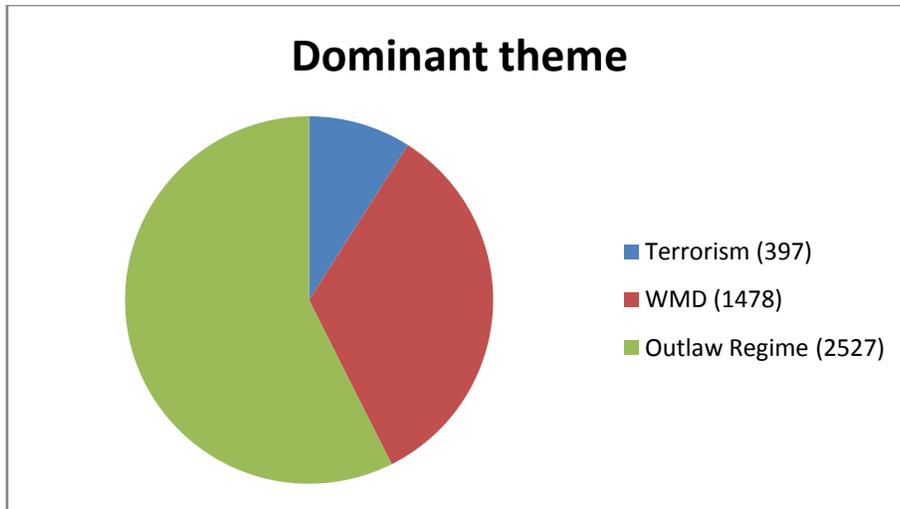


Figure 10. Theme Construction. This chart shows the total number of statements that were made by the US executive leadership in whole during the referent time period and separated by the theme they contributed to.

While some semblance of balance was maintained in the mediums used to communicate the frame, Figure 10 demonstrates that the frequency of the statements contributing to each theme supportive of the frame show significant imbalance. Despite dominant perception during the time and recollection of many it was the nature of the regime of Saddam Hussein which was emphasized. The rationale for this is clear, given a long history of the regime being a bad actor on the world stage, invading its neighbors, defying the will of the international community, and oppressing its own population. Therefore, specific accounts that are verifiable on that subject were far more prevalent than the regime’s affiliation with terror or its specific weapons of mass destruction capability. The result is that despite common perceptions, the manifest content of all the material analyzed showed that the terrorism theme, while critical to the narrative, only accounted for 9 percent of their statements, and WMD was only slightly more than a third of the focus.

This finding was remarkable, given that Saddam Hussein had been considered an outlaw for a more than a decade. As previously noted, war was not even justifiable when the combination between an outlaw regime and weapons of mass destruction existed, because that too was the case for more than a decade. This indicates that the salience of terrorism as a threat in the wake of the September 11th attacks served as a catalyst. Therefore, it seems that the disparity between the frequencies of each theme being presented could be attributed to the quantity of examples available to the Bush administration.

The following table details the specific statements made, the theme that they supported and the accuracy of the overall themes that supported the frame justifying the Iraq war.

Theme Analysis

Table 2. Accuracy Analysis of Statements Supporting Constituent Themes

Statement	Theme Supported	Accuracy
Presence of the regime on the terrorist list	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^{iv}
Relationships with terrorist networks	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^v
Harbor terrorist networks ⁴	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^{vi}
Support terrorism ⁵	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^{vii}
Presence of Al Qaida in Iraq	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^{viii}
Praising September 11 th attacks	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^{ix}
Ordering terrorist attacks	Terrorism theme	Accurate ^x
Close relationship with Al Qaida	Terrorism theme	Inaccurate ^{xi}
Provided Al Qaida with chemical and biological weapons training ⁶	Terrorism theme	Undetermined ^{xii}
Pursuit of WMD ⁷	WMD theme	Accurate ^{xiii}
Historical development of WMD	WMD theme	Accurate ^{xiv}

⁴ Including playing host to terrorists, allowing specific terrorists to be in the country

⁵ Including specific references to material or financial support to terrorist group

⁶ President Bush was the only member of the executive leadership to make this claim and he only made it once in the Speech "World Can Rise to This Moment" on February 6th, 2003.

⁷ This includes statements that include references to pursuit, desire, appetite, and proliferation of WMD

Historical WMD capabilities ⁸	WMD theme	Accurate ^{xv}
Historical use of WMD	WMD theme	Accurate ^{xvi}
Presence of an Active Program to develop nuclear weapons	WMD theme	Inaccurate ^{xvii}
Possession of biological weapons	WMD theme	Inaccurate ^{xviii}
Possession of chemical weapons	WMD theme	Accurate ^{xix}
Probably more lethal and dangerous today	WMD theme	Inaccurate ^{xx}
Biological capability moving around in vans	WMD theme	Inaccurate ^{xxi}
Advanced their WMD programs	WMD theme	Inaccurate ^{xxii}
Invasion of neighboring countries ⁹	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxiii}
Aggressive behavior against neighbors	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxiv}
Attacks against US persons ¹⁰	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxv}
Not playing by international rules ¹¹	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxvi}
Dangerous nature of the regime	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxvii}

⁸ Iraq used nerve and blister agents against the Kurdish population in the northern portion of Iraq and against Iran in the Iran-Iraq War.

⁹ Includes Kuwait and Iran

¹⁰ Including statements referring the Iraq shooting at pilots in the Northern and Southern “No-fly zone” and other references to individual attack plans.

¹¹ Including references to the number of UN resolutions Iraq has failed to comply with and the number of years they have not complied with UN demands

Oppressive nature of the regime	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxviii}
Totalitarian character of the regime ¹²	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxix}
Untrustworthy nature of the regime ¹³	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxx}
Filing false declarations	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxxii}
Pursuit and possession of unauthorized military capability	Outlaw regime theme	Accurate ^{xxxiii}

Clearly, the three component themes that constituted the justification frame were not equal. Due to the September 11th attacks and the choice to establish the frame the day after the anniversary thereof, terrorism was the single most powerful message for the administration to convey. Despite popular recollection demonstrated in the literature review, the executive leadership was extremely careful about how they connected the group responsible for the September 11th attacks (Al Qaida) and the regime of Saddam Hussein. They frequently either refuted the claims of the direct connection or simply pointed to a lack of evidence for that connection. In fact, even when pointing to the presence of Al Qaida in Iraq the members of the executive leadership would qualify their statements by saying that there is also Al Qaida in the US and dozens of other countries. When it came to terrorism, the utmost effort was made to stick to previously known affiliations and historical activities of Hussein's regime that were well known and verifiable.

¹² Including references to Saddam Hussein as a dictator, tyrant, outlaw, totalitarian

¹³ Including references to denial, deception, lies, and propaganda

The weapon of mass destruction theme was different. Of the ten separate categories of statements, only half of them were accurate. This was due to a departure from the way in which the terrorism theme was portrayed, and a historical inability to accurately determine what activities were occurring within Iraq. When the Bush Administration pointed to historical activities they were able to maintain their accuracy but once they began to infer a specific capability based on historical activities their accuracy diminished until they appear to have largely convinced themselves of the increased capability to the point where they dropped all qualifications from their rhetoric about the Hussein regimes weapons of mass destruction. This, as we all know, resulted in the Bush administration being unable to prove what they purported to be clear.

The outlaw regime theme, on the other hand, was perfectly crafted. Not by the work of the Bush administration, but rather by the work of Saddam Hussein. He gave frequent current examples of why he and his regime could not be trusted to operate within the bounds of international norms, and abundant historical examples of the threat he and his regime posed throughout the world. It was not by accident that he was subject to no less than 17 United Nations Security Council Resolutions. And it is unsurprising that Saddam Hussein was found guilty of countless transgressions and atrocities by his own people, eventually resulting in his execution¹⁴.

The accuracy of the Bush administrations statements was found to be what some would consider surprisingly high, given the arguments to the contrary the literature review identified. In most cases, they each maintained adherence to those areas that were already contained within the historical record, qualified inferences as statements of possibility, and made statements that were

¹⁴ Iraq's High Tribunal found Saddam Hussein guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced him to hang for the 1982 killing of 148 Shiites in the city of Dujail(MSNBC, 2006).

either proven or provable. The most significant and identifiable discrepancy was not with their overabundance of repetition of the Al Qaida-Iraq-WMD nexus (which was only stated once directly) but with the transition they made as a unit in the last days leading up to the invasion, from focusing on historical aspects and statements of probability about Saddam's current WMD capability, to statements of certainty about what would be found.

V. Discussion

“Why should the American people trust their government, is the question, I guess. The-first of all, they don’t have to trust their government blindly. The leaders have the responsibility to persuade, and persuasion means you marshal facts and you marshal argumentation, and the combination of the two results in persuasion.”

-(Rumsfeld, 2003)

When President Bush spoke in front of the United Nations General Assembly on September 12th, 2002 and established that the number one threat facing the United States and the international community was the regime of Saddam Hussein providing weapons of mass destruction to terrorists who would use them to advance their radical cause, he initiated a chain of events that would result in America’s first preemptive war, and one of the nation’s longest conflicts. The time leading up to this speech was a difficult time to be a member of the US executive leadership, as September 11th ushered in a new threat environment and the country had been hit on their watch. Despite the recognition that the primary threats facing the US in the 21st century were terrorism and weapons of mass destruction early in his term (Bush, 2001a) it took the attacks of September 11th, both their unforeseen nature and the asymmetric technique employed, to begin to imagine the potential for those two threats (terrorism and WMD) to achieve a nexus or connection.

Once the nature of terrorism in the 21st century had taken shape, it is unsurprising that old foes began to be viewed in a new light and the tide began to build which ultimately resulted in the state of war¹⁵ to be reinvigorated between the US and Saddam Hussein. It, however, was not an immediate transition. The threat first began to be categorized as part of the “Axis of Evil”

¹⁵ The state of war with Iraq had never concluded, and the US/UK maintained a military presence in the region to ensure that aggressive behavior on the part of Saddam Hussein was controlled (Congress, 2002).

where the regimes in Iran, North Korea, and Iraq were characterized as the three most significant threats because they shared some qualities that would be critical to the justification frame used for Operation Iraqi Freedom (Bush, 2002b). The qualities primarily included three themes, namely, pursuit of WMD capability, transgressions against international norms, and support for terrorism.

Despite having built them as an axis, and besides their near complete disassociation with each other, the three qualities were not equal. Apparently it was perceived as necessary within the administration to curtail the amount of focus during that timeframe they would put on Iraq, given the recent invasion of Afghanistan at the time of the speech, and valuable to clearly state that any nation supportive of terrorism would be viewed as terrorist themselves. Iraq, as we all know now, was still viewed differently and ultimately received the greatest amount of attention. This fact is something that became necessary to explain over the successive months.

Iraq was different. Saddam's administration paid the families of suicide bombers in Israel, used chemical weapons on their Kurdish population and against the Iranians, invaded their neighbor Kuwait, oppressed their population, and was subject to more than a decade of UN resolutions. They also happened to be Arab, which is the dominant makeup of the international terrorist organization which attacked the US homeland on September 11th. The Bush administration would have had a much more difficult task to justify a strike against Iran, since Iran has a democratically elected regime, there was no established state of war, and it had no history of aggression against US allies and interests that could compare to the regime of Saddam Hussein. The third state in the Axis of Evil, North Korea, was completely unapproachable given their close relationship with China and the impossibility of making the clear connection between the regime there and the potential for a September 11th like attack.

Once the “axis of evil” connection was dropped and the justification for dealing with Iraq versus the emerging threat from North Korea and Iran was established, the criteria was in place for the three constituent themes to receive intermittent focus until the establishment of the justification frame. As the frame was established, the work of the executive leadership to maintain that central organizing storyline increased exponentially. In fact, the frequency of engagement on the subjects supporting the frame and the quantity of reinforcing statements showed a marked increase leading up to each of the critical events in the road to war.

First, it was the vote in the US Congress to authorize the President to use force in Iraq to enforce UN Resolutions and protect US national interests. The vote took place on October 7th, 2002 with a resulting vote of 296-133 for HJ Res 114 and 77-23 for SJ Res 45. The vote was overwhelming and the language used was nearly verbatim from the speeches, interviews, and press conferences that constituted the frame’s constituent themes.

The next critical step in the process was the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1441. The resolution passed unanimously in the Security Council, 15-0, and established that Iraq had failed to meet its obligations, being in material breach of all of the previous 16 resolutions. This show of unanimity was unique, even more so than the overwhelming support that HJ Res 114/SJ Res 45 received. It recognized that each member was responsible for the enforcement of Security Council resolutions and that Iraq faced serious consequences for non-compliance with any of the provisions contained therein. After the legislative successes were secured within the US Congress and the United Nations the rhetoric coming from the US executive leadership ebbed for a short period while they allowed the process detailed in UNSCR 1441 to go forward.

By Mid-January 2003, it was clear in the administrations statements that they had given enough leeway to the process and began a concerted framing effort once again. This time, however, their focus was no longer on the legislative process and public/international support required to facilitate them, but on justifying the policy to their principal audience, the American people. The policy indicated that a second major front for the war on terrorism was not only justified but necessary. The focus they provided was on the idea that there was no other choice than to invade Iraq and depose Saddam to prevent “the world’s most dangerous weapons” from getting into the hands of terrorists who would use them on innocent Americans, “resulting in not thousands, but tens or hundreds of thousands of deaths” and a collapse of the US economy.

In that case, and in the wake of September 11th, many were persuaded that the policy of preemption was justified. Another September 11th like attack with weapons of mass destruction was an unacceptable outcome that had to be prevented. The train of thought which characterized Saddam as a mad man who wanted to see such devastation was well developed. After all, he had used these terrible weapons on his own people and if he had a surrogate to pass off the capability to it was rational to think that he would actually do it. In hindsight, he could have done just that, even with the minimal capability he had stored in bunkers at Al Muthanna or the expertise of the WMD scientists he still had access to. But would Saddam Hussein have empowered another group or individual and allowed them to be credited with striking such a blow to the “great Satan?” In hindsight that eventuality does not seem likely. However, in the aftermath of September 11th it is not surprising that the Bush administration saw connections where they likely did not exist, perhaps because they failed to see them where they existed in the months leading up to September 11th, 2001.

VI. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the official framing efforts undertaken by the U.S. Executive leadership to gain support for the Iraq War. It began by highlighting the contentious and unprecedented nature of the conflict in order to illustrate the value of exploring the topic from a different perspective. Subsequently, I articulated the research questions and described the roadmap for how this thesis would continue.

My review of the scholarly literature focused on concepts, ideas, and methods that could be applied and for that reason was separated into literature on the justification for the Iraq War, framing in the media, executive framing, and the application of manifest content analysis. The results of the review indicated a strong bias and lack of rigorous analysis on the Iraq War, as well as the potential value in approaching this topic from a different perspective using a technique that is less susceptible to bias. Therefore, I used manifest content analysis to analyze the specific messages that were being communicated to the American people by their leaders, as well as the timing and forum used to convey them.

The application of manifest content alone provided a great deal of data to be analyzed, but in order to better understand the application of framing efforts by the Bush administration I determined the accuracy of the statements themselves as well. Thus the methodological approach included the mapping of media engagements by each of the leaders with the public on the issue and the themes each of the U.S. Executive leadership contributed to. Then I explored the group dynamics to identify the type of engagement and level of attention given to the separate themes contributing to the central organizing storyline, or frame. Finally, I analyzed the accuracy of the statements, the themes those statements contributed to, and the overarching frame using the historical record.

The findings were remarkable for the contrast they present when compared to the scholarly literature available on the subject. The results of the manifest content analysis clearly indicate that there was a deliberate effort to frame the regime of Saddam Hussein as the most significant threat facing the national interest of the United States. While there were some explicit statements to that effect, the primary effort was spent on repetition of verifiable components or themes that supported that central storyline. The marketing of the Iraq War was performed by executive framing which capitalized on the threat known to be in place, a history that was condemnable, and, most importantly, the fear inspired by Al Qaida's success attacking the US homeland on September 11th, 2001.

All of the authors explored in the literature review, however, offered very different results than what the manifest content analysis indicates. For example, Kull et al. (2003) and Calabrese (2005) pointed to the case for material support being provided by Iraq to Al Qaida (Calabrese, 2005; Kull et al., 2003). The manifest content of U.S. Executive communication, however, fails to demonstrate their case. Similarly, Kumar (2006), Kellner (2007) and Hartnett & Stengrim (2004) all conclude that the Bush administration dragged America into war due to imperialist aims and based on propaganda or lies (Hartnett & Stengrim, 2004; Kellner, 2007; Kumar, 2006). Yet, their explanations fail to be corroborated by manifest content analysis. Given the dominant perception by both the American public and scholars reviewed in this thesis that the administration was focused on Iraq's links to terrorism and possession of weapons of mass destruction, it seems that Borrelli & Lockerbie (2008) were correct when they asserted that framing effects were based more on emotion than rational analysis (Borrelli & Lockerbie, 2008), and it is likely that the administration was aware of that fact as they constructed the frame and used the media and their surrogates to amplify their careful argumentation.

Relinquishing the control the US executive leadership expects to have in conflicts is a difficult disillusionment to undergo. They were faced with a challenge that was unique and an enemy that was unpredictable so it was an easy transition to look to historical foes and implement a strategy to address their fears. In contrast to those who view the effort as a campaign of lies, the administrations marketing was primarily rooted in accurate statements. For their part, it seems the American people were persuaded by each step in the historical process being done correctly and the way in which the Bush administration capitalized on the emotion and fear present in the wake of September 11th. Unfortunately, we stand years divorced from that process and the subsequent war, but face no fewer threats than those that faced us in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001. Terrorists still seek weapons of mass destruction, rogue nations still see value in proliferating a WMD capability, and even more turmoil has manifested in the Middle East as dictators are deposed and all semblance of stability has been lost; traditional terrorists entering and winning democratic processes, their members sit atop newly formed governments. With Iraq, the American people were persuaded to act, but nearly ten years removed from the beginning days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, that war is a cautionary tale that may have reinvigorated traditional sentiments that are not as much anti-war as they are anti-fear.

Was the Iraq war justified through a concerted campaign of lies, as other scholars have determined? The results of this manifest content analysis indicate that the administration developed its argument and capitalized on external events, timing, and individual perception to persuade their audience to see a threat emanating from the rogue regime. By marshaling their argumentation, rooted in historical examples and rational inference, they made their case. In the instance of existing and current WMD capabilities present in Iraq some of their inferences were incorrect, but manifest content analysis does not indicate that their narrative was based solely on

deliberately false statements. Rather, it seems that their marketing of the Iraq War was a common framing effort with the intent of capitalizing on emotion, timing, trust, and the amplifying effect of the media and surrogates.

The other key question is why public recollection of the case made by the executive leadership stands in such a stark contrast from the manifest content of their engagement? For every question answered or word uttered by the President, or his key cabinet members, there is a never-ending number of inferences and commentary coming from the media. They seek to organize and categorize for their audiences but they are just as subject to bias and inaccuracy as the individuals they report on while rarely held responsible for the impressions they leave. These impressions inform much of public opinion as “opinion elites” inform “opinion leaders,” who subsequently impact public recollection of how events transpired.

In the lead up to the Iraq war these media outlets and the audiences they informed were taken by the narrative that was attributed to the Bush administration but separated by a matter of degree from the intriguing but less direct frame the administration developed on their own. When the regime of Saddam Hussein was deposed and it turned out that the “smoking gun” or large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction were neither used in the conflict, nor found by the US forces blanketing the country the media’s narrative turned on the Bush administration, in part because the expectations the media itself created were not fulfilled by the reality on the ground.

The threat of WMD terrorism remains, as is made clear in the National Security Strategy (US, 2010). If the experience of the Iraq War constrains the options available for preventing the nexus between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction from becoming a reality, what do we do about it? That is a question that must be addressed and if the justification frame for the Iraq War is simply seen as a byproduct of a corrupt and disingenuous administration then the

American people may not ask the right questions. The result could either be that they blindly resist the policy or again find themselves bogged down in a conflict that they were persuaded to support.

Ultimately, my findings indicate that the justification for the Iraq War was a concerted framing effort that capitalized on a number of factors, potentially including recognition and adaptation to the perception that some of the cabinet members were more credible both domestically and on the world stage. It showed that they recognized the media framing effects and conducted real time analysis of their audience in order to best capitalize on the political environment and appeal to the emotion and fear which surrounded the issues. Unlike other scholars who have explored this subject area, however, my results do not indicate that their skill in framing their argument was an attempt to indoctrinate through a campaign of deliberately false statements but simply a common framing effort to convince their audience that Iraq was a valid and immediate threat, which is a replicable process neither unique to the Bush administration or war policies.

This is an important finding because real time analysis of executive framing can be informed by this effort. If evidence is presented in a manner which requires a great deal of inference the audience must be prepared for the possibility that the inference is incorrect or the cost outweighs the benefit. Which of those determinations would best apply to the Iraq War will undoubtedly remain a point of disagreement, but it would be a mistake to view the effort to frame the justification for the war as an isolated incident in American political history or a diabolical plot by a single administration. Framing will continue to occur and recognition that it is taking place will remain critical for the audience the US leadership seeks to convince.

For those reasons, and the limitations of using only manifest content analysis in this inquiry, the subject remains relevant and could benefit from additional inquiry. This could be approached in a number of ways, such as polls, manifest content analysis on the interaction of media and executive frames, using a combination of manifest and latent content analysis, or a multi-method approach, thereby allowing the scholar to discern the actual impact of the framing effort on public and international opinion. Additionally, while this thesis focused on what the Bush administration intentionally said to the American public there is an opportunity for future scholars to determine what areas they avoided or simply refused to address when presented with the opportunity, thereby providing greater depth and a basis to discern the intention to deceive.

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End Notes

ⁱ H.J. Res 114 “To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq.” Recognized the past transgressions of the Iraqi government, including: (1) Iraq's war of aggression against and illegal occupation of Kuwait; (2) Iraqi defectors leading to the discovery that Iraq had large stockpiles of chemical weapons and a large scale biological weapons program, and that Iraq had an advanced nuclear weapons development program that was much closer to producing a nuclear weapon than intelligence reporting had previously indicated;(3) direct and flagrant violation of the cease-fire; and (4)attempts to thwart the efforts of weapons inspectors to identify and destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction stockpiles and development capabilities, which finally resulted in the withdrawal of inspectors from Iraq on October 31, 1998. This led to their determination in Public Law 105-235 (August 14, 1998), that Iraq's continuing weapons of mass destruction programs threatened vital United States interests and international peace and security, and declared Iraq to be in `material and unacceptable breach of its international obligations' urging the President `to take appropriate action, in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws of the United States, to bring Iraq into compliance with its international obligations' and mitigate their “continuing threat to the national security of the United States and international peace and security in the Persian Gulf region .” This led the Congress to authorize the President to: (1) strictly enforce through the United Nations Security Council all relevant Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq and encourages him in those efforts;(2) obtain prompt and decisive action by the Security Council to ensure that Iraq abandons its strategy of delay, evasion and noncompliance and promptly and strictly complies with all relevant Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq; (3) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and(4) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq (Congress, 2002).

ⁱⁱ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 was passed unanimously on 8 November 2002. It recognized that Iraq remained subject to all previously resolutions including: resolutions 661(1990) of 6 August 1990, 678 (1990) of 29 November 1990, 686 (1991) of 2 March 1991, 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991, 688 (1991) of 5 April 1991, 707 (1991) of 15 August 1991, 715 (1991) of 11 October 1991, 986 (1995) of 14 April 1995, 1284 (1999) of 17 December 1999, and resolution 1382 (2001) of 29 November 2001. 1441 also recognized the threat Iraq's non-compliance with Council resolutions and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles posed to international peace and security, and that its resolution 678 (1990) authorized Member States to use all necessary means to uphold and implement its resolution 660 (1990) of 2 August 1990 and all relevant resolutions subsequent to resolution 660 (1990) and to restore international peace and security in the area. The resolution goes on to deplore the fact that Iraq remained in material breach of all previous resolutions and maintained the repressive nature of the regime on Iraq's civilian population, their abysmal track record on terrorism, and their failure to comply with obligations they made with regard to monitoring and inspection of their weapons of mass destruction programs. The resolutions reads on to detail an invasive inspection regime and glosses over the “serious consequences” of Iraq's continued failure to comply (UNSC, 2002).

ⁱⁱⁱIbid (i)

^{iv} Having spent 14 years on the list of state sponsors of terrorism, after the 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, Iraq was removed from the list in October of 2004. It was a symbolic act to show support for Iraq's interim government after the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein during the major combat operation phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom(CFR, 2005; Miles, 2004).

^v “Saddam Hussein's dictatorship provided headquarters, operating bases, training camps, and other support to terrorist groups fighting the governments of neighboring Turkey and Iran, as well as to hard-line Palestinian groups. During the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam commissioned several failed terrorist attacks on U.S. facilities. The question of Iraq's link to terrorism grew more urgent with Saddam's suspected determination to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which Bush administration officials feared he might share with terrorists who could launch devastating attacks against the United States”(CFR, 2005).

^{vi} Saddam Hussein primarily harbored “groups that could hurt Saddam’s regional foes. Saddam has aided the Iranian dissident group Mujahadeen-e-Khalq and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (known by its Turkish initials, PKK), a separatist group fighting the Turkish government. Moreover, Iraq has hosted several Palestinian splinter groups that oppose peace with Israel, including the mercenary Abu Nidal Organization, whose leader, Abu Nidal, was found dead in Baghdad in August 2002. Iraq has also supported the Islamist Hamas movement and reportedly channeled money to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. A secular dictator, however, Saddam tended to support secular terrorist groups rather than Islamist ones such as al-Qaeda, experts say”(CFR, 2005).

^{vii} Ibid

^{viii} Abu Musab Al Zarqawi was a well known Al Qaida leader, who resided in Iraq until his death on 6 June, 2006. He and other members of Al Qaida traveled through and resided in Iraq throughout the lead up to the Iraq war, but Al Qaida members were also known to reside in dozens of other countries including the United States and close European allies.

^{ix} Saddam Hussein’s regime failed to condemn the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States and is reported to have praised the effort despite fundamental differences in ideology between the dictator and the Islamist group (Kean, 2004).

^x During the Persian Gulf War Saddam Hussein was known to have commissioned terrorist like attacks against US facilities (CFR, 2005).

^{xi} There is no evidence to justify the determination that there was a close relationship between the regime of Saddam Hussein and Al Qaida. All indications and the results of the Iraq Survey Groups efforts indicate that the ideological chasm and singular world outlook embraced by Saddam Hussein would be incompatible with the Islamist tact employed by the group and their leader, Usama Bin Laden (Group, 2004).

^{xii} There is no evidence of this type of training occurring and throughout the period in question there was only one statement, made by President Bush, from the executive leadership that made such an allegation.

^{xiii} Iraq’s pursuit and possession of a historical WMD capability is well documented through the efforts of UNMOVIC as well as declared stockpiles (CIA, 2007; Group, 2004; UNSC, 2002).

^{xiv} Ibid

^{xv} Ibid

^{xvi} Ibid. “In the 1980s Iran-Iraq War, Iraqi troops repeatedly used poison gas, including mustard gas and the nerve agent sarin, against Iranian soldiers. Iranian officials have also accused Iraq of dropping mustard-gas bombs on Iranian villages. Human Rights Watch reports that Iraq frequently used nerve agents and mustard gas against Iraqi Kurds living in the country’s north. In March 1988, Saddam’s forces reportedly killed thousands of Iraqi Kurds in the town of Halabja with chemical weapons”(CFR, 2005).

^{xvii} The Iraq Survey Group concluded that there was no evidence to support the idea that Iraq had an active nuclear weapons program, but they did determine that the knowledge to rapidly reinstate a program after sanctions were lifted was closely protected by Saddam Hussein (Group, 2004).

^{xviii} The Iraq Survey Group concluded that a bio-weapons capability was not present during the time period in question despite a historical program to produce and weaponize some biological warfare agents (Group, 2004).

^{xix} During the invasion of Iraq it was determined that the historical capabilities that resided within sealed bunkers remained, but those chemical weapons were not in a readily usable form for traditional military purposes (CIA, 2007).

^{xx} After years of sanctions and military interdiction by US and UK forces in the “no fly zones” and beyond Iraq’s military capability had been decimated and their remaining WMD capability was not employable (CIA, 2007; Group, 2004).

^{xxi} Despite graphics depicting mobile bio-weapons production facilities there was no discovery that could provide conclusive evidence of the Bush administrations assertions of their existence (Group, 2004).

^{xxii} Clearly, based on the results of the Iraq Survey Group and intelligence collected post-invasion, Iraq’s WMD capability had been significantly degraded through the actions of UN inspectors and US/UK military operations (CIA, 2007; Group, 2004).

^{xxiii} In 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait and committed countless atrocities. Requiring UN action, Operation Desert Storm resulted in the Iraqi military being pushed back across the previously existing border and United Nations resolutions being imposed upon the regime of Saddam Hussein (Bureau of Democracy, 2002; UNHCR, 2002).

^{xxiv} Ibid

^{xxv} In both UN Resolution 1441 and H.J. Res 114 both the US and International community’s acknowledged the aggressive behavior against US/UK pilots enforcing the “no fly zone” and there is historical evidence of Saddam Hussein ordering terrorist like attacks against US facilities and persons (Congress, 2002).

^{xxvi} Detailed in UN Security Council resolution 1441, the council deplored the actions of the regime and their continued flagrant violations of their obligation under international law (UNSC, 2002).

^{xxvii} Reports from both the United Nations Human Rights Watch and the U.S. Department of State highlight the dangerous, totalitarian, and vicious nature of the Saddam Hussein regime, including: prisoners of conscience and armed forces officers being executed, systematic torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners and detainees, “widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law by the Government of Iraq, resulting in an all-pervasive repression and oppression sustained by broad-based discrimination and widespread terror.” They go on the detail common methods of physical torture including “electric shocks or cigarette burns to various parts of the body, pulling out of fingernails, rape, long periods of suspension by the limbs from either a rotating fan in the ceiling or from a horizontal pole, beating with cables, hosepipe or metal rods, and *falaqa* (beating on the soles of the feet)” (UNHCR, 2002). For their governance the reports detail that by the provisional Constitution of 1968, Iraq claims to be a democratic republic, however, “political power has rested exclusively in a harshly repressive one-party apparatus dominated by Saddam Hussein al-Tikriti and members of his extended family. Saddam Hussein, who was also Prime Minister, Chairman of the RCC, and Secretary General of the Regional Command of the Ba’th Party, therefore wielded absolute decisive power. Hussein and his regime obtained 100 percent of the votes cast in a nondemocratic “referendum” on his presidency held in October that did not include secret ballots, and many credible reports indicated that voters feared possible reprisal for a dissenting vote. The judiciary was not independent, and the President had the ability to override any ruling or refer any case to a secret system of special courts outside the normal judiciary”(Bureau of Democracy, 2002).

^{xxviii} Ibid

^{xxix} Ibid

^{xxx} Ibid (xxvi)

^{xxx} Ibid (xxvi)

^{xxxii} As evidenced by the successive resolutions and determinations of material breach, in addition to the findings of UNMOVIC inspectors post-resolution 1441 there is clear evidence of a continued effort by the regime of Saddam Hussein to maintain unauthorized capabilities that he and his regime believed they could get away with. The pattern of misconduct is irrefutable, but to extend that to a robust WMD capability is not possible (UNSC, 2002).