

A Comparative Pentadic Analysis of Mediated Presidential Discourse  
During 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina

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**ABSTRACT**

In his first term as president, George W. Bush was confronted with one of the worst national attacks in United States history: the September 11 terrorist attacks of 2001. Through the devastation, however, President Bush triumphed in unifying and guiding this nation during what would become the height of his rhetorical leadership. Following his reelection in 2004, President Bush faced one of the worst natural disasters in the nation's history: Category 4 Hurricane Katrina. In its aftermath, Katrina became known as "one of the worst mishandled disasters ever." Utilizing Kenneth Burke's pentad, this study analyzes the president's rhetorical response and the primetime network news coverage following each crisis in an attempt to determine how President Bush could fare so well in one instance, consoling and leading the American people, while falling short in his second major crisis during his term as president.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In his first term as president, George W. Bush was confronted with the worst national attack on United States soil since Pearl Harbor: the September 11 terrorist attacks of 2001. Through the devastation, however, President Bush triumphed in unifying and guiding the nation during what would become the height of his rhetorical leadership. Denise Bostdorff argues that the president's discourse about the attacks was "his inauguration into the presidency."<sup>1</sup> From his first speech in the Oval Office on the night of the attacks to his famous "Bullhorn Speech" on-site at ground-zero, the President was successful in describing the mood of the situation, rallying the nation together, and serving as a strong leader during this crucial time of need.<sup>2</sup> "Bush's public image," according to Stephen Farnsworth and Robert Lichter, "was transformed into that of a warrior president."<sup>3</sup> His approval rating as president rapidly increased from about 51 percent prior to the event to an astounding 90 percent, the highest ever recorded by the Gallup poll.<sup>4</sup>

Following his reelection in 2004, President Bush faced one of the top five worst natural disasters in the nation's history. On August 29, 2005, Category 4 Hurricane Katrina ripped through the Gulf Coast, destroying cities such as New Orleans, Biloxi, and Mobile. In its aftermath, Katrina became known as "one of the worst mishandled disasters ever."<sup>5</sup> Unlike September 11, President Bush did not speak to the public immediately; instead, the president decided to stick to his pre-Katrina schedule and fly to San Diego, California for his long-planned trip commemorating the 60th anniversary of Japan's surrender. The President delayed his response and attention to Hurricane Katrina because this was a "localized" natural disaster, unlike the terrorist attacks, which was an issue of national security.<sup>6</sup> In the wake of this disaster,

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<sup>1</sup>Denise M. Bostdorff, "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal: Upholding the Faith of the Greatest Generation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89, no. 4 (2003): 301.

<sup>2</sup> See George W. Bush, "Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation," in *The White House* (Washington, D.C.: 2001). and George W. Bush, "President Bush Salutes Heroes in New York," (New York, NY: 2001).

<sup>3</sup>Stephen J. Farnsworth and S. Robert Lichter, *The Mediated Presidency : Television News and Presidential Governance* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 4.

<sup>4</sup>"Do You Approve or Disapprove of the Way George W. Bush Is Handling His Job as President?," review of Reviewed Item, *Gallup Poll*, (21 September 2001), <http://www.pollingreport.com/BushJob1.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> E. L. Quarantelli, a co-founder of the Disaster Research Center at the University of Delaware, quoted in Jesse Walker, "Nightmare in New Orleans: Do Disasters Destroy Social Cooperation?," *Reason: Free Minds and Free Markets* December 2005, 24.

<sup>6</sup>Jim and White Vandehei, Josh, "Bush Urges Shift in Relief Responsibilities," *Washington Post*, 15 September 2005.

Bush's approval rating as president dropped from 45 to 40 percent and continued to decline as the event unfolded.<sup>7</sup>

How does a president react appropriately in one case, comforting and uniting the public while also echoing their feelings, and provide a seemingly inappropriate response in another case? Larry Sabato argues, "9/11 created an image of competence for George Bush and Katrina destroyed it."<sup>8</sup> Were the responses truly different or solely portrayed differently by the press? In both of his major speeches – the September 20, 2001 address to Congress and September 15, 2005 address to the nation – the president was tending to a nation who trying to make sense out of what was occurring in each event. Secondly, both of the speeches were broadcast live via primetime television with a goal to address the entire nation. One would think that similar responses would essentially yield similar reactions and effectiveness, yet that did not seem to be the case in these two situations. If the responses were similar, why was the strategy effective in one case and fall short in the other? Finally, what role did the news media play in each event? Did the press have any influence on the success or failure of the president's strategy in each case? This study explores the rhetorical response of President Bush and the news media coverage following the crisis events of the September 11 terrorist attacks of 2001 and the unfolding of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 in an attempt to answer these questions and shed light on these particular events that greatly impacted the Bush presidency.

### **Presidential Discourse, Crisis, and Television News**

In *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric*, Amos Kiewe explains that his idea of studying presidential discourse during critical situations was sparked in the 1990s during the first President Bush administration.<sup>9</sup> For Kiewe, it was intriguing that an administration who found strength in the campaign rhetoric of "read my lips: no new taxes" was the same administration that effectively handled the Gulf crisis.<sup>10</sup> Kiewe observes, "the marked difference in the rhetorical energy surrounding these two overlapping crises brought me to consider the dynamic

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<sup>7</sup>"Do You Approve or Disapprove of the Way George W. Bush Is Handling His Job as President?," review of Reviewed Item, *Gallup Poll*, (16 September 2005), <http://www.pollingreport.com/BushJob1.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in an interview during David Gregory, "Memories of Katrina and 9/11 Terror Attack to Determine Future of Politicians," *NBC Nightly News*, 24 August 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Amos Kiewe, ed., *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric* (Westport: Praeger, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* This quote came back to haunt President George H. W. Bush during his reelection due to the perceived economic crisis.

of discourse during critical situations as an area of study.... especially presidential crisis rhetoric.”<sup>11</sup>

Living through the events of September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina, and watching as both crises unfolded, I found a similar provocative question concerning President George W. Bush.<sup>12</sup> *How could a president who grasped the role as leader so effectively during one of the worst national attacks on American soil, approximately four years later fall short in respects to one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States?* Similar to Kiewe’s work, the objective of this study “is not to prove an academic point regarding the generic classification of crisis rhetoric, or to justify a special place for this rhetorical form over others... the objective here is practical: *to further our understanding of crisis discourse, to shed light on the role of modern presidency during crisis situations, to stipulate some consistent or special features and patterns in the relationship between presidential speech, behavior and action, to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the justification for taking action or averting crisis situations and for ignoring warranted actions or exacerbating insignificant ones.*”<sup>13</sup>

According to Mary E. Stuckey, rhetorical criticism of public discourse is “an endeavor to understand the public meaning of shared symbols, for a society develops an understanding of itself by negotiating the meaning of such symbols.”<sup>14</sup> She contends that through this negotiating process, “some voices speak more loudly, more clearly, than others” and that “in the United States, one of these [more loud] voices belongs to the president.”<sup>15</sup> Scholars in political communication, and more recently political science, have had extensive interest in presidential discourse.<sup>16</sup> As presidential action becomes increasingly rhetorical, coupled with the increase in engagement and influence of the news media, presidential addresses and the responses they evoke have become even more important artifacts of study.

The president in times of a national crisis or disaster not only becomes our crisis manager as leader and Commander-in-Chief, but also our “Consoler in Chief.” As “crisis manager” and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all references to “the president” or “President Bush” are referring to George W. Bush.

<sup>13</sup> Kiewe, ed., *Modern Presidency*, xv.

<sup>14</sup> Mary E. Stuckey, *The President as Interpreter-in-Chief* (Chatham: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1991), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See William N. Brigance, ed., *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, 2 vols. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1943), Robert D. King, “Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Second Inaugural Address--a Study in Text Authenticity,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 23, no. 3 (1937), Stuckey, *Interpreter-in-Chief*, Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism: The Development of Standards for Rhetorical Appraisal* (New York: Ronald Press, 1948).

Commander-in-Chief, there is an expectation for the president to find and execute solutions for our problems. Equally as important, however, is the expectation of the president to describe the mood of the situation, explain how and why the situation occurred, and comfort the nation assuring us that everything will soon be back to normal. According to Gary Woodward, “Presidents help convert crises into occasions that reaffirm an individual’s sense of national identity.”<sup>17</sup>

The president does this in a variety of ways. The most efficient strategy to accomplish these tasks is through public address – taking his consoling message and plan of remedies directly to the people.<sup>18</sup> However, in taking the message directly to the people, the news media act as mediator, or “middle man,” transferring the message to the people. As a major crisis develops, the public depends on the news media, more specifically television, for instantaneous coverage of the unfolding drama. Because of the vast array of publics, the media present and interpret these events in a simplistic, personified manner. As Murray Edelman states, “news depends on dramatization, simplification and personification.”<sup>19</sup> Although the media generally privileges the presidential voice in terms of coverage (i.e. when the president speaks, the media are more than likely to cover it) they can also mitigate, reflect, or even ignore the president’s portrayal of himself as agent and the situation he set up in his public address. “In so doing,” according to Stuckey, “television has influenced the altered place of the president within the American political system and has affected both the form and the content of presidential speech.”<sup>20</sup>

The speeches President Bush delivered on September 20, 2001 to Congress (and the nation) concerning the September 11 terrorist attacks and the September 15, 2005 address to the nation concerning the events of Hurricane Katrina played a significant role in the Bush presidency. The two events created very similar rhetorical opportunities for the president. September 11 was one of the worst attacks on American soil to date, only second to Pearl Harbor, while Katrina was labeled one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States. Acknowledging the differences in the types of crises, with one being an intentional, purpose driven terrorist attack becoming an issue of national security and the other being an

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<sup>17</sup> Gary C. Woodward, *Center Stage: Media and the Performance of American Politics* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 91.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Murray J. Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 90.

<sup>20</sup> Stuckey, *Interpreter-in-Chief*, 7.

uncontrollable natural disaster, both events still posed a similar crisis situation in terms of magnitude that the president was required to address. Although they were not the first utterances from the president upon the disasters, the two speeches provided the first discourse of substance that laid out the president's immediate plan of action in both situations. With this in mind, a comparison of the two addresses revealed similarities and differences in terms of rhetorical strategy, and shed light on why the response to the two speeches differed so greatly. In addition, looking at these addresses highlighted particular strategies used by the president in times of crisis, contributing to the literature of presidential crisis rhetoric.

Many scholars have argued that from the 1960s on, the networks' evening news shows "have been the lenses through which many citizens view government."<sup>21</sup> According to Stuckey, "Television has supplanted print and radio as the primary source of information about politics, and presidents increasingly rely on television to communicate with the American people."<sup>22</sup> In this case, it was especially important to review the two selected speeches in the context provided by the television news media because of the significant role the media played in influencing the public's perception of the crises. The television news media provided instantaneous coverage of events as they unfold, showing on-site pictures, providing personal interviews, and creating the stage for the drama as it unravels. In each crisis situation, this coverage was generally the first account their audience receives. Thus, how the news media described and arranged the scene of events, along with their definition and portrayal of key actors, played an important role in creating the perceived reality of the public. Examining the pre-speech television news media coverage in each case exposed the created "mediated reality" prior to the speech, allowing for the comparison between the television news media's description of the situation to the president's account within his speech. The comparison unveiled whether the news media and the president were describing the same realities in each case; and if not, demonstrating what discrepancies in each account were present and how those discrepancies affect the success or failure of the president's discourse.

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<sup>21</sup> Farnsworth and Lichter, *The Mediated Presidency*, 5. Also see Timothy E. Cook, *Making Laws and Making News* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1989), Stephen J. Farnsworth and S. Robert Lichter, *The Nightly News Nightmare: Network News Coverage of U.S. Presidential Elections 1998-2000* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), Doris Graber, *Mass Media and American Politics*, 6th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2002), Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1991), Bartholomew Sparrow, *Uncertain Guardians: The News Media as Political Institutions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Stuckey, *Interpreter-in-Chief*, 2.

Both speeches qualify as the first major addresses about the events that were carried live on primetime television, with both events – the September 11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina – ranking number one in the “Top News Stories” of their respective years.<sup>23</sup> According to Farnsworth and Lichter, “Whatever roles recent presidents tried to play, or had thrust upon them, they sought to craft their public image through a common channel: an independent news media dominated by the big three television networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC).”<sup>24</sup> Television network news continues to perform a significant function in disseminating information to the American public. The Pew Research Center cites that 53 percent of the public view the network evening news as mostly fact and 75 percent rate network news favorably.<sup>25</sup> In addition, network television continues to be an important source of news for other media outlets. Frequently, the same news footage and content will be broadcast over the network’s associated cable channel, such as NBC’s *MSNBC*.<sup>26</sup> Although network news popularity has dimmed over the past century, it remains a leading national news source. Collectively, the networks continue to play a pivotal role in providing, describing, and creating a “mediated reality” for their viewers.

This study analyzed network evening news coverage, specifically *ABC’s World News Tonight*, *CBS’s Evening News*, and *NBC’s Nightly News*, immediately following the crisis events and leading up to the speeches in order to examine how the media set the stage for each of the president’s speeches. Secondly, President Bush’s speeches following each event – the September 20, 2001 address to Congress and the September 15, 2005 address to the nation – were investigated to unveil the president’s description of both crises. Finally, the network news media coverage within the two days following the speeches was also reviewed. By analyzing the post-coverage, the study uncovered the media’s response to the president’s descriptions of the crises, determining the media’s reflection, mitigation, or even disregard of the message the president conveyed.

By analyzing the two pieces of discourse, this study was able to discern President Bush’s approach to crisis rhetoric in each instance, examining the strengths, weaknesses, similarities, differences, successes, and failures. In addition, by exploring the network news media’s coverage of each event, this study investigated what role the media played in the successes and failures of

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<sup>23</sup> "What Was and Wasn't on the Public's Mind... and How Opinions Changed During 2005," *Pew Research Center for the People and the Press*, 27 December 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Farnsworth and Lichter, *The Mediated Presidency*, 4.

<sup>25</sup> "What Was and Wasn't."

<sup>26</sup> Farnsworth and Lichter, *The Mediated Presidency*.

each speech. Through the systematic study of the modern rhetorical presidency and the relationship it has with the news media, Stuckey contends that “we can further the process of understanding the state of our present political language and political life” and the current role of presidential communication, or the “rhetorical presidency.”<sup>27</sup>

Chapter 2 briefly discusses and examines the role of “president as leader” and explores the increased importance of the “rhetorical presidency.” The “rhetorical presidency,” coupled with the presence of the news media, plays a key role during any national crisis situation. Presidential crisis rhetoric and news media coverage influence the public’s perception of any drama, especially those involving the wellbeing of the nation as a whole. These two entities constantly vie for their perception and interpretation of reality to be accepted by the public. The reality most accepted by the American people will not only influence their perceptions, but also determine the perceived success or failure of a president’s administration. Because of this important process, it is important to review the influences and effects of the news media on the public’s perception and comprehension of events. Finally, enlightening the analysis on the described reality and motive of each rhetor, a review of Kenneth Burke’s dramatism and the pentad will provide the perspective through which to examine each artifact of the study, including: President Bush’s September 20, 2001 address to Congress, his September 15, 2005 address to the nation, and the media coverage following each crisis event.

Chapters 3 and 4 contain a brief context of each situation in a case-by-case fashion. Chapter 3 focuses on the September 11 terrorist attacks, while chapter 4 describes Hurricane Katrina. Following the description of the event in each chapter, a pentadic analysis is performed on each artifact: the network news coverage leading up to each address, the presidential speech, and the post-news media coverage of each address. Finally, chapters 5 and 6 offer a comparison of the two events, discussion of the findings and conclusions that the comparison draws from the findings.

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<sup>27</sup> Stuckey, *Interpreter-in-Chief*, 8.

## CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This chapter reviews two powerful actors in the realm of politics: the president of the United States and television news media. These key players contribute an integral part in setting the stage for the public's view of reality. In this chapter, I survey the role of presidential leadership, including exploring his positions as the commander and communicator, the evolution of the rhetorical presidency, and tasks of the president in times of crisis. Secondly, I investigate the news media's function as "creators of reality" and their relationship with the office of the presidency. Finally, I conclude with a brief review of the lens this study, Kenneth Burke's dramatism and pentad, used to focus on the artifacts at hand.

### **Presidential Leadership**

The lead actor in the drama of politics is our country's fearless leader, the president of the United States. Lori Han and Diane Heath point out, "As presidents face the challenge of appearing in public, the importance of their image as a leader among the American public cannot be ignored."<sup>28</sup> The literature below explores presidential leadership and the various rhetorical challenges of the office.

**Commander and Communicator.** According to Robert E. Denton, Jr. and Gary Woodward, "The presidency is an office, a role, a persona, constructing a position of power, myth, legend, and persuasion."<sup>29</sup> Edwin Corwin, one of the first scholars to discuss the various roles of the presidency, outlines five basic Constitutional roles as sources of power within the presidency, including: Chief of State, Chief Executive, Chief Diplomat, Commander-in-Chief, and Chief Legislator.<sup>30</sup> Clinton Rossiter, extending Corwin, continues this list with five extra-constitutional roles with the president serving as Chief of Party, Protector of the Peace, Manager of Prosperity, World Leader, and Voice of the People.<sup>31</sup> Both of these scholars argue that the source of Presidential power lies in the combination of the various roles. Despite the array of characters the president plays, it important to note Denton's argument: "the Presidency is a

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<sup>28</sup> Lori C. Han and Diane J. Heath, *In the Public Domain: Presidents and the Challenges of Public Leadership* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 11.

<sup>29</sup> Robert E. Denton and Gary C. Woodward, *Political Communication in America*, 3rd ed., Praeger Series in Political Communication. (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 185.

<sup>30</sup> Erwin Corwin, *The President: Office and Powers*, 3rd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1948), 20-23.

<sup>31</sup> Clinton Rossiter, *The American Presidency* (New York: Harvest Book Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1960), 72-75.

product of interaction.”<sup>32</sup> The extent of presidential power is dependent on his leadership skills and his ability to interact, communicate, and persuade.

Although America prides itself on equality and democracy, the president is the “one-man distillation of the American people” reflecting their values and “their perceived dignity and majesty.”<sup>33</sup> Whenever the president speaks to the public, not only do we place him in the central focus of our political attention as our distributor of political and social policies, we as a society inherit a sense of national identity from his words and deeds. As the “only elected politician answerable to all Americans,”<sup>34</sup> the president must be able to comprehend the problems of our nation and, articulate and resolve those problems better than his followers.<sup>35</sup> According to Mark A. Peterson, “the spotlight falls upon presidents at center stage because we expect them to exercise leadership and to make a conscious difference in the life of the nation and even in our personal welfare.”<sup>36</sup> Denton and Woodward claim that there are no specific traits set in stone to determine what makes a good leader or comprise successful leadership; however, there are certain traits that can be helpful in certain situations the president may face.<sup>37</sup> Most importantly, the president must be able to confront and solve problems, while also being accountable to a broad range of constituents.

Furthermore, the role of leadership calls for the president to communicate to the people, define situations, justify actions, legitimize policies, persuade various groups, and inspire the nation as a whole. Stuckey posits that “presidents must unite contemporaneous occasions with appropriate traditions and innovations so that enough of us will continue to see ourselves—and sometimes maybe even our better selves—reflected in the national mirror of public discourse.”<sup>38</sup> Barbara Kellerman explains that “the president’s success as a directive leader—the degree to which he accomplishes what he set out to accomplish—seems to depend to a considerable degree on his own personal capacities. . . (1) the vision and motivation to define and articulate his

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<sup>32</sup> Robert E. Denton, *Moral Leadership and the American Presidency* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 39.

<sup>33</sup> Rossiter, *The American Presidency*, 18.

<sup>34</sup> Mary E. Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Steven J. Rubenzer and Thomas R. Faschingbauer, *Personality, Character, and Leadership in the White House* (Washington D.C.: Brassey's Inc., 2004), 17.

<sup>36</sup> Mark A. Peterson, "Presidential Power and the Potential for Leadership," in *Presidential Power*, ed. Robert Y. Shapiro, Martha Joynt Kumar, and Lawrence R. Jacobs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 363.

<sup>37</sup> Denton and Woodward, *Political Communication*, 182.

<sup>38</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 2.

agenda so as to broaden his base of support; and (2) some considerable ability to perform effectively in those interpersonal interactions necessary for bringing about this most important goals.”<sup>39</sup> Increasingly, the various roles of the presidency, and to an extent the characteristics of an effective leader, rely more and more on the president’s ability to interact with, communicate to, and articulate for the public he serves.

*The Rhetorical Presidency.* Denton and Woodward, extending Orrin Klapp’s argument, recognizes the increasingly important role of a symbolic executive leader in terms of the presidency.<sup>40</sup> They contend that symbolic leadership “is an emergent phenomenon resulting from the interaction of the public and the politician.”<sup>41</sup> Within a political drama, the president is automatically identified, interpreted, and projected within this particular role; “The key, therefore, in becoming a symbolic leader is to take advantage of the dramatic elements in any setting.”<sup>42</sup> The president governs by “focusing on the role of communication in creating, defining and sustaining our relationship with the institutional presidency.”<sup>43</sup> For a president to demonstrate effective leadership, he must perceive this connection between communication and governing, and then use that knowledge to act accordingly.<sup>44</sup> As Denton and Woodward point out, “Everything a president does or says has implications and communicates something.”<sup>45</sup>

The importance of the “rhetorical presidency” on the power of the office has increased greatly over the past two decades. According to Richard Neustadt, the president’s ability to be an effective leader is based on this “rhetorical presidency.” He states that “presidential power is the power to persuade.”<sup>46</sup> Jeffrey Tulis clearly defines this increasing role in his book, *The Rhetorical Presidency*.<sup>47</sup> He argues that the “rhetorical presidency does represent a true

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<sup>39</sup> Barbara Kellerman, *The Political Presidency: Practice of Leadership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 21.

<sup>40</sup> This concept was initially discussed in Robert E. Denton, *The Symbolic Dimensions of the American Presidency: Description and Analysis* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1982)., however, continued in other works including Denton and Woodward, *Political Communication*. extending Orrin Klapp, *Symbolic Leaders: Public Dramas and Public Men* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1964).

<sup>41</sup> Denton and Woodward, *Political Communication*, 184.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>44</sup> Martha Joynt Kumar, "The President as Message and Messenger: Personal Style and Presidential Communications," in *Presidential Power: Forging the Presidency for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert Y. Shapiro, Martha Joynt Kumar, and Lawrence R. Jacobs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 408.

<sup>45</sup> Denton and Woodward, *Political Communication*, 184.

<sup>46</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power, the Politics of Leadership* (New York: Wiley, 1961), 10.

<sup>47</sup> Jeffrey Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).; This book was an extension and further explanation of an earlier article: James Ceaser, Thourow, Glen, Tulis, Jeffrey, and Bessette, Joseph "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* II, no. Spring (1981).

transformation of the presidency” and demonstrates a huge shift in presidential leadership between the nineteenth and twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> According to Tulis and other colleagues, prior to the twentieth century, leadership performed through popularity and the “bully pulpit” was considered suspect and questionable.<sup>49</sup> They explain that presidents “rarely spoke directly to the people, preferring communications between the branches of the government.”<sup>50</sup>

However, presidents have relied increasingly on the “bully pulpit” as a tool to perform a strategy Samuel Kernell describes as “going public” – “a strategy whereby a president promotes himself and his policies in Washington by appealing to the American public for support.”<sup>51</sup> Kernell argues that this public leadership strategy is necessary due to the declining efficiency of presidential bargaining and the increase in opportunities of “going public,” having the decisions lie in the hands of public opinion. In his discussion of the rhetorical presidency, Theodore Windt highlights three central areas in which the power of the rhetorical presidency becomes most influential: constitutional or legal power; role as legislative leader and head of his party; and public opinion.<sup>52</sup> Of the three, according to Windt, public opinion “is the power upon which all other powers rest, for persuasion is how public opinion is formed, changed, influenced, and molded.”<sup>53</sup>

James Ceaser and coauthors identify three reasons for the increase of the rhetorical presidency and the necessity for the president to speak to the mass public more than ever before.<sup>54</sup> First and foremost, Ceaser argues, is the development of the modern doctrine of presidential leadership. Over the past three centuries, the public has gradually placed more and more expectations on the president as leader. The president is expected to set particular goals and solve the nation’s problems, no matter how small or large, and to do so in a very open manner.

Secondly, Ceaser cites the development of mass media. The mass media has greatly increased in size and availability. They provide their audiences with immediate access to events

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<sup>48</sup> Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.; Coined by President Theodore Roosevelt, “bully pulpit” is referring to the president’s ability to use communications as an instrument of political power. See Carol W. Gelderman, *All the Presidents’ Words: The Bully Pulpit and the Creation of the Virtual Presidency* (New York: Walker and Co., 1997), ET Lim, “Five Trends in Presidential Rhetoric: An Analysis of Rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2002).

<sup>50</sup> Ceaser, “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency,” 159.

<sup>51</sup> Kernell, *Going Public*, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Theodore Windt, “Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Discipline of Study,” in *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric*, ed. Theodore Windt and Beth Ingold (Dubuque: Kendal/Hunt Publishing, 1987).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., xxi.

<sup>54</sup> Ceaser, “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency.”

and occurrences across the globe in a matter of seconds. Ceaser accounts, “driven by its own inner dynamic to find and sustain exciting issues and to present them in dramatic terms, news creates—or gives the impression of creating—national moods and currents of opinion which appear to call for some form of action by the government and especially by the President.”<sup>55</sup> In terms of the presidency, this development dramatically modified the access the public had to the office of the presidency and vice-versa, changing “the mode of communicating with the public from primarily the written word to the spoken word delivered in dramatic form.”<sup>56</sup> As Karyl Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson explain, this availability enhances the institutional power of presidential rhetoric “by the ability of presidents to speak when, where, and on whatever topic they choose, and to the national audience through coverage by the electronic [and mass] media.”<sup>57</sup> Roderick Hart claims that because of this expansion, presidential speechmaking now becomes a “tool” for modern governance.<sup>58</sup>

The final reason for amplification of the “rhetorical presidency,” Ceaser adds, is the modern electoral campaign: “So formative has the campaign become of our tastes for oratory and of our conception of leadership that presidential speech and governing have come more and more to imitate the model of the campaign.”<sup>59</sup> Instead of the governing setting the tone for the campaign, the reverse is taking place. Ceaser explains that this trend of allowing the campaign to drive and set the stage for governing has embedded a certain set of expectations in the public’s mind: “Both may think of the campaign as their finest hour to the extent that its techniques become internalized in their conception of governing... governing with public approval requires a continuing political campaign.”<sup>60</sup>

Despite the reasons and benefits for the increase of the “rhetorical presidency” and the continuation of “going public,” recent presidents also deal with the consequences of these trends. One of the leading downfalls of these developments is the increase of public expectations for the presidency. In his discussion about presidential leadership and power, Neustadt puts it very bluntly: “Everybody now expects the man inside the White House to do something about

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.: 12.

<sup>56</sup> Denton and Woodward, *Political Communication*, 184.

<sup>57</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words : Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 3.

<sup>58</sup> Roderick P. Hart, *The Sound of Leadership : Presidential Communication in the Modern Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 77.

<sup>59</sup> Ceaser, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," 16.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

everything.”<sup>61</sup> According to Kernell, “Casting himself as the fount from which the answers to the nation’s problems flow, such a president may raise public expectations to unrealistic heights.”<sup>62</sup> Because this strategy has become a common occurrence, the public has developed a greater expectation for the president not only to describe various policies, but also to explain, respond, and react to any situation or event that effect the wellbeing of the nation or national identity.

***Presidential Crisis Rhetoric.*** Presidential power and leadership derives from the president’s ability to gain identification from the public within the reality of the situation he creates.<sup>63</sup> Stuckey asserts that “presidents... articulate national identity and, to be successful, must do so in ways that will be accepted as obvious, even inevitable.”<sup>64</sup> Kiewe maintains that in order for presidents to be rhetorically successful, they must “seek the opportunity to define situations and to construct the reality they wish the public to accept.”<sup>65</sup> This strategic action becomes most important in a crisis situation. Denton explains that critical situations “allow presidents to communicate an image of decisiveness and determination, since crises can evoke the image of events that are extraordinary, unique, and threatening.”<sup>66</sup> According to Kiewe, crisis rhetoric “is the discourse initiated by decision makers in an attempt to communicate to various constituents that a certain development is critical and to suggest a certain course of action to remedy the critical situation.”<sup>67</sup> More specifically, presidential crisis rhetoric is distinguished as a separate type of discourse due to this particular urgency of the given situation and “the expectation on the part of the president and the public that averting or addressing a critical situation requires different political processes and the suspension of normal political conversation.”<sup>68</sup>

Scholars such as Tulis, Windt, and David Zarefsky have noted a routine practice that the rhetorical presidency has created: “crisis politics.”<sup>69</sup> This utilizes the “crisis tool” as a mean to

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<sup>61</sup> Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 7.

<sup>62</sup> Kernell, *Going Public*, 45.

<sup>63</sup> Denton, *Symbolic Dimensions*, 91. Also see Theodore Windt, *Presidents and Protesters : Political Rhetoric in the 1960s* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

<sup>64</sup> Stuckey, *Defining Americans*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Kiewe, ed., *Modern Presidency*, xvi.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> See Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, Windt, *Presidents and Protesters*, David Zarefsky, *President Johnson's War on Poverty : Rhetoric and History* (University: University of Alabama, 1986).

gain popularity of issues and allow for a heightened possibility of political change. According to Windt, situations “rarely create crisis. Rather, presidents’ perceptions of situations and the rhetoric they use to describe them mark events as crisis.”<sup>70</sup> This repeated strategy has the possibility of hindering the president in the event that an irresolvable crisis is created. It also could lead to the confusion the public, occurring so often that it is hard for them to distinguish between a genuine crisis and a spurious one. Kiewe, however, defines presidential crisis rhetoric as “discursive products created and transacted through an interaction between the president, the press, and the public, and serves to legitimize (or to delegitimize) the definition of a given situation as critical.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, the president can be participating one of three situations: the creator of crisis by defining an issue in such a way that it heightens the issue to crisis level; the reactor to crisis created by outside events or people as in the cases of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina; or the reactor to a crisis that the president initially created, intentional or not, such as President Lyndon B. Johnson in the Gulf of Tonkin incident.<sup>72</sup>

**Summary.** The literature highlights the role of the president as leader, serving as both a commander and communicator. As this communicator function has increased over time, the concept of the “rhetorical presidency” and “going public” has played a greater role in the leadership power of the institution of the presidency. During a crisis situation, this power—the power of the president to define and explain events or issues—is heightened; however, not without some consequences. The present study involves examining the rhetorical response of George W. Bush during two of the worst crises ever to hit the United States in recent history: the September 11 terrorist attacks and the devastating results of Hurricane Katrina. In each case, President Bush received the rhetorical opportunity to emerge as a strong leader, addressing the nation in response to a crisis situation. Each speech had the power to define the events and set the scene for the American people who were trying to understand the situation. Through the analysis of each piece of discourse, this study examines how the president described the situation and draws a comparison between each address, noting the similarities and differences between each response.

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<sup>70</sup> Windt, *Presidents and Protesters*, 5.

<sup>71</sup> Kiewe, ed., *Modern Presidency*, xvii.

<sup>72</sup> Scholars suggest President Johnson and his advisers constructed a narrative around the Gulf of Tonkin crisis that portrayed a “disparate set of events” as a way to “create a drama where the US prestige and power were tested and became the basis for expanding US involvement in the Vietnam War.” See Moya A. Ball, “The Gulf of Tonkin Crisis: An Analysis of the Private Communication of President Johnson and His Advisers,” *Discourse and Society* 2, no. 3 (1991).

## The Power of the News Media

A second key player in the definition of events and issues is the news media. According to Stephen Farnsworth and Robert Lichter, failure to manage the media effectively “deprives a modern president of one of his greatest advantages over the divided legislative branch.”<sup>73</sup> In this sections that follow, I review the literature supporting the role of the news media as creators of reality and highlight their interaction with the presidency.

*News Media as Creators of Reality.* The news media have a significant impact on what people think and how the public views the world. According to Theodore White, the power of the press in America “is a primordial one. It sets the agenda of public discussion.... It determines what people will talk and think about.”<sup>74</sup> One of the first to recognize this power was Bernard Cohen. In an early study on the press and foreign policy, Cohen pointed out, the mass media “may not be successful in telling people what to think, but they do tell people what to think about.”<sup>75</sup> Each day, the news media are responsible for unveiling the top events and issues. In presenting this information, not only do they have to gather the facts, but also present the facts in an organized fashion in which the public can make sense of the event or issue. Stuckey suggests that “one of television's most important effects is the creation of a dramatized society.”<sup>76</sup> The news media are able to set the stage and create the narrative or story to serve as a “mental map” for the public to follow.<sup>77</sup> After sifting through the information about a particular event or issue, the news media pick and choose what information to present to the public. In this information selection, the media present a package that highlights some aspects of the event or situation, while leaving others in the background. This highlighting function allows the media the power to determine what dramas of the world are relevant and “at issue.” Jim A. Kuypers observes that “because our attention is highly selective, we do not often notice this process.”<sup>78</sup>

Robert Entman provides a good example of the differences in the presentation of facts within the news media when analyzing and comparing the narratives of two very similar events:

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<sup>73</sup> Farnsworth and Lichter, *The Mediated Presidency*, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1972* (New York: Bantam, 1973), 327.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 16.

<sup>76</sup> Stuckey, *Interpreter-in-Chief*, 5., 5.

<sup>77</sup> Sharon Dunwoody, "The Media and Public Perceptions of Risk: How Journalists Frame Risk Stories," in *The Social Response to Environmental Risk : Policy Formulation in an Age of Uncertainty* ed. Daniel W. Bromley and Kathleen Segerson (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992).

<sup>78</sup> Jim A. Kuypers, "The President and the Press: A Rhetorical Framing Analysis of George W. Bush's Speech to the United Nations on November 10, 2001" (paper presented at the National Communication Association, San Antonio, TX, 18 November 2006), 3.

the 1983 Soviet downing of a Korean Air Lines Flight 007 plane and the 1988 U.S. shooting of the Iran Air Flight 655.<sup>79</sup> Both events were very similar in terms of the facts; however, the news media covered each story very differently. On the one hand, the Soviet occurrence was described by the news media as a brutal attack, whereas the United States occurrence was described as a tragedy. In another study, Thomas Nelson and colleagues performed an experimental design using a local news story about a Ku Klux Klan march and various portrayals to show how the different staging of the narratives dealing with such a controversial topic had an effect on the audience's view of the issue.<sup>80</sup> These studies demonstrate the power that the news media have when presenting narratives about the facts of a situation.

The news media's ability to choose and organize news narratives in a particular manner that focuses on certain aspects of a situation is just one way the news influences the public view. What makes this process influential in terms of the media is the concept of agenda-setting. Before they gather any information about a topic, the editors must first choose which topics are going to be covered on the day's news program. This practice leads to the theory of agenda-setting, the "process whereby the news media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues."<sup>81</sup> According to Maxwell McCombs, this power of transferring salience from the media agenda to the public agenda plays a key role in the early formation of public opinion: "Those aspects of the public affairs that are prominent in the news become prominent among the public."<sup>82</sup>

Many scholars have tested this theory and have found that the media do in fact influence the public agenda and create a mediated reality.<sup>83</sup> When the news media focus more on a particular issue, the public is more likely to cite that issue as the most important concern facing

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<sup>79</sup> Robert M. Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents," *Journal of Communication* 41 (1991).

<sup>80</sup> Thomas E. Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley, "Media Framing of Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effects on Tolerance," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (1997).

<sup>81</sup> Jian-Hua Zhu and Deborah Blood, "Media Agenda-Setting Theory: Telling the Public What to Think About," in *Emerging Theories of Human Communication*, ed. Branslav Kovacic (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 99.

<sup>82</sup> Maxwell McCombs, "A Look at Agenda-Setting: Past, Present, and Future," *Journalism Studies* 6, no. 4 (2005): 543.

<sup>83</sup> See G. Ray Funkhouser, "The Issues of the Sixties: An Exploratory Study in the Dynamics of Public Opinion," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1973), Sheldon Gilberg et al., "The State of the Union Address and the Press Agenda," *Journalism Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (1980), Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Functions of the Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 33 (1972).

the nation.<sup>84</sup> In their foundational study, McCombs and Donald Shaw found that voters actually relied heavily on the news media for political information and cited important issues that coincided with what the media had defined as important.<sup>85</sup> Sei-Hill Kim, Dietram Scheufele, and James Shanahan performed both an opinion survey and a content analysis of a local newspaper on a particular issue.<sup>86</sup> They found a significant correspondence between prominent issue attributes delivered by the media and the agenda of attributes among the public. Joe Hester and Rhonda Gibson collected and content analyzed forty-eight months of print and broadcast news about the economy and discovered that economic news was framed negatively more often than positively.<sup>87</sup> In addition, the negative coverage was one of the significant predictors of consumer expectations about the future of the economy. Other research suggests that this agenda influence is unidirectional, whereas the press affects the public agenda, public concern and/or objective reality generally do not have a strong influence on the media.<sup>88</sup>

*News Media and the Presidency.* According to Stuckey, the American mass media, and the news reporters that represent them, “are the most visible and constant link between the leaders and the led.”<sup>89</sup> Without the media, most Americans would not have the ability to obtain detailed political insight and establish a relationship with the political figures that represent them. The news media serve as a liaison between these political agents and mainstream society, serving as the nation’s eyes and ears.<sup>90</sup> Woodward concludes that “nowhere are the stakes higher than at the White House, where political operatives and journalists battle over the mediation of the presidency.”<sup>91</sup>

On the same token, the media do not always reflect the messages of political figures, including the president. Windt argues that the media, particularly television news, function as a

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<sup>84</sup> Shanto Iyengar, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder, "Experimental Demonstrations of the Not-So-Minimal Political Consequences of Mass Media," *American Political Science Review* 76 (1982).

<sup>85</sup> Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Functions of the Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 33 (1972).

<sup>86</sup> Sei-Hill Kim, Dietram A. Scheufele, and James Shanahan, "Think About It This Way: Attribute Agenda-Setting Function of the Press and the Public's Evaluation of a Local Issue," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>87</sup> Joe Bob Hester and Rhonda Gibson, "The Economy and Second Level Agenda Setting: A Time-Series Analysis of Economic News and Public Opinion About the Economy," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (2003).

<sup>88</sup> See Roy Behr and Shanto Iyengar, "Television News, Real-World Cues, and Changes in the Public Agenda," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1985), Jan E. Leighley, *Mass Media and Politics: A Social Science Perspective* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004).

<sup>89</sup> Stuckey, *Interpreter-in-Chief*, 2.

<sup>90</sup> Woodward, *Center Stage: Media and the Performance of American Politics*, 97.

<sup>91</sup> Farnsworth and Lichter, *The Mediated Presidency*, 5.

“rhetorical check on presidential pronouncements.”<sup>92</sup> In his book *Presidential Crisis Rhetoric and the Press*, Jim A. Kuypers reviews how the Clinton administration portrayed the crisis situations dealing with North Korea, Bosnia, and Haiti in comparison with the manner the print news media presented the situation after the administration description of the drama.<sup>93</sup> What he found was that although the press was presenting the content of the administration’s message, they left behind the context of the message. Kuypers states that “at a time when calm deliberation and consensus were extremely important to the U.S. government to project, the press was advancing a contradictory impression of the continuing discussion between Congress and the White House over U.S. involvement in Bosnia. In this manner, the press was intentionally mis-communicating the direct assertion of the President of the United States.”<sup>94</sup> In a further study, Kuypers analyzed speeches and statements made by five political actors.<sup>95</sup> For this analysis, he collected and investigated the nationwide press coverage for the duration of two weeks following the speaker’s utterance. Kuypers found, in a majority of the time, “the press advanced its own interpretation of events over that of the speaker, if that speaker’s comments went against press supported positions.”<sup>96</sup>

This becomes especially important in times of crisis. The president and the news media play very important roles in defining the situation for the public during times of crisis. As mentioned above, each actor does not always portray the created reality in the same light or using the same terms. Therefore, there is a constant wrangling, or tug-of-war if you will, between whose definition of reality will be widely accepted by the public. As Thomas Patterson has noted, if the president should happen to hesitate or stumble, it “gives the press an opportunity to seize control” of the story.<sup>97</sup>

**Summary.** After reviewing the literature, it is evident that the news media influence what is talked about and how it is discussed. Previous research suggests that the news media have the ability to describe, and in a sense, create reality, by selecting certain stories and highlighting

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<sup>92</sup> Windt, "Presidential Rhetoric," xxxi.

<sup>93</sup> Jim A. Kuypers, *Presidential Crisis Rhetoric and the Press in the Post-Cold War World* (Westport: Praeger, 1997).

<sup>94</sup> Kuypers, "The President and the Press: A Rhetorical Framing Analysis of George W. Bush’s Speech to the United Nations on November 10, 2001", 11.

<sup>95</sup> Political actors include Charles Davison, former President Bill Clinton, Louis Farrakhan, Reggie White, and Trent Lott. See Jim A. Kuypers, *Press Bias and Politics : How the Media Frame Controversial Issues* (Westport: Praeger, 2002).

<sup>96</sup> Jim A. Kuypers, ed., *The Art of Rhetorical Criticism* (Boston: Pearson, Allyn Bacon, 2005), 193.

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Patterson, *Out of Order* (New York: A. Knopf, 1993), 55.

some aspects, while also leaving other aspects in the background. As a result, the public's view of a particular situation or event, or their perception of reality, can be influenced in one way or another. Having this influence, while also serving as the liaison between political leaders and the public – more specifically, the president and the American people – this process becomes especially important in times of crisis when the accepted definition of reality can determine the effectiveness and success of the president and his perceived leadership. With the considerations of the information above, I examined television network news in an attempt to unveil how the news media described the president and the overall situation in each event, during the pre and post speech coverage. In addition, I looked at how the media's description of the overall situation compared to the president's description, highlighting possible aspects that may have helped or hampered the effectiveness of the president's address.

### **Lens of Study**

According to Sonja Foss, rhetorical criticism is “a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes.”<sup>98</sup> With an interest in fully understanding the rhetorical artifacts selected and how they operate within the sphere of public discourse, this study uses Kenneth Burke's Dramatism and the pentad as the lens of analysis. In this case, dramatism and the pentad serve as an efficient and productive tool to uncover the motive of each act, determining the reality offered by each artifact. Burke notes that the methodology of dramatism “invites one to consider the matter of motives in a perspective that, being developed from an analysis of drama, treats language and thought primarily as modes of action.”<sup>99</sup> He also asserts that motives are shorthand explanations for situations; therefore, an analysis of motive is an analysis of human behavior. Finally, because motives are linguistically constructed, critics should employ an analysis of language, namely the pentad, in a quest to unveil motive. However, before examining this tool, it is important to understand Burke's concept of motive, methodology of dramatism, and the process of a pentadic analysis.

***Dramatism, Motive, and Symbolic Action.*** According to Burke, *the* defining characteristic of human beings is the ability to use language, which he characterizes as symbolic

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<sup>98</sup> Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism Exploration and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Waveland Press, Inc., 2004), 6.

<sup>99</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1969), xxii.

action: “‘Action’ is a term for the kind of behavior possible to a typical symbol-using animal (such as man).”<sup>100</sup> As humans, we create our reality through the active choosing and using of language. Therefore, according to Burke, language constitutes action, not purely motion. Motion simply refers to the animalistic, biological behavior needed for survival such as respiration and digestion, and the requirements for these motions, such as food, water, and shelter. This particular process does not involve the use of symbols. Action, on the other hand, defines our ability as human beings to create symbols and acquire symbol-using systems, such as language. The act of choosing the symbols, or language we use, directly correlates to the way we as humans create and view reality. As Rachel Holloway explains, the words people choose to express their perceptions “betray and display their particular world views. They state what for them is reality and act on the basis of that reality.”<sup>101</sup>

Humans distinguish different situational patterns through the particular vocabulary of their culture or the group into which they were born and raised. According to Burke, “men seek for vocabularies that will be faithful *reflections* of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are *selections* of reality. And any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a *deflection* of reality.”<sup>102</sup> The vocabulary that is used selects what is meaningful to the group and what is not. Burke asserts, these relationships “are not *realities*, they are *interpretations* of reality – hence different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions to what reality is.”<sup>103</sup> Any particular situation gains its definition from the framework or lens of interpretation that is applied by humans. Consequently, the way humans define and describe an objective situation becomes subjective when they assign motive to the situation. Holloway suggests that “because symbolic action involves choice from a range of alternative actions, the actors are always accountable for their choices.”<sup>104</sup> Therefore, the motive attached to the act can be determined by the linguistic choices and labels attributed by the rhetor to describe a particular instance, act, or situation.

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<sup>100</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action; Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1966), 53.

<sup>101</sup> Rachel L. Holloway, *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer : Politics, Rhetoric, and Self-Defense* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1993), 31.

<sup>102</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 59.

<sup>103</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Permanence & Change, an Anatomy of Purpose*, 2d rev. ed. (Los Altos, Calif.,: Hermes Publications, 1954), 35.

<sup>104</sup> Holloway, *In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer : Politics, Rhetoric, and Self-Defense*, 32.

Burke argues that humans develop particular patterns of responses to situations, so much so that we have specific words that define these responses and shape the interpretation that surrounds them. Holloway clearly demonstrates this point with the example of a soldier running from battle: “[I]f a soldier is observed running from the battle lines, several descriptive terms can be invoked: ‘desertion,’ ‘retreat,’ or ‘intelligent survivalist response.’”<sup>105</sup> Each label given to that particular act attributes a different type of motive because the interpretations of the soldier’s action are situated in a different way. Holloway explains, each term “embodies a different meaningful relationship between the act (the run from battle) and a context,” proving that motive is not “fixed,” but instead a term of interpretation.<sup>106</sup> In a more recent example, two different news outlets posted pictures in their medium of Hurricane Katrina victims carrying groceries through the flooded waters. One caption read: “A young man walks through chest-deep flood water after *looting* a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005.”<sup>107</sup> However, in the other news outlet, the caption located under a similar picture read: “Two residents wade through chest-deep water after *finding* bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana.”<sup>108</sup> The act of labeling the action as finding versus labeling the act as looting creates a different context and interpretation of reality surrounding the act.

***Dramatism.*** Of all premises, this notion of language as symbolic action and motive are the most important concepts when considering Burke’s idea of dramatism. Dramatism is Burke’s critical system for analyzing human symbolic action. This analysis uses terms derived from the study of drama to analyze and study the motive of language. To Burke, life is a drama and humans are actors within it. Humans naturally create messages and present reality much the same way as a play is presented. Through this presentation, humans reveal our particular view of a situation – our reality, similar to a play’s presentation of a certain world and reality. Through our use of language, humans describe the situation, naming its key structures and surrounding elements. Foss argues, how we describe a situation “indicates how we are perceiving it, the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Italicized emphasis added. This photo was issued by the AP Wire but is no longer available through this service. This issue has, and continues to saturate internet blogs. For example, see *Yahoo Slideshow Shows Why Editors Are Important* (Dvorak Uncensored, 2007 2005 [cited February 15, 2007]); available from <http://www.dvorak.org/blog/images/katrina/>

<sup>108</sup> This photograph was featured in the AFP Wire, but again, was pulled from publication. The only observable difference between the two photographs was the race of the people pictured. See Ibid.

choices we see available to us, and the action we are likely to take in that situation. Our language, then, provides clues to our motives or why we do what we do.”<sup>109</sup> Hence, dramatism, according to Burke, serves as a “method of analysis and corresponding critique of terminology designed to show that the most directed route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodical inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their function.”<sup>110</sup>

**Pentad.** Burke asserts that the goal of dramatism is aimed at understanding "what is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it."<sup>111</sup> He develops the idea that grammar determines how the world is experienced and interpreted. Using this notion, he continues by constructing a grammar of five key terms – the pentad – through which one can explain the motive within language or, as Burke would put it, symbolic action. The five key terms of the pentad include act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. Act, as Burke describes, names the action, or “what took place, in thought or deed.”<sup>112</sup> The person, or kind of person, who performs the act is the agent, while the means he or she uses to commit the act is the agency. Scene is the background of the event or the situation in which the act occurred. Purpose is why the person is committing the act. Although some scholars align this part of the pentad with motive,<sup>113</sup> most would warn against that idea, stating that motive is what arises from the pentad as a whole.<sup>114</sup> Burke states: “Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer some kind of answers to these five questions.”<sup>115</sup>

**Pentadic Ratios.** Most would wonder why this vocabulary of grammar is so important to determining motive. Up until this point, these terms seem only to allude to the common terms answered in the realm of journalism: who (agent), what (act), why (purpose), where and when

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<sup>109</sup> Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism Exploration and Practice*, 384.

<sup>110</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 135.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> See L. Virginia Holland, "Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Approach in Speech Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 41, no. 4 (1955).

<sup>114</sup> See Richard E. Crable and John L. Makay, "Kenneth Burke's Concept of Motives in Rhetorical Theory," *Today's Speech* 20, no. 1 (1972), Sonja K. Foss, Karen A. Foss, and Robert Trapp, *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1985), Roderick P. Hart, *Modern Rhetorical Criticism* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman/Little Brown, 1990).

<sup>115</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, xv.

(scene), and how (agency). However, Burke proceeds to use this grammar to set up a series of ratios. Ratios are the interrelationships between these terms. Foss describes ratios as “a paring of two of the key terms that allows a critic to investigate how the first term in the pair affects the second.”<sup>116</sup>

Burke implies that it is not only important to use the grammar, but also to analyze how the grammar terms relate to each other. For example, when pairing the Scene (where and when) with the Act (what), creating the Scene-Act ratio, the critic would look to see how the scene interrelates with or affects the act. Does the scene found in the rhetorical artifact dictate or mandate a particular type of act? Are certain acts more likely to take place in this scene than others? In the Agent-Act ratio a critic would examine how the characteristics of the agent, i.e. the agent’s leadership position, personality, socio-economic standings, etc, require the performance of specific acts. Again, the key is to analyze the relationship between the two terms and examine how one term affects the other. Burke explains: “In a shipwreck, for instance, everyone on the ship would respond in some way to the crisis that marked the situation (scene-act ratio)... However, the very poignancy of the event would be likely to bring out sharply varied “agent-act” ratios. One man would become panic-stricken, another would try to be generally helpful, another would think only of his own survival, and so on.”<sup>117</sup>

Although there are twenty possible ratios, not all of the pairs will unveil a significant relationship. A critic may find a significant relationship between two terms in the ratio or may discover that the first term in the ratio has little effect on the second. For example, if the scene were a plane crash, that scene seems to require specific acts of survival; therefore, a strong relationship exists between the scene and the acts that must take place. However, if the scene were an apartment in Blacksburg, Virginia and the act was baking a cake, there is no necessary connection between the scene and the act. Burke emphasizes that there must be appropriate relationships and causality between the elements in order for them to be enlightening, which is dependent on the importance of the role the term plays within the drama. Once the critic examines all significant ratios, generally one term should arise as the driving term in the drama, determining the nature of most of the other terms. It is within that term that the critic looks for the motive of the act.

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<sup>116</sup> Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism Exploration and Practice*, 385.

<sup>117</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Dramatism and Development*, Heinz Werner Lectures ; 1971. (Barre, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1972), 24.

Burke suggests that human beings generally have a particular disposition to define our realities in one consistent fashion, with one term or ratio. Furthermore, we also reflect that disposition through the explanation and response to the world around us. With that in mind, Burke connects each possible driving term in the pentad with a particular philosophical system that may help the critic generate ideas about the possible motive of the rhetoric. If *scene* is the driving term, the corresponding philosophy is *materialism*, the idea that all facts and reality is explainable through motion and matter and the scene is responsible for the action. If *agent* is the prevailing term, *idealism* is the parallel philosophy. This system views the experience of the mind or spirit as fundamentally real and the existence of material things as a construction of the mind, meaning the agent determines the nature of the act and the situation surrounding it. On the other hand, a featured *act* signifies *realism*, a system in which things such as moral facts and universals exist independently outside of the agent's thoughts and perceptions and agent is defined their act. When *agency* is dominant, the related philosophical system is *pragmatism*, in which acts are justified by the means used to complete them. Finally, if *purpose* prevails, the connecting philosophy is *mysticism*, in which unity is emphasized, the individual disappears, and the element of identification is so strong that the agent is compelled to act by some higher, universal purpose.<sup>118</sup> The clarification and analysis of these relationships can indicate which term directs the other terms, which is where motive of symbolic action is located.

Not to be confused with purpose, which is the agent's reason for committing the act, as specified in the language used, motive is the explanation of the act that is revealed *after* the act is completed. According to Foss, "Motive is often unconscious; rhetors may believe they are engaging in an act for one purpose, when they actually have quite a different—unknown to them—reason for performing that act."<sup>119</sup> Andrew King states, "[M]otive becomes the name that situates the act within the orbit of social communication... Motive is what differentiates motion from action."<sup>120</sup> Burke's concept of dramatism and the pentad not only create a grammar to locate motive, but also demonstrate how humans' use of language determines how the world is experienced and interpreted. According to Jeffery Murray, by situating the grammar of how to view particular actions of communication, dramatism provides "an account of how human

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<sup>118</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*.

<sup>119</sup> Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, 2 ed. (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1996), 338.

<sup>120</sup> Andrew King, "Motive," review of Reviewed Item, *American Communication Journal*, no. 3 (1998), <http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol1/iss3/burke/king.html>.

beings, as symbol users, come to know the world through symbolic framing”<sup>121</sup> and the motives of action and communication. Burke contends that by focusing and analyzing the way humans interact, use, and communicate with language, the human motive behind the action can and will be unveiled.

**Case Study.** I utilize the pentad as a tool to complete a dramatistic analysis of the president’s addresses and primetime television network news stories in a quest to expose the stage set by each rhetor. In the following chapters, the context surrounding each artifact is described. This examination of context is followed by a pentadic analysis of the primetime network evening news coverage of *ABC’s World News Tonight*, *CBS’s Evening News*, and *NBC’s Nightly News* between the following dates: September 11, 2001, the day of the terrorist attacks to September 15, 2001, the day of the president’s address to Congress; and August 29, 2005, the day Hurricane Katrina hit landfall in New Orleans, to September 15, 2005, the day of the president’s address to the nation.<sup>122</sup> Secondly, each speech – the September 20, 2001 address to Congress and the September 15, 2005 address to the nation – is examined through a dramatistic lens, using the pentad and the appropriate ratios. Finally, the news coverage two days following each address is inspected through the pentad, with a discussion of the ratios and overall findings in each situation. The concluding chapter explores a comparison of the two speeches and media coverage in each instance, guiding the discussion of the findings and drawing conclusions about each case in terms of presidential crisis rhetoric and the influence of the news media in crisis events.

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<sup>121</sup> Jeffrey Murray, *Kenneth Burke: A Dialogue of Motives* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 123.

<sup>122</sup> Through the search engine LexisNexis, news stories containing “Bush” and “September 11” or “9/11” in the full-text search between the dates of September 11, 2001 and September 22, 2001 were collected to create the first dataset for comparison. Similarly, using the same database, news stories containing the terms “Bush” and “Hurricane Katrina” were collected to create the second dataset for comparison. The news stories were screened for significance of the story. The segments were required to focus on both search terms in order to be included in the analysis. Those simply mentioning the terms in passing were excluded from the study. Once gathered, a critical analysis was performed to determine the narrative themes running throughout each set of data. These themes were then examined through a dramatistic lens, exposing the appropriate ratios.

## CHAPTER 3. FREEDOM AT WAR WITH FEAR: THE SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS

The grave unfolding of September 11, 2001 began in the early hours of the morning.<sup>123</sup> The first high-jacked passenger jet, American Airlines Flight 11 out of Boston, Massachusetts, crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center at 8:45 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. A second plane, American Airlines Flight 175 also from Boston, followed shortly after and hit the south tower of the World Trade Center at 9:03 a.m. Both impacts tore gaping holes in the building, setting them on fire. Within the hour, all airline flights were grounded and air traffic halted. President Bush, speaking at an elementary school in Sarasota, Florida, was notified and escorted back to Air Force One. Before leaving the elementary school, the president made a statement to the public declaring that the country had suffered an “apparent terrorist attack.”<sup>124</sup>

At 9:43 a.m., American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon, lighting it on fire and causing significant damage. Immediately following the collision, the Pentagon and the White House were evacuated. President Bush departed from Florida at 9:57 a.m. and flew to an undisclosed location for safety purposes. Within the next terrifying hour, both towers of the World Trade Center collapsed, causing massive clouds of dust, rubble, and debris to explode into the atmosphere. A portion of the Pentagon also caved in shortly thereafter. The final blow came when United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. FBI officials speculated the plane’s destination was Camp David, the White House or the U.S. Capitol building. This final attack was unsuccessful due to the passengers’ takeover of the hijackers and suicidal crash of the plane.

As the morning ended and the chaos continued, President Bush made a public statement from Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana at 1:04 p.m. He assured the American people that the government was taking all of the appropriate security, safety, and rescue measures. This included the high alert status of the U.S. military worldwide. Asking for prayers for the victims of this horrific event, he said, “Make no mistake, the United States will hunt down and punish

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<sup>123</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all context information was provided by National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, 1 ed. (New York City: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005).

<sup>124</sup> This statement was made at 9:30 a.m. at the elementary school immediately after notification of the attacks. See Appendix 1 for a complete timeline of the president’s utterances.

those responsible for these cowardly acts.”<sup>125</sup> The President was then escorted from Barksdale aboard Air Force One to an undisclosed Air Force base in Nebraska – later revealed to be Offutt Air Force Base – to conduct a National Security Council meeting via teleconference.

A sense of shock, fear, and confusion swept the nation. Speculation about who was responsible for the devastation grew. U.S. officials reported “good indications” that Saudi militant Osama bin Laden, also suspected of coordinating two U.S. embassy attacks in 1998, may have masterminded the attacks. United States Senator Bob Graham, D-Florida, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, claimed that he was “not surprised there was an attack (but) was surprised at the specificity.”<sup>126</sup> He said he was “shocked at what actually happened -- the extent of it.”<sup>127</sup> New York Governor George Pataki closed all government offices. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani urged New Yorkers to stay at home on Wednesday. The American Stock Exchange, the NASDAQ, and the New York Stock Exchange were all closed and announced that they would remain closed the following day.

Once the events of the day settled, the President left Offutt Air Force Base and returned to Washington at 4:30 p.m. There were still reports of fires burning in part of the Pentagon. Building 7 of the World Trade Center complex collapsed after sustaining damage earlier in the day. Surrounding buildings in the area remained smoking or actually on fire. Once President Bush arrived back at the White House, he scheduled an address the nation at 8:30 p.m. This address, coming directly from the Oval Office in the White House, was very short – only lasting five minutes – and to the point. He vaguely laid out the day’s events and asked for prayers for the victims and the families and friends of the victims, giving sympathy to them from the American people: “Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil... These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.”<sup>128</sup> In this speech, the president made the bold statement that the U.S. government would not make any distinction between the terrorists who committed the acts and the countries and leaders who harbor them. Finally, he assured the nation that administration and government bodies would continue to function, announcing that

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<sup>125</sup> George W. Bush, “Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents,” ed. National Archives and Records Administration (Government Printing Office, 2001).

<sup>126</sup> *September 11: Chronology of Terror* (CNN.com, 2001 [cited September 15 2006]), available from <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/chronology.attack/>.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Bush, “Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation.”

government offices in Washington were reopening for essential personnel Tuesday night and for all workers Wednesday.

In the days following the attack, America saw an astonishing outpouring of emergency relief, patriotism, volunteerism, and donations. The president promptly declared a national emergency the day of the attacks, and a “national day of remembrance” in response to the event. He also activated 50,000 National Guard and reserve members to help with recovery and security. People across the nation flocked to New York to help run blood drives, hand out water to the firefighters and police officers, or participate on the various search and rescue teams. Even the president traveled to the Pentagon the day after the attacks to visit with the victims and the relief workers, despite the security risks to his life.

A memorable rhetorical event for the president came three days following the attacks in what would become known as his “bullhorn moment.” Visiting the World Trade Center and standing on the rubble where the towers once stood, the president visited with the volunteers and people of New York. Holding up a bullhorn, speaking a few general conversational comments directly to the people, there was a mustering of “We can’t hear you” arising from the crowd. President Bush promptly said, “Well, I can hear you. All of America can hear you. And soon, the people who did this will hear us all.”<sup>129</sup>

As normal lifestyle routines began to resume in New York and Washington D.C., the president was very involved with ceremonial events. On the Friday after the attacks, President Bush led the nation in a national day of prayer and remembrance, giving a heartfelt meditation at a memorial service held in the National Cathedral. He even went as far as to stand in the middle of Yankee stadium, knowing the risks and dressed in full-body armor, to throw out the first pitch resuming the major league pennant race.

On September 20, nine days after the attacks, the president addressed a joint session of Congress broadcast live on primetime television to the American people. The president carefully described the situation surrounding the events and presented the next step for the United States, a nation that was just starting to come out of shock and comprehend the extent of the events of September 11.

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<sup>129</sup> Bush, "President Bush Salutes."

## Network News Coverage: Setting the Stage for the President's Address

Coverage of the September 11 attacks began almost instantaneously, with news stations and bystanders capturing video footage of the second plane crashing into Twin Tower II, victims leaping out of windows to their death, the collapse of the towers, and fire fighters, police officers, rescue workers, and volunteers pulling victims out of the rubble and helping them to safety. Throughout the coverage, however, the media also focused on the president, reporting on his utterances, actions, and intentions, illustrating the president's role in this drama for the American public. In this analysis, I examine the network news coverage through the pentadic lens of the grammar of motives, purpose, agent, act, agency, and scene, to focus on the news media's portrayal of the president within this drama.

**Purpose.** The media portrayed the agent's purpose in this drama very clearly: to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice – establishing a war on terror. Within the first few days of coverage, the news media undoubtedly established this as the main purpose, declaring it the primary focus of the Bush administration: “The war on terrorism will be the focus of his administration, and it's just getting underway.”<sup>130</sup> Coverage consistently reflected the message of the administration, providing a congruent message alongside the president. In an NBC news report, Tim Russert stated, “As the president said this morning, this is the new focus of his administration. This is the first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are wasting no time putting plans in place, organizing their coalition, and trying to get some results by fighting these terrorists.”<sup>131</sup> ABC's anchor Charles Gibson explained, “President Bush has returned to the White House, urging America back to work and pledging we will win the first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”<sup>132</sup> Campbell Brown of NBC continued on this same path: “We heard from him the strongest language he has used since these attacks, calling this the war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and fighting the war the focus of his administration.”<sup>133</sup>

The news media sustained this purpose throughout their coverage by highlighting the president's utterances that they felt played into their characterization of purpose: “President Bush

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<sup>130</sup> Tom Brokaw, "FBI Arrests Suspects at Kennedy Airport and Flight Data Recorder Found on Hijacked Plane," *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>131</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Country Behind the President in Dealing with Terrorist Attacks," *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>132</sup> Charles Gibson, "President Bush Reacts to the Terrorism," *ABC World News Tonight* 2001.

<sup>133</sup> Tom Brokaw, "President Bush Visits Bombing Victims in Washington, Vows He'll Visit New York Also," *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.

said it is America's responsibility to answer the attacks and, quote, "rid the world of evil."<sup>134</sup> CBS anchor Dan Rather highlighted the president, quoting him directly: "President Bush says the United States will, and I quote directly, "lead the world to victory over terrorism."<sup>135</sup> Following the same pattern, ABC reporter Terry Moran quoted the president: "At Camp David, the president met with his national security team. His mood was defiant. PRESIDENT BUSH: There's no question about it. This act will not stand. We will find those who did it. We will smoke them out of their holes. We'll get them running and we'll bring them to justice."<sup>136</sup> Even after establishing a prime suspect, the purpose continued to be explicit: "President Bush says prime terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden will be found and punished, as will those who have harbored him."<sup>137</sup> Broadcasts saturated coverage with the president's pledge that "he would defend freedom at any cost. . ."<sup>138</sup> with the goal of catching the "prime suspect Osama bin Laden dead or alive."<sup>139</sup>

**Agent.** Not only did the news media present a succinct purpose, they also distinguished an explicit agent, President George W. Bush. The president was unquestionably one of the main agents in the drama, described by the news media as fulfilling two central roles: strong, patient leader as Commander-in-Chief and companionate "Consoler in Chief." NBC's evening news anchor Tom Brokaw positioned the president in each of these roles, plainly stating, "President Bush today presided over a wounded nation as chief executive, Commander-in-Chief, and first friend."<sup>140</sup>

First and foremost, the media depicted the president as a strong, patient leader, not only using his title of "president" in their stories, but also specifically using the label Commander-in-Chief. In a report describing the response to the events, CBS reporter John Roberts pointed out, "And this morning, tough talks from a Commander-in-Chief preparing the nation for combat

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<sup>134</sup> Dan Rather, "Top Headlines," *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>135</sup> Dan Rather, "News Headlines of the Hour," *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>136</sup> Peter Jennings, "President Bush on the Terrorist Attacks," *ABC World News Tonight*, 15 September 2001.

<sup>137</sup> Dan Rather, "Evening News," *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.

<sup>138</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush Vows to Punish Osama Bin Laden for Last Week's Attacks," *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.

<sup>139</sup> Dan Rather, "Update on the Aftermath of the Terrorist Attacks on New York City and Washington," *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.

<sup>140</sup> Tom Brokaw, "President Bush Visits Weary Rescuers as Operations Continue," *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.

with an unknown enemy.”<sup>141</sup> Coverage continued to highlight President Bush in this role, stating that the Commander-in-Chief was “very much on active duty, every day one step further down the road to war.”<sup>142</sup> NBC reporter Jim Miklaszewski pointed out the president’s actions as serving as a strong Commander. He stated, “Air Force Reserves on the move today in Minnesota, a mortuary team on a grim mission, to identify the dead from the World Trade towers in New York, as a new set of orders comes down from their Commander-in-Chief. PRESIDENT BUSH: My message is for everybody who wears the uniform, get ready. The United States will do what it takes to win this war.”<sup>143</sup> In a second report, John Roberts of CBS used nearly identical terms: “At the Pentagon today, cheers all around for a Commander-in-Chief preparing the military and the nation for war. And in his toughest language yet, President Bush got personal today, vowing one way or another, he will put Osama bin Laden out of business.”<sup>144</sup>

Not only was President Bush acting as the Commander-in-Chief, he was doing so in a determined and patient manner. ABC’s anchor Peter Jennings informed, “Mr. Bush said earlier today when he was having a cabinet meeting earlier. . . urged the country to be patient and – and to be resolved, and made it clear as to the secretary of state that there isn’t going to be any retaliation until he found out who it was that they intended to retaliate against. . . but the United States undoubtedly has the capacity to respond. . .”<sup>145</sup>

The media extended the characterization of President Bush in a Commander-in-Chief role by highlighting traits conducive to the position, portraying him as an agent who was consistent and keenly aware of his surroundings. For example, reporter David Bloom of NBC expressed that the president was fully aware that his “most dominant role now is Commander-in-Chief.”<sup>146</sup> In addition to knowing his role, the news media portrayed the president of being fully conscious of the consequences of any actions he may take. CBS reporter John Roberts explained, “White House officials tell CBS News tonight that the president will not act quickly just for symbolic reasons. He’s going to take this as a very measured process, a very serious process in accordance with whatever timetable is required. . . this president has talked consistently throughout the

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<sup>141</sup> Dan Rather, "Continuing Coverage of the Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks in New York and Washington DC," *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>142</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush Visits New York City to View the Wreckage and Offer Support to the Victims of Tuesday's Terrorist Attack," *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>143</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Update on Damage at Pentagon," *NBC Nightly News*, 15 September 2001.

<sup>144</sup> Rather, "President Bush Vows."

<sup>145</sup> Peter Jennings, "Us Retaliation against Terrorists Is Discussed," *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>146</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush Visits Weary."

campaign and throughout the nine months of his presidency that there's a new enemy out there, that there is a new reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that terrorism is the new face of threat against the United States. . . So certainly the president appears to be cognizant of that."<sup>147</sup> ABC's John McWethy explained that the president was continuing to be patient and perceptive, detailing that "before any military action, the Bush administration is trying to build a worldwide base of support, asking some countries for access to bases, others for permission to enter their airspace or some, even more simply, to just cast a vote in the UN supporting the US."<sup>148</sup> Echoing a similar message, CBS reporter John Roberts said, "As for any declaration of war, White House officials said today the president will work together with Congress and will make that decision, what they say will be an appropriate decision at the appropriate time."<sup>149</sup>

The news media described the president being surrounded by top aides and officials and maturing as a great leader, further emphasizing the strong and patient Commander-in-Chief depiction. As NBC's David Gregory pointed out, "the second President Bush, surrounded by three of his father's top advisers, has also now become a wartime leader."<sup>150</sup> In addition, President Bush was characterized as being a resolute, brave, and decisive leader. Beginning with the day of the attacks, the news media accentuated the president's reassuring message to Americans that there would be a response and highlighted him being very public about this reassurance. As ABC's Ann Compton explained, "the president feels it's important to address the nation tonight. Later this evening, he will give, what we are told, is a message of reassurance to Americans. That the United States has been tested before and has always passed those tests. And when we saw him briefly toward the back of the plane he was resolute."<sup>151</sup>

Despite the security risk and threat of physical harm, the president still strived to serve as a strong, visible leader: "Late this afternoon, the president toured the smoking ruin of the Pentagon, even as administration officials declared the aircraft that devastated the pillar of American military strength was originally targeted at the White House."<sup>152</sup> David Martin of

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<sup>147</sup> Dan Rather, "Continuous Coverage of the Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon," *CBS Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>148</sup> Peter Jennings, "President Warns Afghanistan Not to Take Our Warnings Lightly," *ABC World News Tonight*, 17 September 2001.

<sup>149</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush and the White House Were Targets of the Terrorist Attacks," *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>150</sup> Tom Brokaw, "President Bush Warns Americans to Prepare for War," *NBC Nightly News*, 15 September 2001.

<sup>151</sup> Peter Jennings, "America under Attack," *ABC World News Tonight*, 11 September 2001.

<sup>152</sup> Rather, "Continuing Coverage."

CBS, directly quoting the president, highlighted, “This was one of the Osama bin Laden training camps the Pentagon struck with cruise missiles three years ago and it’s hard to see what if anything was accomplished. President Bush has vowed not to do that again, saying, according to Newsweek magazine, ‘I’m not going to fire a \$2 million missile at a \$10 empty tent and hit a camel in the butt. It’s going to be decisive.’ That will require much more than the military.”<sup>153</sup>

A second role the news media portrayed the president filling was the companionate “first friend” or “Consoler in Chief.” Many accounts discussed the president’s various appearances at ground zero and the Pentagon, displaying him visiting with the victims and consoling the American public as they tried to fathom the dramatic events that unfolded. Several accounts actually labeled President Bush as the consoler or comforter of the nation. CBS anchor Dan Rather reported, “With the country still shaken by the suicide plane attacks, the president today took on a new, more visible role as “comforter in chief,” telephoning New York to express sympathy and visiting those wounded in the attack on The Pentagon.”<sup>154</sup> Despite the heightened danger and security risks of being in a public environment, the president went willingly to visit with the victims in an attempt to assure the nation that everything was going to be okay. NBC’s Campbell Brown stated that the president “expresses sympathy and compassion for all those mourning loved ones and all those still waiting for word.”<sup>155</sup> George Stephanopoulos, host of ABC’s *This Week*, praised the president, commenting on how “immensely struck” he was by the powerful “message given by the president of comfort, of remembrance for those not only who lost their lives but a lot of the heroes who tried to save lives.”<sup>156</sup> Another news report pointed this out, stating there was “higher security at the White House as President Bush takes a higher profile to comfort victims and reassure the nation.”<sup>157</sup>

Most importantly, the press described President Bush effectively executing both roles simultaneously. Numerous accounts commented on both roles within one or two sentences. NBC’s Tom Brokaw reported President Bush “had a packed schedule today reassuring the

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<sup>153</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush and His Aides Trying to Prepare Americans for Long Struggle against Terrorism," *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.

<sup>154</sup> Dan Rather, "Top Headlines Involving the Terrorist Attack Investigation," *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>155</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush and Four Former Presidents Attend Memorial Service," *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>156</sup> Peter Jennings, "America under Attack 6:00 P.M.," *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>157</sup> Rather, "Top Headlines."

public, while in private preparing for military action in his role as Commander-in-Chief.”<sup>158</sup> CBS’s Bill Plante clearly presented the two roles: “As this new week begins, the administration and the president will work on two tracks. First they’ll continue planning for war, but then they’ll also try to help the nation understand what has happened, to get back to normal, although as one senior official here put it today, ‘I’m not sure that we know what normal is going to be.’”<sup>159</sup> Several reports continued to echo this dual role of President Bush: “At the White House today, the president displayed more public emotion than he has since Tuesday morning suicide attacks, vowing to win the war against terrorism. . .”<sup>160</sup> According to the coverage, the president was able to serve as a strong leader, while also comforting and consoling the victims: “And at once trying to soothe the country and again prepare it for war the president said, quote, “We will rid the world of evil doers.””<sup>161</sup>

**Act.** As the dominant agent, “Consoler in Chief” and Commander-in-Chief George W. Bush participated in two main acts as each agent respectively: comforting the nation and preparing America for war. Networks repeatedly portrayed the two particular acts in their coverage, documenting Bush’s specific actions.

The news media illustrated President Bush comforting the nation through the various visits he made to the devastated areas and the statements he provided to the victims and the American people. CBS’s Dan Rather reported that President Bush “delivered a morale boost and consolation directly to ground zero and to the nation. He rallied the troops of rescue workers at the scene of the crumpled World Trade Center and toured the zone of devastation of the rubble and ruin.”<sup>162</sup> Other reports mimicked this comforting act, describing the president as being very visible, aware of what the victims were going through, and offering words of consolation to nation. In a second report, Dan Rather stated, “Three days after the attack, after the carnage, this was a day for tending to America’s wounded spirit. First, prayers at a national memorial service for those killed in the plane bomb attacks. Then, a morale-boosting visit by the leader of the nation to those who suffered the greatest loss, New Yorkers. President Bush saw for himself the

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<sup>158</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush Assembling International Coalition against Terrorism, Hunting for Bin Laden," *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2001.

<sup>159</sup> John Roberts, "President Bush Meets with His Aides, as He Says Any Conflict against Terrorists Will Not Be Short," *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2001.

<sup>160</sup> Dan Rather, "Possibly Two of the Four Hijacked Airliners Were Bound for Washington, DC," *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>161</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush Assures America Terrorists Will Pay," *NBC Nightly News*, 16 September 2001.

<sup>162</sup> Rather, "Top Headlines."

rubble of the World Trade Towers and the desperate search for victims.”<sup>163</sup> John Roberts of CBS explained the president “came here to see for himself the impact of a war of terror and to give the victims comfort and support.”<sup>164</sup> The president was also shown leading the nation in the memorial services for the victims: “In other developments, the president led mourners praying for the dead and for their families at a memorial service in Washington’s National Cathedral.”<sup>165</sup>

While comforting the nation, the president simultaneously served as a strong leader, preparing America for war: “In every appearance, the president is preparing Americans for war as it has never been fought before.”<sup>166</sup> CBS anchor Dan Rather cited that “the president is trying to prepare the American people for what’s ahead in the war against terrorism.”<sup>167</sup> ABC’s George Stephanopoulos commented, “What struck me most was in the president's remarks, his words, which really suggested that he was preparing the country for a war. And he said a wa--it was a war that would end by our choice--choice, even though it wasn't begun by our choice.”<sup>168</sup> Numerous reports recounted the presidential actions taken in this act of “preparing for war,” including declaring a national state of emergency, calling up reservists, meeting with cabinet members and other advisers, and participating in various means to gain international support. CBS’s David Martin reported, “When he declared a national emergency, the president gave the Defense Department authority to call up the reservist. The first call will be for 35,000 reservists.”<sup>169</sup>

The media also discussed the president’s meetings with various advisers as he devised a plan and strategy to prepare America for war: “Over the weekend at Camp David, Mr. Bush and his senior advisers began the planning for war, one which he warns will be a long struggle.”<sup>170</sup> ABC’s Charles Gibson detailed that “neither the president nor his national security advisers will say exactly when, where or how the first strikes of this new brand of war will occur, but the

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<sup>163</sup> (Dan Rather, "Today's Top News Headlines in Connection with the Terrorist Attacks on the United States," *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>164</sup> Rather, "President Bush Visits New York City."

<sup>165</sup> Rather, "Today's Top News."

<sup>166</sup> Dan Rather, "President Preparing Country for a Different Kind of War," *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.

<sup>167</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush Preparing American People for What's Ahead in the War against Terrorism," *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.

<sup>168</sup> Jennings, "America under Attack."

<sup>169</sup> Dan Rather, "Defense Department Calls on 35,000 Reservists to Help and in Recovery Efforts," *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>170</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush Urges Americans O Go Back to Work with Renewed Dedication," *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.

mobilization for this new kind of war is about to begin.”<sup>171</sup> David Gregory, reporter for NBC, stated that the president was preparing this nation for war “surrounded by three of his father’s top advisors.”<sup>172</sup> John Roberts of CBS explained, “President Bush met today with his top domestic and military aides and told US troops to get ready to fight. He braced Americans for a difficult time ahead, warning, ‘The conflict will not be short.’”<sup>173</sup> Finally, news reports highlighted President Bush’s preparations for war in terms of gaining international support: “President Bush tonight visiting the Pentagon, at the same time, the president and his advisers are working urgently to line up an international political alliance. They are also sending a very stern message to Afghanistan. They are organizing military options and, most important, they’re trying to determine who was responsible, find them, and punish them.”<sup>174</sup> Anchor Peter Jennings of ABC explained, “There have been all sorts of reports today about cooperation between the United States and foreign governments overseas. We get that from embassy after embassy after embassy. Everybody’s swinging into action in this particular investigation.”<sup>175</sup> NBC’s Tom Brokaw pointed out, “President Bush spent most of his day today working the telephones in his own office, talking to foreign leaders about firming up an international coalition to carry out this war on terrorism.”<sup>176</sup> In a similar piece, CBS’s Dan Rather echoed this message, stating President Bush “spent much of his day trying to line up international support and the support of the American people for what he sees as a sustained war against terror. . . The president met with or telephoned world leaders trying to enlist their help.”<sup>177</sup>

**Agency.** While preparing the country for war in this fight to defend freedom, the networks described the agent as willing “to do what it takes to win the war against terrorism.”<sup>178</sup> The news media repeatedly provide this agency as a means for the president to achieve the goal of bringing the perpetrators to justice, winning the war on terrorism, and comforting Americans with a sense of security. Whether it was working with Congress, supplying funds, or gaining

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<sup>171</sup> Charles Gibson, "President Bush Prepares the Nation for War," *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2001.

<sup>172</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush Warns Americans."

<sup>173</sup> Roberts, "President Bush Meets with His Aides."

<sup>174</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Worldwide Investigation into Attack on World Trade Center Moving Swiftly," *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>175</sup> Peter Jennings, "People Rescued: Destruction in the City," *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>176</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush Trying to Solidify International Coalition against Terrorism as Foreign Leaders Visit," *NBC Nightly News*, 19 September 2001.

<sup>177</sup> Dan Rather, "Latest Developments in the Aftermath of the Terror Attacks," *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.

<sup>178</sup> John Roberts, "Latest Developments in the Terrorist Attacks," *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2001.

international support, the president was willing to use whatever means necessary to achieve success. NBC reporter David Gregory directly quoted the president stating that America “will do whatever it takes to smoke them out and get them running, and we’ll get them.”<sup>179</sup> Echoing this message, another report, again quoting the president, cited, “Tonight, the president will pledge to direct, quote, “every resource at our command to the disruption and defeat of the global terror network.””<sup>180</sup> According to the news coverage, Congress was completely willing to support and grant this agency, “empowering the president to respond with whatever force he deems necessary.”<sup>181</sup> ABC anchor Peter Jennings reported that the president “has authorized the call-up of 35,000 military reservists. The Congress has approved the president's request for \$40 billion in emergency funds, and the Senate gave the president its consent to use force against those responsible for the attacks, if they can be found.”<sup>182</sup> Specifically referring to a congressional representative, one report pointed out, “Senator John McCain argues that, at minimum, what’s needed is a resolution similar to that in the Persian Gulf War, authorizing the president to use whatever force he needs, including ground troops if necessary.”<sup>183</sup>

Specific agencies mentioned throughout the coverage included military action, monetary and physical resources, and international support. In terms of military action, network news coverage extended that “all options for military strikes are on the table, including an all-out invasion.”<sup>184</sup> Reports also discussed the monetary and physical resources that were agencies in the preparation for war. As an example, CBS anchor Dan Rather explained, “Earlier the president said America’s task must now be to, quote, “rid the world of evil.” To that end, a unanimous Congress approved spending \$40 billion to fight terrorism and help the recovery. Many consider it to be just a first down payment.”<sup>185</sup> Commenting on the costs, NBC’s Andrea Mitchell reported, “It is not cheap. Before the attack, the counterterrorism budget request for next year, \$13 billion, more than double what it was six years ago. And today, the president talks

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<sup>179</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush Warns Americans."

<sup>180</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush Will Address Nation Tonight Concerning War on Terrorism," *NBC Nightly News*, 20 September 2001.

<sup>181</sup> Tom Brokaw, "House and Senate Discuss Money and Power in Wake of Terrorist Attacks," *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>182</sup> Peter Jennings, "President Bush Visits New York City to See for Himself the Devastation," *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>183</sup> Brokaw, "House and Senate."

<sup>184</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Possible Us Relation against Terrorist Organizations," *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.

<sup>185</sup> Dan Rather, "Headlines and Upcoming Stories," *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.

about spending billions more. PRESIDENT BUSH: This morning I am sending to Congress a request for emergency funding authority so that we are prepared to spend whatever it takes.”<sup>186</sup>

Other reports focused on the troops needed to complete this mission: “President Bush takes the first military steps today to lead the nation into war. Declaring a national state of emergency, President Bush orders the call-up of up to 50,000 reserves back to active duty to defend the American homeland against further attacks.”<sup>187</sup>

Finally, international support was portrayed as a necessity for the successful attainment of the ultimate goal: “Today, as new information about the attacks pours in, the president signals the administration’s first priority to make sure the rest of the world supports the US in whatever action Bush decides to take. PRESIDENT BUSH: This enemy attacked not just our people, but all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world. The United States of America will use all our resources to conquer this enemy. We will rally the world.”<sup>188</sup> CBS’s John Roberts covered the coalition the president was building in order to fight this war on terror: “[C]ertainly the administration today announced forthrightly that it is trying to build a coalition not just to go after who is responsible for these acts of terrorism, but a worldwide co—collation to go against terrorist at large. We saw the first part of that with our—our NATO allies invoking Article 5 of the NATO charter which states that an attack against one ally is an attack against all allies.”<sup>189</sup> There were also reports about the international military support the president had lined up: “[T]he Bush administration is lining up lots of help. In a historic decision, all NATO nations will permit air strikes from their bases... the Bush administration will push hard for diplomatic and economic sanctions against any terrorist state.”<sup>190</sup>

**Scene.** According to the news media, the president acted in an explicit scene. This scene included associations with Pearl Harbor and descriptions of a warzone, along with the support of Congress, the American public, and the world.

A frequent description used to illustrate the scene was the association of the September 11 terrorist attacks to other events in American history, most specifically Pearl Harbor: “Now

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<sup>186</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Large Amounts of Intelligence to Analyze Makes It Difficult to Determine Terrorist Threats," *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>187</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush Calls up 50,000 Reserves to Defend America against Further Terrorist Attacks," *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.

<sup>188</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Bush Administration Claims Air Force One and White House Possible Targets of Terrorist Attack," *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>189</sup> Rather, "Continuous Coverage."

<sup>190</sup> Brokaw, "Possible Us Retaliation."

this attack on America was an attack first and foremost on powerful symbols of our beloved United States. . . Pearl Harbor's one of the first things that comes to mind."<sup>191</sup> CBS anchor Dan Rather explained, "Terror hits home. In the history of our country, we had 'Remember the Alamo,' then 'Remember the Main' during the Spanish-American War. We had 'Remember Pearl Harbor; and now 'Remember the twin towers'."<sup>192</sup> In his report, NBC anchor Tom Brokaw also likened the scene to Pearl Harbor: "And tonight America is at war with terrorists after a stunning series of attacks today against targets in New York and in Washington D.C., the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. . . The most serious attack on this country since Pearl Harbor."<sup>193</sup> Echoing this message, ABC news went as far as to say that this particular scene constituted the action of war: "We suffered an attack like Pearl Harbor yesterday. Someone is at war with us."<sup>194</sup>

Related to the comparison above, the news media continued the description of the scene by equating it to a "warzone." Tom Brokaw of NBC described the scene as being "something straight out of a war zone"<sup>195</sup> while CBS reporter John Roberts emphasized the scene of the heightened security and "heightened state of alert" around the president.<sup>196</sup> Others specifically labeled the scene as being on "war footing": "Having put the nation on war footing, President Bush tonight in the warzone."<sup>197</sup> As a continuation of this description, the media also repeatedly quoted the president and referred to the scene as "the first battle of war" or the "first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." One report exclaimed, "We heard from him [the president] the strongest language he has used since these attacks, calling this the war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and fighting the war the focus of his administration."<sup>198</sup> NBC's David Gregory reported, "[U]sing his strongest language ever today the president called the assault on New York, quote, 'the first battle of war.'"<sup>199</sup> ABC reporter Terry Moran quoted Bush, stating that the president "acknowledged the terror of last Tuesday has changed the country. He now governs, as he said, 'A nation at war,' and signaled clearly today, that means a change in law enforcement and possibly in civil liberties on the home

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<sup>191</sup> Dan Rather, "Aftermath of Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon," *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2001.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Chronology of Terrorist Events That Occurred Today," *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2001.

<sup>194</sup> Jennings, "Us Retaliation."

<sup>195</sup> Tom Brokaw, "President Bush Returns to White House on Marine One," *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2001.

<sup>196</sup> Rather, "Possibly Two."

<sup>197</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush Visits Weary."

<sup>198</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush Visits Bombing Victims."

<sup>199</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush Warns Americans."

front.”<sup>200</sup> Recapping this message, CBS anchor Dan Rather stated, “President Bush said the attacks were not just acts of terror, they were acts of war. A war he vowed we will win.”<sup>201</sup>

The final piece of this scene the networks described included the support the president had from the American public, Congress, and the world. For example, one report pointed out, “News polls indicate there’s widespread American public support for the president and retaliation.”<sup>202</sup> When being interviewed by a CBS news poll, one man stated, “Whatever the president needs of me, I am prepared to do. Show me the line and I’ll be in it.”<sup>203</sup> In an ABC interview, a Palestinian worshipper at a downtown mosque was quoted, exclaiming President Bush “should go after who’s doing this and who’s harboring them.”<sup>204</sup> Dan Rather, offering his own commentary, suggested that there was no doubt that the president was doing the right thing for the nation: “Well—an—and I also well know that in circumstances such as that if there’s any doubt, when there’s any doubt, the president should be given the benefit of the doubt and those working with him given the benefit of the doubt. . . .”<sup>205</sup> Tim Russert of NBC’s *Meet the Press* quantified the support that the president attained, reporting the current poll numbers: “Overwhelming support for George W. Bush amongst the American people. Eighty percent approve of his performance thus far, a scant eight percent disapproval.”<sup>206</sup>

In addition to support offered by the American people, the president also operated in a scene in which he had the support of a unified Congress and the international arena: “[T]hat Washington of yesterday, which was a scene of all that partisan fighting – all that was long ago and far away. This is a different city tonight, a city that is slowly realizing this nation is at war.”<sup>207</sup> NBC’s Campbell Brown cited, “[I]t was an amazing gathering of leaders from every branch of government who today sent a very clear message that America is united behind President Bush and ready to back him in this fight.”<sup>208</sup> Bob Schieffer, host of the *CBS Evening News*, reported, “Now the Congress passed a very strong resolution supporting the president,

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<sup>200</sup> Gibson, "President Bush Reacts."

<sup>201</sup> Dan Rather, "Today's Key Developments in the Attacks on America," *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Rather, "Aftermath of Attack."

<sup>204</sup> Peter Jennings, "Americans React to the Terrorist Bombings as Some Seek Retaliation," *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>205</sup> Dan Rather, "Continuing Coverage of the Attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon," *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.

<sup>206</sup> Brokaw, "Country Behind the President."

<sup>207</sup> Dan Rather, "Damage and Injuries from Attack on American Sites in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC," *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2001.

<sup>208</sup> Brokaw, "President Bush and Four."

calling on him, and said they'd be behind him in tracking down and giving the appropriate punishment to whomever is behind this."<sup>209</sup> ABC quoted Senator John Warner commenting on the support of the president: "As the past chairman, preceding Carl Levin, I can assure you that the Congress stands behind our president, and the president speaks with one voice for this entire nation. . . As our president and those with him, most notably our secretary of defense, our chairman, and the men and women of the armed forces all over this world, stand ready not only to defend this nation and our allies against further attack, but to take such actions as are directed in the future in retaliation for this terrorist act, a series of terrorist acts unprecedented in world history."<sup>210</sup>

Finally, the media depicted the scene of international support the president and the United States had during this drama. Many reports spoke to this description of the scene. CBS summarized it best stating, "Britain and the other NATO countries have declared their support for the United States in what President Bush makes clear will be an all-out and sustained 'war,' his word, on terrorists."<sup>211</sup>

***Analysis and Discussion.*** Examining the grammar of motives in the pre-news coverage unveiled the reality described by network news. Coverage portrayed the dominant term of the drama, the scene, as a warzone, comparing it to the likes of Pearl Harbor, which perpetuated the support of Congress and the American people for the agent, President Bush. The agent played two roles in this scene: Commander-in-Chief and "Consoler in Chief." In these roles, the agent committed acts appropriate to the characteristics set out by each role (scene-agent-act). According to the media, the president (agent) focused on preparing the nation for war (act) and consoling a nation (act) who was trying to make sense of the situation (scene). An additional term highlighted by the news media and dictated by the scene was the agent's purpose: to defend freedom and bring the terrorists to justice in this war on terror (scene-purpose).

Establishing the scene as a "warzone," the news media set the parameters for interpretation of the President's response. This scene positioned the president to take on the role of a strong Commander-in-Chief and "Consoler in Chief," all the while pursuing the goal of bringing the terrorists to justice with the wide-range support of the American people, Congress,

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<sup>209</sup> Rather, "Continuous Coverage."

<sup>210</sup> Jennings, "America under Attack."

<sup>211</sup> Dan Rather, "Reaction of NATO Nations and Other Us Allies to the September 11th Attacks," *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.

and the international community. As the president fulfilled these roles within this particular scene, and pursuing the stated purpose, the choice of action was constrained and inevitably presented as the only logical, fitting act: to prepare the nation for war and comfort a nation who is now living within this warzone.

In addition, it could be argued that the purpose influenced the nature of the president as an agent (purpose-scene). His role as president required him to be a leader; however, the established purpose highlighted by the administration and reflected by the media allowed and almost required him to serve as a strong Commander-in-Chief while also simultaneously serving as a sincere, comforting “Consoler in Chief.” The purpose reported by the media was very consistent with the statements issued by the administration, furthering positive evaluation of the president fulfilling the two roles.

Further dictating the type of agent the president should be, the consistency of the purpose also allowed for the establishment of how the president should respond, or the act, in this particular drama (purpose-act). In order to be successful in achieving his purpose of bringing justice to the enemy within the scene of a warzone, the president had no other option but to act as a strong leader and prepare this nation for war, while also comforting a nation devastated by this tragic event. Because the news media reported the president’s acts as such to fill those roles created by the media’s description of the scene and purpose, the acts not only appeared to be required, but also emerged as effective and suitable to achieve the purpose successfully.

Overall, the media’s coverage of the scene and purpose dictated the role of President Bush as an agent and his acts, which were consistent with the statements and acts of the Bush administration. Not only did the coverage reflect the administration, their descriptions of the two terms helped define and solidify Bush’s roles and acts in this drama. This shared “rhetorical vision” created a sense of effectiveness for the administration, which set the stage for the following drama presented by President Bush.

### **President’s Address to Congress, the American People, and the World**

The 9/11 terrorist attacks at its essence was successful in destroying a clear symbol of American prosperity and military might, calling into question the security and peace enjoyed by the greatest superpowers of world. This inevitably created the rhetorical situation in which a response from the president was not only required, but also extraordinarily significant. In light of

the events, President Bush decided to schedule an address before Congress, providing the motion of this drama.<sup>212</sup>

The president presented three main agents in his address: the terrorists, the American people, and himself as “Consoler in Chief,” Commander-in-Chief, and leader in this global war on terror. Throughout the speech, the president typecast each agent, portraying the role they played within the situation and used vivid descriptors to name the characteristics of the purpose, acts, agencies, and scene.

*The Evildoers: the Terrorists.* One agent the president presented in this drama was the terrorists, namely, Al Qaeda. The terrorists were described as “enemies of freedom,”<sup>213</sup> “murderers,”<sup>214</sup> “heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>215</sup> This particular group, Al Qaeda, was “to terror what the mafia is to crime”<sup>216</sup> and was “trained in tactics of terror.”<sup>217</sup> These murderers were committed to the act of terrorism and commanded to “kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children.”<sup>218</sup> The agent was using the agency of “sacrificing human life” with a driving purpose “to serve their radical visions” and “followed in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism.”<sup>219</sup> According to President Bush, the terrorists “kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life”<sup>220</sup> and “stand against us, because we stand in their way.”<sup>221</sup> Their entire purpose for existing lied in their goal of “remaking the world – and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.”<sup>222</sup>

President Bush also labeled the terrorists as extremist of Islam, “rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics,”<sup>223</sup> and “traitors to their own faith.”<sup>224</sup> He portrayed the agent as creating a scene of terror and repression. “Afghanistan’s people have been brutalized – many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school.

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<sup>212</sup> George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," (Washington D.C.: 2001).

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., ¶11.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., ¶12.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., ¶26.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., ¶13.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., ¶15.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., ¶14.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., ¶26.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., ¶32.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., ¶25.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., ¶13.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., ¶14.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., ¶21.

You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough.”<sup>225</sup> The “evil doers” were spreading terrorism and committing murder in order to tear down freedom and democracy while spreading their radical believes.

***The Good Guys: the American People.*** A second agent named in this drama was the American people. Throughout the speech, the president vividly characterized the nation, stressing America’s pride as a united, democratic country. The president immediately began describing the American agent as strong and enduring, one that will fight and overcome this threat to our freedom. He began the speech by issuing a statement concerning the “State of the Union,” a message that the American people had already delivered, according to President Bush: “In the normal course of events, Presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight, no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people.”<sup>226</sup>

Using the example of Congress singing “God Bless America” on the steps of the Capitol building and highlighting how many different ethnic backgrounds considered themselves “American” and prayed for the victims, President Bush consistently employed distinctly democratic ideas and terms within his description of Americans as agents in this drama.<sup>227</sup> He specifically pointed out various freedoms that defined our liberties as Americans. One in particular included the practice of freedom of religion, stating that the Muslim faith was “practiced freely by many millions of Americans.”<sup>228</sup> Bush stated one of the main reasons for the attacks on the United States was due to these coveted and envied freedoms: “Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber – a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”<sup>229</sup> The terrorists hated who we were as agents and the values that defined us.

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., ¶17.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., ¶1.

<sup>227</sup> There is a great importance to the fact that President Bush points out “We have seen... the saying of prayers – in English, Hebrew, and Arabic.” (3) This specifically points to the unity of this diverse country.

<sup>228</sup> Bush, “Address to Congress,” ¶21.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., ¶23.

These enemies of freedom threatened who we were as Americans: “Tonight we are a country awakened to danger. . .”<sup>230</sup> This new reality, or scene, brought upon us was unlike any we experienced in the past. Although the United States had known wars, Americans fought these wars on foreign soil, except for the horrible assault on Pearl Harbor. Even then, the attack was on our military, “but never before on thousands of civilians.”<sup>231</sup> Bush maintained, “All of this was brought upon us in a single day – and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.”<sup>232</sup> Acknowledging this new reality, the president affirmed the existence of a new scene: “Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attack.”<sup>233</sup>

However, despite this attack on our freedom, creation of a new reality, and existence in a new scene, President Bush avowed our strong, enduring nation. Although the terrorists threatened our freedom as a nation, we would continue to outlast and overcome this danger because of who we were as agents: “My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our Union – and it is strong.”<sup>234</sup> Accentuating the character of the American people, Bush pointed out, “We have seen the courage of passengers. . . the endurance of rescue workers. . . the unfurling flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers. . .”<sup>235</sup> He continued throughout the rest of the speech with this similar tone, creating a picture of the United States as a nation united in freedom and democracy, determined to endure and prevail no matter what the odds. Even though the scene Americans existed in was rattled and questioned, and while there were new “struggles ahead, and dangers to face” in encountering fear and terror, “this country will define our times, not be defined by them.”<sup>236</sup> We would still be driven by our core purpose, as the defenders and protectors of freedom and democracy. Bush declared, “As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world.”<sup>237</sup> Throughout this horrible situation and war on terror, “Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid., ¶5.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., ¶11.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., ¶30.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., ¶4.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., ¶3.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., ¶49.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

violence from our people and our future. . . We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.”<sup>238</sup>

***The Tripartite Leader: President George W. Bush.*** The final agent presented in this drama was the president himself, serving as the “Consoler in Chief,” Commander-in-Chief, and leader in this global war on terrorism. Embracing the role of “Consoler in Chief,” the president positioned himself as being part of the American people, and comforted the nation with the use of inclusive language and consolatory statements. “It is my hope that in the months and years ahead, life will return almost to normal. We will go back to our lives and routines, and that is good.”<sup>239</sup> Using observably inclusive language, Bush consistently used the terms “we,” “our,” “my fellow citizens,” and other all-encompassing phrases when speaking about what the nation had experienced, including himself in its grief and anger. “*We* have seen. . . why do they hate *us*. . . *we* will direct. . . *our* response. . . *our* nation.” Additionally, he consoled the nation by attempting to rationalize the events for the people and assured the nation that everything will soon be okay again. “Even grief recedes with time and grace.”<sup>240</sup> Making a comforting promise, Bush vowed, “I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it. I will not yield; I will not rest; I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.”<sup>241</sup>

Filling a second role, the president positioned himself as Commander-in-Chief in a variety of ways. From the formality of the speech, choosing to deliver the speech in front of Congress, to his proposed actions and language use, the president positioned himself as the distinct leader acting to lead a nation who prides itself on scene and ideals of democracy. First, occurring nine days after the attack, the physicality of the address played an important role in presenting Bush as a strong president representative of the United States of America. The president chose to deliver the speech to a joint session of Congress, which inevitably surrounded him with symbols that traditionally distinguished the institution of the presidency as our highest office.

Secondly, the president continued to fulfill the Commander role throughout the speech by the intended actions he would take. President Bush proposed measures that the United States

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., ¶50.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., ¶51.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., ¶53.

would take in order to protect democracy and fight terrorism. Issuing distinct plans of action, he clearly laid out what the United States government would do as a nation in response to the attacks. He enacted the creation of the Office of Homeland Security, appointed a leader of this new Cabinet-level position, and put the military on alert. “And tonight, a few miles from the damaged Pentagon, I have a message for our military: Be ready.”<sup>242</sup> He clearly spoke as the Commander-in-Chief and as the nation’s diplomat to the rest of the world, placing demands on the terrorists who attacked the United States: “And tonight, the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban: Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. . . Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps so we can make sure they are no longer operating.”<sup>243</sup> Explicitly recognizing this role, Bush explained, “And on behalf of the American people, I thank the world for its outpouring of support.”<sup>244</sup>

Lastly, as the president of a democratic nation, his language use throughout the speech attested to the freedom of choice Americans had in whether we wanted to follow our fearless Commander. When speaking directly to the American people, he did not demand that we contribute to the relief efforts or cooperate with the government; He specifically delivered his statements in the form of requests: “Americans are asking: What is expected of us? I ask you to live your lives, and hug your children. . . I ask you to uphold the values of America. . . I ask you to continue to support the victims of this tragedy. . . I ask you for your patience.”<sup>245</sup>

The final role President Bush presented himself as was the universal commander and *the* protector of democracy, leading the world’s fight in this global war on terrorism. Presenting an ultimatum, he clearly stated, “Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.”<sup>246</sup> Additionally, he posited, “This is the world’s fight. This is civilization’s fight. This is the fight of all who believe in the progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. . . An attack on one is an attack on all.”<sup>247</sup> He continued, again acting as the democratic world leader, by requesting the help of all nations as he did with the American people: “We ask every nation to join us. . . We will ask, and we will need, the help of

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., ¶33.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., ¶19.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., ¶8.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., ¶37-43.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., ¶29.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., ¶33-35.

police forces, intelligence services, and banking systems around the world.”<sup>248</sup> As the leader against terrorism and the defender of freedom, the president maintained, “We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.”<sup>249</sup>

***Analysis and Discussion.*** The president used vivid descriptors to portray and characterize the terrorists as an agent, using terms such as “extremists,” “enemies of freedom,” and “murderers.” Because the terrorists exhibit these characteristics, the president claimed that the terrorists commit “acts of war,” using murder as agency to serve their purpose of destroying democracy and repressing freedom. This, in turn, allowed them to create a scene of terrorism, which became a new reality for the United States. According to the president, the sole reason for the terrorists committing the act of terrorism was to achieve their purpose of spreading their “radical beliefs.”<sup>250</sup> Driven by this purpose and their characteristics as agents – murderers, extremists, and traitors to their own faith – the president’s speech illuminated the terrorists as serving a higher purpose in this drama: destroying the practices and ideology of freedom and democracy.

Terrorists were spreading this scene of terrorism and oppression, attacking Americans’ core beliefs and values. Although the attacks awakened us as a nation, creating a new scene around us and calling us to action, we would prevail by the drive of *our* purpose and characteristics that had always been in the grain of our existence as Americans. Despite the scene around them – the new reality of terror and a world in which freedom and fear, good and evil, violence and justice were at war, and Islamic extremism existed – the American people as agents would rise to the occasion and prevail as a strong, enduring entity that would not fail. We must “define our times, not be defined by them.”<sup>251</sup> Unlike other situations in which the terrorists had defined the scene surrounding them, destroying democracy as enemies of freedom, Americans were not going to fall into that trap. In order to stop the terrorists from spreading their scene around the world, the American people must act, fight back, and protect who we are as agents, driven by our purpose as defenders and protectors of democracy. President Bush portrayed the American people as being courageous in times of need, respectful to and inclusive of other

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., ¶50.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., ¶13.

<sup>251</sup> This clearly employs the agent-act-scene ration, as opposed to the scene-act or scene-agent ratios.

nations and nationalities, sympathetic of the victim, and most of all, united under the virtues of freedom and democracy. Although these values have always been engrained in the heart of the American people, the scene allowed these characteristics to resurface, exposing and reaffirming the true agent in this drama.

Because of our identity as Americans, courageous and enduring, holding freedom and democracy as the lifeline of our existence, we had no other options in terms of rationale. The values we held as an agent dictated our rationale for existence and purpose. Freedom was under attack; however, not only was our freedom in danger here at home, the value of freedom was in jeopardy around the world. This drastic scene or new reality that surrounded us, as enduring, courageous, and strong agents who valued freedom and democracy, further strengthened our drive to pursue our purpose, protecting and defending freedom in this war on terrorism. One statement in particular directly exposed this entire dynamic. In the speech, the president stated, “We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment.”<sup>252</sup> “We” as an agent, the American people, had again found our mission, our purpose for existence as protectors of democracy, and our moment, the scene to serve our purpose.

In addition to defining a clear enemy and reminding Americans of the values and principles that made them who they were, President Bush was able to position himself within the drama as the “Consoler in Chief,” Commander-in-Chief, and leader of this global war on terrorism. Within these roles, the president was successfully able to serve as an agent himself, committing acts to comfort a nation existing in this new reality, guide the nation in its purpose to preserve and defend freedom, and lead the world in this global war on terror. In this, he was successful in identifying and characterizing a central enemy, the terrorists, while also painting the United States as the obvious protagonist in the drama. He declared, “You are either with us or with the terrorists.” After clearly defining the terrorists as agents of murderers and extremes with a driving purpose of spreading radical views and motive to tear down democracy, and Americans as enduring, strong agents with a driving purpose of defending freedom and democracy, the president really leaves no choice but to side with the Americans.

Overall, the President Bush established a clear enemy, who was creating an evil scene with their driving purpose to oppress freedom and destroy democracy. This created a new reality (scene) that called for action (act) from the American people and himself as leader (agents). As

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<sup>252</sup> Bush, “Address to Congress,” ¶50.

“Consoler in Chief,” Commander-in-Chief, and leader of this global war on terrorism (agent) within this evil scene, he had a clear purpose to act in this drama, to protect and defend freedom and democracy (scene-agent-purpose; scene-purpose-act). However, this new reality of terrorism was not going to dictate the American people (agents). Because of who we were as agents, we were going to dictate the scene (agent-scene). Because of who we were as agents, we had a specific purpose (agent-purpose) in this scene. We were going to define our times, not let our times define us.

The pentadic analysis of the speech revealed the president stressing scene, agent, and purpose as the driving terms in the rhetoric. These driving terms unveiled a higher purpose of the rhetor, the motive as Burke would call it, to unite the country and the world together to support the United States in a quest to protect and defend freedom and democracy. According to President Bush, either you were with us or with the terrorists; there was *no* in between.

### **Post-News Coverage: Responding to the President’s Address**

Reports following President Bush’s address to Congress were very clear and unified in focus and content. The news media continued to spotlight the president’s efforts and actions in response to the terrorist attacks. The following examination reviewed the media coverage during the two days after the president’s speech, with an illumination of how the media portrayed the president and the situation as a whole.

*Scene.* Media coverage after the speech portrayed the scene as being one of the unknown, “a new reality of America” facing “a war that officials said again will be unlike any other”<sup>253</sup> as the US prepared “a response to the worst terrorist attack in this country’s history.”<sup>254</sup> As NBC anchor Tom Brokaw stated, “the attacks proved that something in America has to change.”<sup>255</sup> According to the coverage, the president was preparing America to face an enemy and fight a war that this nation had never before experienced. Hence, the president was acting in an unfamiliar scene of astounding magnitude and importance. CBS anchor Dan Rather reported that

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<sup>253</sup> Tom Brokaw, "New Cabinet Post Could Make Things Tougher for Terrorists," *NBC Nightly News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>254</sup> John Seigenthaler, "President to Name Specific Terrorist Groups, Ask Treasury to Freeze Their Us Assets and Issue Worldwide Arrest Warrants," *NBC Nightly News*, 22 September 2001.

<sup>255</sup> Brokaw, "New Cabinet Post."

the United States was “now on war footing.”<sup>256</sup> Reporter Andrea Mitchell of NBC quoted Governor Tom Ridge, the newly appointed head of Homeland Security: “Our nation faces an unusual threat, one it has never faced before.”<sup>257</sup> In this new reality, the nation was facing a new type of enemy, one that the media continually painted as ruthless, and again, one that the United States had never faced. NBC reporter Jim Miklaszewski described the enemy: “American troops are being prepared to face a savage and ruthless enemy, the Taliban. In POW training, pilots and special forces are being told the Taliban takes no prisoners, and if they are captured, they will likely be tortured and executed.”<sup>258</sup> ABC’s Peter Jennings, reporting on the president’s speech, stated President Bush “said last night that Americans should expect a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have seen.”<sup>259</sup>

**Purpose.** Although the broadcasts did not directly state the purpose, the ultimate goal of this drama was obvious: to capture bin Laden and bring him to justice for the security of freedom. NBC’s coverage directly quoted Press Secretary Ari Fleischer saying that the president “could not have made it any plainer last night that this is not the time for negotiations or discussions. This is a time for action.”<sup>260</sup> On the president’s orders, “US Special Forces will launch a commando-style manhunt to track down bin Laden.”<sup>261</sup> This “manhunt” was a driving force for the drama. As CBS anchor Dan Rather reported, the president “again demanded that Afghanistan’s Taliban dictatorship turn over the prime suspect in the attack on America, the Saudi Arabian Osama bin Laden.”<sup>262</sup> When discussing the president’s actions, CBS quoted the president: “His [the president] parting message to the Taliban: ‘There will be no negotiation. Hand over bin Laden now, or else.’”<sup>263</sup>

**Agent.** Similar to the purpose, the media coverage did not explicitly state the nature of President Bush as an agent; however, the president was one of the main focal points of this drama, characterized by his actions as a strong, decisive, and determined leader. When

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<sup>256</sup> Dan Rather, "Latest Developments in the Aftermath of the Terrorist Attacks," *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>257</sup> Brokaw, "New Cabinet Post."

<sup>258</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Us Officials Still Believe Bin Laden Is in Afghanistan as Taliban Poises for Attack," *NBC Nightly News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>259</sup> Peter Jennings, "People Worry About War," *ABC World News Tonight*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>260</sup> Tom Brokaw, "Taliban's Continued Rejection of White House Plans Will Result in Accelerated War Preparations," *NBC Nightly News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>261</sup> Brokaw, "Us Officials."

<sup>262</sup> Rather, "Latest Developments."

<sup>263</sup> Dan Rather, "President Bush Demands That the Taliban Government Hand over Osama Bin Laden," *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

discussing his speech, ABC's Peter Jennings stated that President Bush "could not have been more direct in his message to the rulers of Afghanistan last night."<sup>264</sup> CBS's Jim Stewart highlighted, "President Bush last night went further than anyone has so far in outlining the case against bin Laden."<sup>265</sup> Painting the president as an unwavering leader, one report explained that the president "again demanded that Afghanistan's Taliban dictatorship turn over the prime suspect in the attack on America, the Saudi Arabian Osama bin Laden."<sup>266</sup> Another broadcast reported, "Fighter jets by his side, President Bush departed for Camp David late today. His parting message to the Taliban: 'There will be no negotiation. Hand over bin Laden now, or else.'"<sup>267</sup>

**Act.** Networks focused on the president's acts of planning the United States' response to the attacks and preparing the nation for war. NBC anchor Tom Brokaw reported, "The president, as we've said, spent much of the day on war preparations."<sup>268</sup> CBS's Dan Rather continued this depiction stating that the United States "is now on war footing. After appealing for public support last night for the war against terrorism, President Bush today lined up some more international backing and moved more US military firepower to the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and elsewhere."<sup>269</sup> John Seigenthaler of NBC explained, President Bush "pushed ahead on the military and diplomatic fronts today as the US prepared response to the worst terrorist attack in this country's history."<sup>270</sup> When talking about the president's demands for the Taliban, reporter David Martin of CBS stated, "With B-1 bombers taking off from South Dakota, the US is making preparations to bomb the camps if the Taliban refuses."<sup>271</sup> Others reported that the United States military was "moving rapidly tonight, putting air, sea, and land forces in place for whatever action may be coming"<sup>272</sup> and that the president "remained on planning the US response. . . meeting with the National Security Council to continue now daily war planning."<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Peter Jennings, "People in Afghanistan and Pakistan Fear War," *ABC World News Tonight*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>265</sup> Dan Rather, "Us Efforts Build a Convincing Case against Osama Bin Laden in the Terror Attacks Last Week," *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>266</sup> Rather, "Latest Developments."

<sup>267</sup> Rather, "President Bush Demands."

<sup>268</sup> Brokaw, "Taliban's Continued Rejection."

<sup>269</sup> Rather, "Latest Developments."

<sup>270</sup> Seigenthaler, "President to Name."

<sup>271</sup> Dan Rather, "Us Military Forces Rapidly Being Deployed," *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>272</sup> Rather, "Latest Developments."

<sup>273</sup> Brokaw, "Us Officials."

**Agency.** According to the news coverage, the president vowed to do “whatever it takes” and “use every weapon necessary to defeat bin Laden.”<sup>274</sup> This included the government agency focused on by the news media, the office of Homeland Security, along with issuing demands to the Taliban, securing international support, and providing funds to prepare the nation for war. ABC’s Peter Jennings reported, “Last night President Bush announced the creation of a Homeland Security Office to coordinate the fight against terrorism in this country at the highest level. And he named Governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania to lead it.”<sup>275</sup> Continuing the focus on Homeland Security, reports described the office as “the new terror-fighting measure”<sup>276</sup> and part of “the new reality of America.”<sup>277</sup> A second agency the media discussed was the demands President Bush issued to the enemy. When talking about the wreckage and ground zero, CBS reporter David Martin in his report quoted the president, stating that the president “doesn’t need any more evidence to demand that the Taliban turn over Osama Bin Laden and his lieutenants, and rid Afghanistan of all terrorist activities. PRESIDENT BUSH: Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist and every person in their support structure to appropriate authorities.”<sup>278</sup>

The president was also using international support as an agency in this drama. NBC’s Campbell Brown reported, “Today the president’s focus remained on planning the US response... meeting with the National Security Council to continue now daily war planning. Bush spoke with Russia’s President Putin, pressing for Russia’s help with intelligence gathering. White House sources say the president will soon sign an executive order naming specific terrorist groups, including bin Laden’s al-Qaeda, asking the Treasury Department to freeze their US assets.”<sup>279</sup> Dan Rather of CBS continued this message, stating that President Bush “lined up some more international backing, and moved more US military firepower to the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and elsewhere.”<sup>280</sup> Finally, the media mentioned the agency of funding. In a second report, Dan Rather continued, “The president today released the first \$5 billion from the anti-terrorism packaged rushed through Congress. This money will help pay for the military

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<sup>274</sup> Rather, "President Bush Demands."

<sup>275</sup> Peter Jennings, "President Appoints New Office to His Cabinet," *ABC World News Tonight*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>276</sup> Dan Rather, "Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge and His New Post as the Head of the Office of Homeland Security," *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

<sup>277</sup> Brokaw, "New Cabinet Post."

<sup>278</sup> Rather, "Us Military."

<sup>279</sup> Seigenthaler, "President to Name."

<sup>280</sup> Rather, "Latest Developments."

buildup, including increased military intelligence, federal marshals on some commercial flights and rewards for information on terrorists.”<sup>281</sup>

***Analysis and Discussion.*** Because of this “new reality” the United States was facing, depicted by the news media as the worst that we had ever seen, President Bush not only had to serve as a strong Commander-in-Chief and acted immediately to achieve the purpose. The scene described by news media was one of the unknown, something that the United States had never seen before. This scene created a sense of immediacy and set up two possible acts. Either we as a nation would sit around in fear and wait for more information or we would prepare ourselves to face whatever it is that is coming our way. However, our nature as a nation, as affirmed by President Bush’s speech to Congress, dictated that this nation could only act in terms of the latter (scene-act). As the media described the scene, the president (agent) had no choice *but* to prepare our nation (act), to the best of his ability, for a type of war this nation had never known (scene-agent-act). Therefore, not only were Americans constrained by the scene of the event, we were also constrained by who we were as agents and what we stood for in purpose, which was explicitly described in President Bush’s address. Similarly, the news media’s portrayal of the purpose stated that the main goal was to bring the perpetrators, now established as Osama bin Laden, to justice no matter what the costs (agency). This purpose congruently corresponded with the administration. Because of this driving purpose, the president (agent) must act with the only choice that presented itself as logical, and planed an immediate response to the attacks (scene-purpose-act).

Finally, the media’s focal point in this drama was the description and portrayal of the president’s acts of planning a response and preparing this nation for a war that we have never seen before. These acts characterized the agent in this drama, President Bush, as being a strong, decisive leader fulfilling the role of a resilient Commander-in-Chief, hence being consistent with the agent that the media portrayed in the pre-coverage and the leader President Bush positioned himself as in his speech (act-agent).

## **Summary and Conclusions**

After reviewing all three rhetorical artifacts, pre-speech media coverage, President Bush’s address, and post-speech media coverage, there were a few key aspects worth noting. The

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<sup>281</sup> Rather, "President Bush Demands."

horrific tragedy of September 11 created a drama so intense that everyone in this nation and around the world was struggling to define the situation, looking to President to help explain the events. As shown by the analysis, the network news coverage reported a congruent analysis with the administration. Many reports directly quoted the president while others used nearly identical wording, employing similar terms to describe the situation. This provided a very consistent, unified vision of the scene and purpose that were driving a majority of the rhetoric.

Following the initial definitions and descriptions of the situation, the president issued his address to the nation. Utilizing a similar analysis, he portrayed multiple agents acting in this new reality. The president clearly defined the terrorists as the enemy, the American people as the protectors of freedom and democracy, and himself as the strong, vigilant leader to bring the country, and the world, through this war on terror. In the speech, he described how this horrific attack perpetrated by the evil enemy had created a new reality for the American people. This scene had united us, along with the world, in a distinct war on terror with the purpose of protecting and defending freedom and using every possible means necessary.

The post-media coverage, again, reflected the message and definitions that President Bush and the administration used. Post-coverage mirrored the scene presented by the president in his speech, now situating the agent and act in this “new reality” facing a ruthless enemy and unknown territory, with a purpose to bring the enemy to justice.

The pre-coverage described this drama in scenic terms, presenting the scene as the driving force of the narrative. The warzone the news media situated President Bush within drove the purpose of bringing the terrorists to justice and constrained the possible acts the agent could commit (scene-purpose, scene-act). The president’s speech articulated his narrative utilizing two driving terms: scene and agent. Bush described the scene of a new reality created by the evil terrorists committing evil acts for an evil purpose. This new scene gave the president a definition as agent – Commander, consoler, and world leader – while dictating a response (act) and creating a distinct purpose to protect freedom and defend democracy (scene-act-agent). However, the dominant driving term the president portrayed was the agent of the American people. The new reality was not going to define this agent. Because of who we were and what we stood for as Americans, we were defining our own scene, responding (act) in our own way, and were driven by our own purpose (agent-act-scene, agent-purpose). The news media reflected the scene that the president described in his address, which drove the post-coverage drama. Because of this new

reality, President Bush (agent) had no choice but to act in preparing for war and serve the purpose to catch the “evil-doer” (scene-act-agent).

In a sense, there was a shared understanding of our scene, our purpose, and our mission in response to this event. The media reflected the administration’s message in the pre-speech coverage, hence setting the president up for success. President Bush continued with a consistent message reaffirming the reports and unifying the nation under the same purpose. Echoing the president’s speech, post-media coverage confirmed the president’s depiction of the situation, reinforcing this motive of unification. Due to the reflections of the new media, everyone expected President Bush to respond as he did, and he did it well.

## CHAPTER 4. OVERCOMING THE DIRGE: HURRICANE KATRINA

On August 23, 2005, reports came in about the newest tropical storm turned hurricane in the 2005 Atlantic Hurricane season: Hurricane Katrina. At the time, no one knew it would soon become one of the top five deadliest and *the* costliest, most destructive storm ever to hit the United States.<sup>282</sup> According to the Hurricane Katrina Report, the overall destruction “wrought by Hurricane Katrina , which was both a large and powerful hurricane as well as a catastrophic flood, vastly exceeded that of any other major disaster. . .”<sup>283</sup> Initially forming in the Bahamas, tropical storm Katrina continued to grow forming a Category 1 hurricane. It crossed the southern coast of Florida on August 24, causing minor flooding and a few casualties. Weakening to a tropical storm over land, the hurricane traveled out to the Gulf of Mexico. It rapidly strengthened to a Category 5 becoming one of the strongest hurricanes ever recorded.

As the hurricane approached the northern Gulf Coast, states in the projected affected areas prepared for this catastrophic storm. On August 26, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco and Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour declared a “state of emergency” for their states. The following day, President Bush designated the Gulf Coast as existing in a “state of emergency” and ordered federal aid for the affected areas to help support the state and local relief efforts. Finally, one day before this devastating storm hit, local officials for select cities on the coastal area, including New Orleans, issued mandatory evacuations. Mayor Ralph Nagin stated, “We’re facing the storm most of us have feared. This is going to be an unprecedented event.”<sup>284</sup> About 30,000 evacuees gathered at the superdome to wait out the storm.

Hurricane Katrina hit landfall again on Monday, August 29, 2005. Winds up to 130 mph created storm surges as high as 27 feet from Mobile, Alabama, to New Orleans, Louisiana.<sup>285</sup> As the days went by, the situation along the Gulf Coast continued to worsen. Within the first 12 hours of the storm, two major flood control levies protecting New Orleans breached and a section of the roof of the Superdome, in which more than 10 thousand people were taking refuge,

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<sup>282</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all context information was provided by "The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned," ed. Department of Homeland Security (Executive office of the President, 2006).

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>284</sup> Gordon Russell, "Nagin Orders First-Ever Mandatory Evacuation of New Orleans," *Times-Picayune*, 28 August 2005.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

was torn open. In an estimated 18 hour time period after the storm hit, approximately 80 percent of New Orleans was flooded with six to twenty feet of water.<sup>286</sup> Localities bused millions of people out to shelters in other states; however, the shelters were ill equipped for the massive numbers of victims. Most shelters lacked sufficient food, water, and toiletries.

The news media reported horror stories of various acts of looting, gunfire directed at rescue-relief helicopters, and ghastly crimes such as rapes and murders occurring in the shelters. Other reports later proved discrepancies in some of the stories initially released, but the visuals provided by television news were undeniable.<sup>287</sup> According to one witness, "Crews plucked hundreds of people off rooftops, but when they delivered them to an assigned landing zone, there was total chaos. No food, no water, no bathrooms, no nothing. There was no structure, no organization, no command center."<sup>288</sup> Overall, Hurricane Katrina impacted close to 93,000 square miles, covering 138 parishes and counties in Louisiana alone.<sup>289</sup>

President Bush, who at the time was vacationing at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, issued his first utterances about the storm from the ranch on August 28, one day before landfall.<sup>290</sup> He thanked local and state officials for taking the storm seriously in their preparations for its arrival and urged citizens to evacuate to safe ground. Bush also reported that he had signed a disaster declaration for the states of Louisiana and Mississippi that would "allow Federal agencies to coordinate all disaster relief efforts with State and local officials." The president promised, "We will do everything in our power to help the people in the communities affected by this storm."<sup>291</sup>

In the following days, Bush continued his regularly scheduled appearances, traveling to Arizona and California to promote his Medicare plan and celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Victory of Japan Day. On his way back to the White House, the president viewed the devastation via a low-altitude fly-over two days after the hurricane hit. This was the first time the president had seen the devastation, occurring on the morning of August 31, 2005. He returned on September 2 to visit the area on the ground. Many of Bush's critics said that the president was

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>287</sup> Brian Thevenot, "Myth-Making in New Orleans," *American Journalism Review* (2005).

<sup>288</sup> Evan Thomas, "The Lost City; What Went Wrong: Devastating a Swath of the South, Katrina Plunged New Orleans into Agony - the Story of a Storm--and a Disastrously Slow Rescue," *Newsweek*, 12 September 2005.

<sup>289</sup> "The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned," 5.

<sup>290</sup> George W. Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," ed. National Archives and Records Administration (Government Printing Office, 2005), 1310.; See Appendix A-2 for a complete list of the president's utterances concerning Hurricane Katrina.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

disengaged, on vacation, distracted by the Iraq war, and very insensitive to the needs of the poor, predominately African-American victims.<sup>292</sup> The press and the public began criticizing the president about the entire ordeal, questioning the whereabouts of their vigilant leader and the administration that had carried them through the last major crisis of September 11, 2001.

Overall, the president and the media presented two explicitly conflicting images of leadership and control over the event. As shown in the news broadcasts, the network coverage portrayed the president as absent, out of touch with reality, and responding to the crisis “too little too late.” On many occasions, the media presented the president as contradictory and on the defense, trying to save the political face of the administration. After setting this stage, the president responded by speaking to the nation in a primetime address, laying out the plans and progress of the relief efforts in an attempt to gain control of the entire ordeal. The following is the narrative of how this drama unfolded.

### **Network News Coverage: Setting the Stage for the President’s Address**

Televised media reports immediately broadcast live from the Gulf Coast, covering the path of destruction Hurricane Katrina was rapidly carving. Throughout their coverage, news media displayed images of the devastation, flooding, and the victims. Equally important, however, were the reports that focused on President Bush and his response to this developing crisis during the time period leading up to the speech. This analysis separates the “pre-speech coverage” into three main segments: the day the hurricane hit to the day before the president first visited the devastated area; the day of the president’s first visit to the day before the announcement of the address; and finally the day of the announcement to the day of the actual speech.<sup>293</sup> The description below briefly presents the context for President Bush’s statements about the Hurricane Katrina event. Secondly, a pentadic analysis of the media coverage analyzes the networks’ portrayal of the drama. Finally, an analysis and discussion of each period presents the findings of the section.

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<sup>292</sup> Thomas, "The Lost City; What Went Wrong: Devastating a Swath of the South, Katrina Plunged New Orleans into Agony - the Story of a Storm--and a Disastrously Slow Rescue."

<sup>293</sup> Dates for the time periods included: August 29 - September 1; September 2 - September 12; and September 13 - September 15. See Appendix 3-B for a complete list of articles examined.

## **ACT I: *The storm hits, taking the president with it...***

The following analysis examines President Bush's utterances and the network news coverage that coincided with the statements during the first four days of coverage.<sup>294</sup> As shown by the investigation, conflicting messages begin to arise from the very first unfolding of this drama.

***President Bush's Script.*** The president's first rhetorical response to the hurricane came while he was vacationing in Crawford, Texas on August 28, the day before the storm hit. The brief remarks preceded the central topic of an already planned speech on the drafting of a constitution in Iraq. The statements simply thanked local and state officials for their preparations for the storm, announced the disaster declaration for the Gulf States, and urged citizens to evacuate to safer ground. During the next two days, President Bush continued on his scheduled appearances. He traveled to Arizona and California promoting his Medicare plan, while also making a stop in San Diego to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V-J Day. In the speeches delivered at each stop, he began by acknowledging the events taking place on the Gulf Coast, stating, "This morning our hearts and prayers are with our fellow citizens along the Gulf Coast who have suffered so much from Hurricane Katrina. These are trying times for the people of these communities. We know that many are anxious to return to their homes. It's not possible at this moment. Right now, our priority is on saving lives, and we are still in the midst of search and rescue operations. I urge everyone in the affected areas to continue to follow instructions from State and local authorities."<sup>295</sup> He continued by giving a phone number and website for Americans who wished to help the hurricane-devastated areas and then transitioned immediately into a discussion about Medicare in the first two cases, and the war in Iraq in the anniversary address.

On August 31, President Bush held a press conference in the Rose Garden, this time focusing directly on the events of Hurricane Katrina.<sup>296</sup> In this conference, he began by mentioning his first look at the devastation, via fly-over, and labeled the event "one of the worst natural disasters in our Nation's history." President Bush stressed that he had been in close contact with his surrogate agents, Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff and FEMA

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<sup>294</sup> Act I examined the president's statements and the network news coverage between August 29, 2005 – September 1, 2005.

<sup>295</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," 1330.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 1335.

Director Michael Brown, and stated that he had “instructed them to work closely with State and local officials as well as with the private sector to ensure that we’re helping, not hindering, recovery efforts.”<sup>297</sup>

As he continued, the president acknowledged a laundry list of federal and state government agencies that were in charge of the hurricane response effort and declared three main priorities of the relief efforts: saving lives; sustaining lives by ensuring adequate food, water, shelter, and medical supplies; and executing a comprehensive recovery effort. The Department of Defense, the National Guard, and FEMA were all serving as federal agents deploying the various agencies for the relief effort. The Department of Defense deployed the USS Bataan, eight swift water rescue teams, the Iwo Jima Amphibious Readiness Group, and the hospital ship USNS Comfort. The National Guard activated 11,000 Guardsmen to assist the local and state officials with security. FEMA reportedly sent more than 50 disaster medical assistance teams from across the country, more than 25 urban search and rescue teams, and more than 1,000 personnel to help save lives to the affected areas. Additionally, President Bush highlighted all of the FEMA resources moving to the Gulf region, including more than 400 trucks containing 5.4 million Meals Ready to Eat, 13.4 million liters of water, 10,400 tarps, 3.4 million pounds of ice, 144 generators, 20 containers of pre-positioned disaster supplies, 135,000 blankets, and 11,000 cots. He concluded his press conference by again, thanking everyone involved with the relief efforts and leaving the public with an uplifting message: “I am confident that, with time, you can get your lie back in order, new communities will flourish, the great city of New Orleans will be back on its feet, and America will be a stronger place for it. The country stands with you. We’ll do all in our power to help you.”<sup>298</sup>

On September 1, President Bush participated in two speaking engagements. After meeting with his father, former President George H.W. Bush, and former President Bill Clinton, President Bush spoke to the media about the recovery effort and progress occurring on the Gulf Coast. He again stressed his heavy contact with Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Director Brown, stating that he wanted to make sure he fully understood the “relief efforts and the extent of the relief efforts and the progress of the relief efforts.”<sup>299</sup> The president expressed that the “Federal

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 1336.

Government has got an important role to play.”<sup>300</sup> He pointed out all of the progress Chertoff briefed him about, including the repair of the breached levees, the increase of law enforcement, and the evacuation of victims from the Superdome.

The president explained that the comprehensive recovery strategy was “moving forward” and that the government was working hard to restore electricity, repair the road system, and rebuild the Gulf Coast. Bush also elaborated on solutions for the gasoline shortage due to the damaged pipelines. He explained that the steps the government was taking would “help address the problem of availability, but it’s not going to solve it. Americans should be prudent in their use of energy during the course of the next few weeks. Don’t buy gas if you don’t need it.”<sup>301</sup> Finally, the president concluded the address by promoting the fundraising efforts headed by the two former presidents. The fundraising endeavor was similar to the outreach effort lead by the former presidents following the Asian tsunami the year prior.<sup>302</sup> He assured the victims that the thoughts and prayers of the entire nation were with them and claimed that the efforts to rebuild “the great city of New Orleans and to rebuild those communities in Mississippi and to help the folks in Alabama will make this Nation a stronger place.”<sup>303</sup>

The president’s second speaking engagement was an exclusive interview with ABC’s television news host Diane Sawyer. During this interview, Sawyer discussed a number of topics concerning the relief efforts with the president, including the extent of the destruction, speed of the response, the security level in New Orleans, and the gasoline shortage. President Bush continued to reassure Sawyer, and the nation, that the federal government had control of the relief efforts and were going to continue to do everything possible to rebuild the Gulf Coast. He stated, “We do know that the storm has just blasted the Gulf Coast. Rural Mississippi and coast of Mississippi has been obliterated, much of it has been obliterated. And obviously, downtown New Orleans is flooded. And, and so, we’re trying to get a handle on it.”<sup>304</sup>

Sawyer particularly asked about the images and pictures that news media were broadcasting to the nation. She asserted, “Everyone who watches the pictures go by, and I should say here in the situation room we have on the screen. . . a screen where you have

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> On December 26, 2004, the “Asian tsunami” affected Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. In response, the former President George H.W. Bush and former President Bill Clinton headed up a fundraising relief fund for the victims of this devastating natural disaster.

<sup>303</sup> Bush, “Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents,” 1336.

<sup>304</sup> Diane Sawyer, “President Bush Exclusive Interview,” *Good Morning America*, 1 September 2005.

teleconferencing and the pictures can go by as well, is there one image that symbolizes to you the dimension of what happened?" The president replied that the image that stuck out the most was "somebody sitting on a rooftop waving a flag saying, come and get me. And, and that, again, I repeat, we've got a, a strategy, and we is not just the Federal government but state and local governments, have got a strategy to first save lives." He continued by provided evidence of this strategy: "As you know, there's a, a major transportation lift taking place, moving people from the Superdome to the Astrodome. There's a lot of choppers beginning to move and more choppers are on the way."

Sawyer again pointed out that there were people crying for help and informed the president of what the people of the Gulf Coast expected: "And some of the things they have asked our correspondents to ask you is, they expected, they say to us, that the day after this hurricane that there would be a massive and visible armada of Federal support. There would be boats coming in, there would be food, there would be water, and it would be there within hours. They wonder what's taking so long?" President Bush assured that there were food, water, boats, and choppers on their way and emphasized that victims and the American public "have got to know that there is a massive - one of the - the -most massive Federal relief effort ever in - combination with state and local authorities. And there is a lot of help coming."

Highlighting another public expectation, Sawyer asked, "[G]iven the fact that everyone anticipated a hurricane five, a possible hurricane five hitting shore, are you satisfied with the pace at which this is arriving and which it was planned to arrive?" The president riposted, "I fully understand people wanting things to have happened yesterday. . . I can't imagine what it's like to be waving a sign that said, come get me now." He explained that there was a lot of frustration, but that he wanted people to know help was on its way. Citing the major cause of the crisis, the president reasoned, "I don't think anybody anticipated the breach of the levees. They did anticipate a serious storm. These levees got breached and as a result, much of New Orleans is flooded and now we're having to deal with it and will."

Closing the interview, Sawyer pointed out the similarities between 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, asking about the president's emotional response to each event. President Bush responded:

*Well, first of all, the, the devastation that I saw was very emotional. I mean, I cannot describe to you what it - what it, what it looks like to see entire neighborhoods under water. Or right down the coast in Mississippi to see little communities completely obliterated. I mean, it is, it is, it is, it is so devastating that*

*it's hard to describe it. 9/11 was, was a man-made attack. This was a natural disaster. And so, I have, I had a little different sense of emotion about realizing that there are some killers out there that killed Americans as opposed to a storm. Nevertheless, the aftermath is going to be just as serious in both cases. New Orleans is going to, is, is more devastated than New York was and just, physically devastated, as was, as is the coast of Mississippi. So, we got a lot of work to do and we'll get it done. It's, it's, it's, it's very important that there be a logical plan in place, a strategy in place, that the Federal government, the state government, and the local government work together to implement and that's what you're seeing unfolding now.*<sup>305</sup>

After the televised interview, President Bush refrained from speaking about Hurricane Katrina until immediately prior to his departure for the Gulf Coast on September 2.

**News Media's Script.** In the first few days of coverage, the news media described the scene of this drama as the "one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history,"<sup>306</sup> "the largest domestic challenge the country has faced since 9/11,"<sup>307</sup> and a "crisis destined for history."<sup>308</sup> Many reports highlighted the death and destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. In one of the first reports after the hurricane hit, NBC anchor Brian Williams painted New Orleans as "battered and soaked" and looking "like a bomb went off downtown." He continued, "Hurricane Katrina certainly arrived here with explosive power, and not even as destructive as first predicted."<sup>309</sup> John Roberts of CBS reported, "About 9,000 people here in New Orleans took shelter at the Louisiana Superdome, the home of the New Orleans Saints. But even that huge building couldn't offer complete refuge from the storm... never before has a stadium hosted fans quite like this. Hungry, tired, wet, and thankful."<sup>310</sup> Quoting President Bush, CBS anchor Bob Schieffer described the scene as "never been anything quite like this. . . . PRESIDENT BUSH: We are dealing with one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history. This recovery will take a long time. This recovery will take years."<sup>311</sup> CBS's John Roberts reiterated this message in a second report, explaining how this scene was different than those experienced in the past: "I've been to many similar disasters in the past, hurricanes across

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Bob Schieffer, "New Orleans Suffering through the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," *CBS Evening News*, 31 August 2005.

<sup>307</sup> Charles Gibson, "The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," *ABC World News Tonight*, 31 August 2005.

<sup>308</sup> Brian Williams, "President Bush Says Recovery from Hurricane Katrina Will Take Years," *NBC Nightly News*, 31 August 2005.

<sup>309</sup> Brian Williams, "Hurricane Katrina Hit Hard, Dwindled Fast, Did Damage," *NBC Nightly News*, 29 August 2005.

<sup>310</sup> John Roberts, "Thousands of People Seeking Shelter in the Louisiana Superdome; Winds from Hurricane Katrina Rip Off Parts of the Dome Roof," *CBS Evening News*, 29 August 2005.

<sup>311</sup> Schieffer, "New Orleans Suffering."

the country, and there's always been National Guard water buffalos that show up, water drops from helicopters; off the back of trucks, MREs being passed out; Red Cross tents well set up by now. And there's nothing like that. It seems is – what happened is they concentrated all of their efforts on the Superdome and everything else is falling through the cracks.”<sup>312</sup>

Many stories focused on the desperation of the victims. CBS reporter John Roberts gave explicit details of the scene: “Emergency response here has been stretched well beyond breaking point. In the flooded downtown hospitals, officials said today dozens of patients are at risk of dying if they can't be evacuated. . . Gangs of thieves, who armed themselves from local stores, now roam the streets, looting even the hospitals. It's forced state officials to divert scarce resources to neighborhood patrols, hoping that a show of force will keep the looting in check. But there's hope more help will arrive soon. . . The highways were jammed with assistance arriving from across Louisiana and out of state. But there are no water tankers, no caravans of relief supplies. National Guard trucks are rolling through the streets of New Orleans empty.”<sup>313</sup> Reporting for ABC, Bob Woodruff continued this description: “Today, the mayor of New Orleans said that hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people in the city are dead. Bodies are being left floating in the floodwaters. . . It is clear, however, that New Orleans will not be livable for months to come. And the president said full recovery could take years.”<sup>314</sup> NBC's anchor Brian Williams, echoing the two other networks, stated: “Katrina's survivors, desperate and angry, begging for help from anyone who will listen. Three days now since the killer storm, and tonight the city of New Orleans is in total collapse. Chaos and crisis, an increasingly desperate and lawless city. Rescue workers overwhelmed, food and water scarce, people left behind, becoming more and more unglued. Where is the help?”<sup>315</sup> Mark Strassmann of CBS commented, “Wiped out, nothing open, no sense here that the help is going to show up anytime soon. You get a real taste of despair wherever you go.”<sup>316</sup>

In addition to describing the scene, the media asked repeatedly, where was the nation's fearless leader? As CBS's Bill Plante reported, “The Katrina catastrophe comes at one of the lowest points of George Bush's presidency. In a new CBS News Poll, his approval rating is as

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<sup>312</sup> Bob Schieffer, "Many Louisiana Communities Suffering Following Hurricane Katrina," *CBS Evening News*, 1 September 2005.

<sup>313</sup> Schieffer, "New Orleans Suffering."

<sup>314</sup> Gibson, "The Aftermath."

<sup>315</sup> Brian Williams, "Nightly News Headlines," *NBC Nightly News*, 1 September 2005.

<sup>316</sup> Schieffer, "Many Louisiana Communities."

low as it's ever been, 41 percent driven down by both the war in Iraq and the soaring cost of gas. Editorial pages across the nation aimed sharp barbs at Mr. Bush: 'what appeared a halting response Tuesday,' and, 'A better leader would have flown straight to the disaster zone and announced immediate mobilization of every available resource.' PRESIDENT BUSH: This recovery is going to be a long process. We all know this is an agonizing time for the people of the Gulf Coast. I ask their continued patience as recovery operations unfold."<sup>317</sup> CBS cited one hurricane victim stating, "You can go in Iraq and come in with big helicopters and set stuff up for people, but you can't do this for us? Come on, Bush!"<sup>318</sup> ABC reporter Bob Woodruff, continuing this focus, stated, "In that interview with the president this morning with Diane Sawyer, the president said that he didn't think that anyone had anticipated that the levees would break in New Orleans. But for years, officials had warned that the levees could break in the case of a powerful hurricane. And Louisiana has asked repeatedly for more Federal funds to help shore them up. Now many residents in Louisiana and New Orleans are asking why more wasn't done to help them."<sup>319</sup>

Not only did the news coverage describe an agent who was not present in the crisis situation, they also depicted the absent agent responding through inefficient agencies, not acknowledging or meeting the needs of the victims. For example, focusing on the gas-price hike that occurred because of the destruction of refineries located in the Gulf Coast, news reports highlighted the lack of relief that Bush's solution would provide. Elizabeth Vargas of ABC described, "In many places where we went today, there were huge lines of people waiting to buy gasoline. President Bush said today that Americans shouldn't buy gas if they don't need it, which certainly doesn't apply here."<sup>320</sup> As CBS anchor Bob Schieffer pointed out, "Hurricane Katrina disrupted oil supplies, so President Bush today opened America's strategic reserve to lend some of that oil to refiners. With that, the price of crude oil fell, but the problem is the hurricane has also disrupted operations at the refineries that turn oil into gasoline and that is sending gasoline prices soaring."<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Bob Schieffer, "Bush under Intense Pressure to Hurry Aid to Hurricane Victims," *CBS Evening News*, 1 September 2005.

<sup>318</sup> Schieffer, "Many Louisiana Communities."

<sup>319</sup> Bob Woodruff, "Asking Questions Federal Responsibility," *ABC World News Tonight*, 1 September 2005.

<sup>320</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "Price Watch Katrina's Ripple Effect," *ABC World News Tonight*, 1 September 2005.

<sup>321</sup> Bob Schieffer, "Gasoline Prices on the Rise Following Hurricane Katrina," *CBS Evening News*, 31 August 2005.

***Intermission: Analysis and Discussion.*** In the first few days of coverage, the conflicting messages of the president and the media immediately began to develop. Describing the desolated Gulf Coast, the media depicted an absent agent, using inefficient agencies within the relief effort that was trying to help the victims in this horrible scene. Although the president initially addressed the situation as a whole, he was not addressing the same aspects of the scene that the news media described. The media coverage focused on the scene of destruction and anguish that the victims were living in, with lack of adequate food, water, shelter, and other relief resources. However, President Bush was attempting to paint the picture of a successful relief effort in progress, solely reciting a laundry list of things currently being done. He identified surrogate agents acting on his behalf, such as the federal government, FEMA, the Department of Defense, and others. Continually emphasizing these central agents in this drama, the president portrayed a scene that the agents were controlling through their various acts and agencies. President Bush explained that the government's (agent) acts would make the nation (scene) as stronger place. What he did not account for was the lack of evidence he had to prove that the agent's acts were accomplishing this purpose. He was receiving briefs about the relief progress from his surrogate agents, Chertoff and Brown, trusting that the information was up-to-date and accurate, and relayed it to the public as such. To his detriment, however, he did not speak to the crisis at the Superdome and the convention center that was unfolding right in front of the nation's eyes on network television. Pictures of victims stranded in flooded locations, begging for food and water, and struggling to survive completely negated the laundry list of resources that were supposedly achieving the "largest relief effort in our Nation's history."<sup>322</sup>

Another point to note was the symbolism of the fly-over Air Force One performed on the way back to the White House on August 31. The president highlighted this action in the very beginning of the news conference, priding himself of seeing firsthand "the scope and magnitude of the devastation."<sup>323</sup> This action, however, could have arguably portrayed the president as being even more absent in the eyes of the media and the public, flying over the scene instead of visiting the scene. This act was inconsistent with the scene presented by the news media. If he had landed in the devastated areas, he would have truly seen the actual scene being depicted by the new media, including the slow arrival of resources and victims being stranded in the

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<sup>322</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," 1336.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 1335.

Superdome and convention center. As the president's staff explained, it was likely that a physical landing would have made things on the ground a lot more difficult due to the security entourage that would be required with a presidential visit. Nevertheless, even if the president's description had come close to the scene the news media were describing and illustrating on television, the fly-over would not have seemed so negative.

Not only was President Bush completely absent at the scene and not attending to the scene and stage the media had set for him, he was also presenting a completely different image of what was actually happening on the ground. Bush exclaimed, "[T]here's no doubt in my mind we're going to succeed. Right now, the days seem awfully dark for those affected. I understand that. But I'm confident that, with time, you can get your life back in order, new communities will flourish, the great city of New Orleans will be back on its feet, and America will be a stronger place for it."<sup>324</sup> Depicting only the physical scene he viewed through the airplane window during the fly-over and issuing statements such as the one above gave the media fodder in their portrayal of President Bush as a out of touch and absent agent.

Overall, the pentadic term *scene*, as defined by the news media, overshadowed all else and was the driving term in Act I of the drama. The news media defined the president (agent) through his absence (act) from this devastating situation (scene). The president, however, spoke of a successful relief effort (scene) provided by the federal government (agent) and issued a laundry list of relief actions and resources (act and agencies) the government (agent) was providing in an attempt to make the nation a stronger place (purpose). He offered few consoling words and focused on acts and agencies that were, according to the news media, as absent as the president. The act of the president's absence within the scene the news media was describing and illustrating via video footage negated any assistance (act and agency) that the president conveyed. Therefore, the scene of the situation rendered the act ineffective, and created the characterization of an absent leader (scene-act-agent). Additionally, the fact that the president (agent) flew over (act) the devastated Gulf Coast area (scene) gave the news media additional ammunition to present him as an absent agent not attending to the scene. This was also another instance where the act was ill fit for the scene (scene-act). The act of absence in scene of devastation described by the news media conflicted with the messages and actions the president was issuing, dictating him as an absent agent whose agencies were neither effective nor

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

sufficient to achieve the purpose of helping the hurricane victims. All of this would continue to set the stage as the rest of the drama unfolded.

**ACT II: *The stage is set with two different scripts...***

The president's statements and news coverage reviewed in this time segment include reports from the first day the president traveled to view the devastated areas on the ground, until the day before the announcement of the address.<sup>325</sup> As the analysis will show, this drama gradually continued to unfold, extending the characterizations of each grammatical term.

***President Bush's Script.*** The president first appeared on the ground on September 2, four days after Hurricane Katrina hit land. However, before departing for the Gulf Coast, President Bush made a few remarks on the South Lawn of the White House. Again, he provided a laundry list of aid he claimed was "surging toward those who have been affected."<sup>326</sup> He maintained that his surrogate agents,<sup>327</sup> the federal government and FEMA, were "making progress about pulling people out of the Superdome." The president also mentioned that there was "an issue at the convention center in New Orleans" but did not mention any details on what the "issue" entailed.<sup>328</sup> Following his optimistic description of the scene and high appraisal of the relief effort and everyone else involved, the president's tone changed with his last few remarks. Bush stated, "The results are not acceptable. I'm headed down there right now. . . I want to assure the people of the affected areas and this country that we'll deploy the assets necessary to get the situation under control, to get the help to the people who've been affected, and that we're beginning long-term planning to help those who have been displaced, as well as long-term planning to help rebuild the communities that have been affected."<sup>329</sup>

The president's first stop was in Mobile, Alabama. There, he took a moment to say a few remarks to the victims and the press. He began by, again, thanking the people working on the ground to help with relief efforts, including the Coast Guard and troops that were present. Secondly, he praised the governors of all of the Gulf States for being outstanding leaders. Finally, he continued by discussing the federal government's response. He stated, "And the

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<sup>325</sup> Act II began on September 2, 2005 and ended with September 12, 2005.

<sup>326</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," 1339.

<sup>327</sup> He referred to the federal government and FEMA, his surrogate agents, as "we" in his comments, stating, "We are making progress..."

<sup>328</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," 1339.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

Federal Government's job is big, and it's massive, and we're going to do it. Where it's not working right, we're going to make it right. Where it is working right, we're going to duplicate it elsewhere. We have a responsibility at the Federal level to help save life, and that's the primary focus right now."<sup>330</sup> The rest of the speech was spent thanking, praising, and describing the people who were making the relief effort a great success. It was then he made a statement that would haunt him throughout the remainder of the crisis: "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job. The FEMA Director is working 24—they're working 24 hours a day."<sup>331</sup> He closed by saying, "Again, my attitude is, if it's not going exactly right, we're going to make it go exactly right. If there's a problem, we're going to address the problems. And that's what I've come down to assure people of. And again, I want to thank everybody."<sup>332</sup>

President Bush also made remarks in Biloxi, Mississippi and Kenner, Louisiana that same day. Both addresses stressed the relief efforts taking place with a similar laundry list of what the federal government provided for the recovery. He ended with a statement of hope for the future: "I believe that the great city of New Orleans [or Biloxi] will rise again and be a greater city of New Orleans."<sup>333</sup>

The following day, on September 3, President Bush issued his weekly radio address from the Rose Garden at the White House. The president expressed his dismay, stating that he had just seen the aftermath of "one of the largest natural disasters to ever strike America" and described the human costs as "incalculable."<sup>334</sup> He explained that despite their best efforts, "the magnitude of responding to a crisis over a disaster area that is larger than the size of Great Britain has created tremendous problems that have strained State and local capabilities." Because of the stretched resources of local and state governments, victims were "not getting the help they need" and he labeled it unacceptable.<sup>335</sup>

Regardless of these problems, Bush assessed that the condition on the ground continued to improve by the hour. He emphasized the increased acts and agencies provided by the federal government, including the ordering of 7,000 additional troops and a 10.5 billion emergency aid package. Laying out clear purpose, Bush declared, "Our priorities are clear: We will complete

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 1349.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 1350.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

the evacuation as quickly and safely as possible. We will not let criminals prey on the vulnerable, and we will not allow bureaucracy to get in the way of saving lives.” President Bush vowed that the federal government would do its part to help those who had been “hit hard by Katrina:” “Where our response is not working, we’ll make it right. Where our response is working, we will duplicate it. We have a responsibility to our brothers and sisters all along the Gulf Coast, and we will not rest until we get this right and the job is done.”<sup>336</sup>

Finally, the president concluded the address by speaking about a broader agent, the American people. He emphasized our character, reassuring the nation that “our Nation has the character, the resources, and the resolve to overcome this disaster.” He continued: “We will comfort and care for the victims. We will restore the towns and neighborhoods that have been lost in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. We will rebuild the great city of New Orleans. And we will once again show the world that the worst adversities bring out the best in America.”<sup>337</sup>

On September 5, upon his second visit to the affected areas, the president spoke to reporters, volunteers, and victims of the storm in Baker and Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Poplarville, Mississippi. He again thanked everyone involved in the relief efforts and stressed, “I think all levels of Government are doing the best they can. If it’s not going right, we’ll make it right.”<sup>338</sup> He also said, yet again, “you know, if it’s not right, we’re going to fix it, and if it is right, we’re going to keep doing it.”<sup>339</sup> Echoing a perspective from 9/11, he continued by claiming we would become a better nation because of this disaster. At the end of his speech in Mississippi he promised, “I understand. I understand the damage. I understand the devastation. I understand the destruction. I understand how long it’s going to take. And we’re with you.”<sup>340</sup>

In the days to come, the president continued to speak on occasion and stress a consolatory message with each mention of Katrina, issuing statements to the National Voluntary Organizations Representatives and remarking on efforts to assist students and school districts displaced by Hurricane Katrina.<sup>341</sup> He consistently emphasized the idea of rebuilding these cities bigger and better and praising the volunteers who were helping with the relief efforts, including non-profit and faith based organizations. President Bush even went so far as to compare the first

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 1354.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 1355.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 1356.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 1358.

responders to Hurricane Katrina to the first responders of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks at the 9/11 Medal of Valor award ceremony on September 9.<sup>342</sup> Bush stated:

*When America has been challenged, there has always been citizens willing to step forward and risk their lives for the rest of us. Over the last 11 days in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama, we have again seen acts of great compassion and extraordinary bravery from America's first-responders. Firefighters and police, and U.S. Coast Guard men and women, and National Guardsmen and active duty forces, disaster and medical assistance teams, search and rescue units from all over the United States have descended on the Gulf Coast to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. They have faced the storm's destruction with valor and determination, and their hard work has saved lives in the face of great adversity.*<sup>343</sup>

The president continued this comparison during his radio address on September 10, one day before the four-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks: "This time the devastation resulted not from the malice of evil men but from the fury of water and wind."<sup>344</sup> Once more, the spirit and character America's armies of compassion had "rallied a response to this tragedy." President Bush indicated that he had just signed additional legislation providing \$52 billion for the response and recovery efforts and began distributing \$2,000 in emergency relief to every displaced household. Finally, he closed by expressing the endurance and determination of the hurricane victims and the American people: "Our greatest resource in such times is the compassionate character of the American people, because even the most destructive storm cannot weaken the heart and soul of our Nation. America will overcome this ordeal, and we will be stronger for it. Even in the deepest darkness, we can see the light of hope, and the light shows us the way forward. We will honor the memory of those we have lost. We will comfort the victims of Katrina, and we will make the gulf coast more vibrant than ever."<sup>345</sup>

On September 12, the president visited the devastated areas of New Orleans, Louisiana and Gulf Port, Mississippi one last time before the national address. Bush spoke directly to the news reporters and faced a few hardball questions. The issues raised in the interview included who was to blame for the inadequate response, if this nation had enough troops here in the US with most of our troops allocated to Iraq, and whether or not there was a racial component to the response. Instead of acknowledging the possibility of any of these issues, the president denied each of them. Bush claimed that there would be time for blame later and that he wanted to "know

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 1369.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 1380.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

what exactly went on and how it went on” in order to “continually assess the inside of my administration.”<sup>346</sup> In terms of Iraq, the president responded, “We’ve got plenty of troops to do both. . . It is preposterous to claim that the engagement in Iraq meant there wasn’t enough troops here, just pure and simple.”<sup>347</sup> Finally, when asked about race, he commented, “My attitude is this: The storm didn’t discriminate, and neither will the recovery effort. When those Coast Guard choppers, many of whom were first on the scene, were pulling people off roofs, they didn’t check the color of a person’s skin. They wanted to save lives.”<sup>348</sup> President Bush ended his conversation in both cases emphasizing the role of the federal government. He claimed that the federal government could multi-task, focusing on both foreign and domestic policy, while also helping the Gulf region set a strategy and vision for rebuilding.

*News Media’s Script.* Continuing to focus on the destruction Katrina caused, the news coverage began to take a slightly different focus as this drama unfolded. ABC reporter Elizabeth Vargas commented, “In the last week and a half, many people have compared the disaster of Hurricane Katrina to the terrorist attacks on 9/11. . .”<sup>349</sup> Reports began assimilating the scene to the September 11 terrorist attacks and begging questions of competence following yet another disaster. Andrea Mitchell of NBC reported, “Finally, communications. Four years after 9/11, local officials still don’t get answers from Washington. . . So tonight, people are wondering why the government can’t respond more quickly, even to a disaster as catastrophic as this one.”<sup>350</sup> On the same token, ABC’s Bob Woodruff stated, “Hurricane Katrina was the first real test since 9/11 of this nation’s ability to respond to catastrophes like this. But no one in this town needs reminding that it just didn’t work out the way it was supposed to. . . LOCAL RESIDENT: Where’s George Bush?”<sup>351</sup> In addition, reports covered the national mood about the entire situation. NBC’s Rosiland Jordan stated, “Americans are not happy with the way the administration has responded to the crisis. The president’s job approval rating has hit a record low. In a Newsweek poll released today, 38 percent of Americans approve of the way President Bush is handling his job; 55 percent disapprove. As for what went wrong in the hurricane, the

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 1382.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "Interview Colin Powell," *ABC World News Tonight*, 9 September 2005.

<sup>350</sup> Brian Williams, "Overview of Government Response to Hurricane and Why It Failed," *NBC Nightly News*, 2 September 2005.

<sup>351</sup> Bob Woodruff, "A Closer Look Blame Game," *ABC World News Tonight*, 6 September 2005.

public blames the government at every level. Seventy-two percent said the federal government did a fair or poor job.”<sup>352</sup>

Other coverage deemed the scene as a “political crisis”<sup>353</sup> sounded by “blistering criticism.”<sup>354</sup> The news media explicitly portrayed President Bush’s actions in particular terms: as means to defend the government’s response, address his political crisis, and attempt to save political face in the eyes of the American people. NBC anchor Brian Williams reported, “President Bush clearly seemed to be trying to get out ahead of this crisis.”<sup>355</sup> ABC reporter Charles Gibson stated, “President Bush was in the region again today. Another chance to demonstrate that he and his administration are on top of the relief effort.”<sup>356</sup>

Coverage throughout the drama continued to define the president’s actions as driven by the need to defend and answer the numerous criticisms about him and his administration’s inefficient response to the hurricane disaster. NBC’s Rosiland Jordan reported, “The president is fighting the impression that his administration’s waited too long to save the victims of Katrina. Today he took another step in hopes of changing that impression. Surrounded by his defense and homeland security chiefs, President Bush had more praise for the relief effort, but he said again the government let victims down.”<sup>357</sup> In another story, John Seigenthaler of NBC reiterated this message, stating, “More troops to the region and another trip to the Gulf Coast planned for the president. It is a stepped-up response to follow through with the president’s promise to fix what isn’t working. . . .”<sup>358</sup>

Additional reports stressed the president’s vindication of the administration’s actions. NBC reporter Tom Costello explained, “Administration officials today were on the ground, defending the government’s response but also getting a firsthand reaction and look at the rescue operations.”<sup>359</sup> CBS’s John Roberts extended this point, claiming, “Well, faced with that kind of criticism, the Bush administration has been playing defense, with the president making his

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<sup>352</sup> John Seigenthaler, "Hurricane Handling Affects Bush Poll Numbers," *NBC Nightly News*, 10 September 2005.

<sup>353</sup> Bob Schieffer, "Calls to 911 Reveal Opening Hours of Hurricane Katrina Disaster in New Orleans," *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2005.

<sup>354</sup> Seigenthaler, "Hurricane Handling."

<sup>355</sup> Brian Williams, "Democrats Call for Commission to Study Katrina," *NBC Nightly News*, 6 September 2005.

<sup>356</sup> Charles Gibson, "Boots on the Ground Reclaiming New Orleans," *ABC World News Tonight*, 5 September 2005.

<sup>357</sup> John Seigenthaler, "Some Critical of Response Time of Rescue Efforts," *NBC Nightly News*, 3 September 2005.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> John Seigenthaler, "Federal Government Called to Task for Being So Slow to Respond," *NBC Nightly News*, 4 September 2005.

second visit to this region tomorrow.”<sup>360</sup> Commenting on President Bush’s promise of accountability, NBC’s David Gregory reported, “Stung by blistering criticism of the government’s response to Katrina, the president for the first time today promised accountability. . . . But perhaps undermining that pledge, the president and his aides refuse to set a timeline for any inquiry. PRESIDENT BUSH: I think one of the things that people want us to do here is play a blame game. I – we got to solve problems. We’re problem solvers.”<sup>361</sup> Other reports reflected this ‘action in response to criticism’ theme. Reporting for CBS, Mika Brzezinski recapped the president’s actions in this light: “President Bush arrived in New Orleans late today, his third trip since the hurricane. . . . Tomorrow he’ll be in hard-hit Gulfport, Mississippi. It’s a mission to show the president is on top of the situation, as the administration faces criticism of its handling of the hurricane aftermath.”<sup>362</sup> Networks’ defined Bush’s actions as actively defending his administration while attempting to grasp control of the scene surrounding this drama.

Reports illuminated the uncontrollable scene of “political crisis,” or “political debacle” that surrounded the administration and implied that this scene influenced the president’s actions. David Gregory of NBC explicitly highlighted this point, stating: “But now, in the wake of a still unfolding human and political crisis, the president is fighting criticism that he is in anything but. . . . Meanwhile at the White House today a series of appearances were designed to help the president reassert control over the catastrophe. The message: that hurricane relief is now the top priority for a White House still reeling from criticism that it responded too late.”<sup>363</sup> CBS anchor Bob Schieffer reported, “President Bush went back to New Orleans today, but he didn’t find much good news. . . . Hours earlier, President Bush was in town, managing his own political crisis. This marked the president’s third trip to the city, his first actual on-the-ground survey of the devastation.”<sup>364</sup> Reporter Bill Plante of CBS explained, “This natural disaster in the Gulf States has become a political disaster for the Bush administration, and the president has become highly visible trying to turn around the perception that his team bungled relief efforts. By Friday, with the scope of the catastrophe apparent, the president called the results of relief efforts

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<sup>360</sup> John Roberts, “Bush White House Scrambling to Show They Are on Top of the Hurricane Recovery Effort and Pointing Blame at Local Officials,” *CBS Evening News*, 4 September 2005.

<sup>361</sup> Williams, “Democrats Call for Commission.”

<sup>362</sup> Mika Brzezinski, “President Bush Returning to New Orleans as Effort Is Made to Find out Why So Many Things There Went Wrong,” *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2005.

<sup>363</sup> Williams, “Democrats Call for Commission.”

<sup>364</sup> Schieffer, “Calls to 911.”

‘unacceptable,’ and White House image-makers, including Mr. Bush’s primary political adviser, Karl Rove, scrambled to position him as clearly in charge. . . .<sup>365</sup> Anchor John Roberts responded, “Too bad politics had to rear its ugly head in all of this.”<sup>366</sup>

Finally, numerous reports also associated Bush’s actions to his poll standings and approval ratings, attributing them to the quest to save his popularity and political face. ABC’s Dan Harris expressed this notion, stating, “This is Mr. Bush’s third visit to the Gulf Coast since Katrina, the storm that devastated this city and diminished his approval ratings.”<sup>367</sup> Kelly O’Donnell of NBC continued on that premise, reporting: “Today the president, with his own approval ratings at an all-time low, tried to direct attention away from Brown and back on survivors’ needs.”<sup>368</sup> Citing specific statistics, ABC reporter Elizabeth Vargas affirmed this connection: “And two weeks after Katrina, a new ABC News poll finds that 63 percent of Americans still believe the Federal government lacks a clear plan to deal with the devastation. President Bush was in Louisiana and Mississippi again today, trying to counter that perception.”<sup>369</sup>

News coverage depicted relief efforts as not addressing the real situation at hand: the suffering of the victims. Despite any recovery efforts and resources the president granted, whether it was through the agency of providing funds, shipping troops, viewing the devastation area, or supplying resources, the relief was never enough to help fix the scene of the disaster.

The first agency the president attempted to utilize in what the news media deemed as a delayed recovery effort was money. NBC’s Brian Williams reported, “President Bush will be asking Congress to authorize another 40 billion – with a “B” – dollars for the effort. It is no exaggeration to say that almost nothing here works. Nothing is the way it was before this storm eight days ago.”<sup>370</sup> CBS’s John Roberts commented, “The president and Congress are now talking about a \$40 billion aid package for this area, but the money won’t cover up the huge

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<sup>365</sup> Roberts, "Bush White House Scrambling."

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Terry Moran, "Progress and Problems Clean-up from Katrina Continues," *ABC World News Tonight*, 11 September 2005.

<sup>368</sup> Brian Williams, "Director of FEMA Michael Brown Resigns," *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2005.

<sup>369</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "Brown's out FEMA Director Mike Brown Resigns," *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2005.

<sup>370</sup> Brian Williams, "New Orleans Paramedics Donny Lirette and Dr. Christopher Najberg Helping Hurricane Katrina Flood," *NBC Nightly News*, 6 September 2005.

political battle under way over who is at fault here.”<sup>371</sup> Although the president was attempting to provide funds for the relief effort, it was deemed as insufficient by the news coverage, again not addressing what was truly going on in the Gulf Coast. ABC’s Charles Gibson highlighted, “Tonight, we look at the human cost and the monetary cost of Katrina. Both are and will be enormous. First, the money, President Bush said today he wants another \$40 billion to cover the next phase of recovery. Some in Congress say it’s going to cost \$150 billion before it’s all over.”<sup>372</sup> In a different report, Elizabeth Vargas of ABC continued, “A week and a half after Hurricane Katrina, the government and the country’s major relief agencies are still struggling in a major way to get hurricane victims the help they need, \$10 billion has already been spent on that effort, \$10 billion. And today, President Bush said it was only the beginning. PRESIDENT BUSH: The government is going to be with you for the long haul. In all the steps we take, our goal is not to simply provide benefits, but to make them easy and simple as possible to collect. VARGAS: In Houston today, it was anything but easy. Thousands and thousands of evacuees began lining up to get these, debit cards from the Red Cross.”<sup>373</sup>

Another agency in this insufficient response included providing more on-the-ground troops to help the Coast through this disaster. Although the president was sending military assistance in an attempt to help with the relief efforts, the media labeled it unproductive, not addressing the real concerns in the crisis. Quoting President Bush, ABC’s John Yang reported, “PRESIDENT BUSH: Many of our citizens simply are not getting the help they need, especially in New Orleans and that is unacceptable. YANG: This morning he ordered the Pentagon to double the active duty military forces in Louisiana and Mississippi. In three days, there will be more than 50,000 soldiers, marines, and guardsmen there. More than two and a half times as many as there were just this morning. But, not enough is being done to fix the damaged levees.”<sup>374</sup> While the president was providing military assistance, the news media considered it a fruitless endeavor.

No matter what the president provided, the same message echoed throughout the coverage: the response was not addressing the real problems on the coast generally caused by a

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<sup>371</sup> John Roberts, "Washington Officials Begin Finger-Pointing over Who Is to Blame for the Poor Response to Hurricane Katrina," *CBS Evening News*, 6 September 2005.

<sup>372</sup> Charles Gibson, "Largest Migration in 70 Years Evacuees Flown to Thirty States," *ABC World News Tonight*, 6 September 2005.

<sup>373</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "System Strained Debit Card Fiasco," *ABC World News Tonight*, 8 September 2005.

<sup>374</sup> Bob Woodruff, "Death Toll Potentially in the Thousands," *ABC World News Tonight*, 3 September 2005.

delayed response. CBS's Bob Orr stated, "By the time the storm had passed, parts of Mississippi and Louisiana were in ruins and New Orleans was drowning in desperation. Still, cries for federal help went largely unanswered for four days, forcing the president to the region."<sup>375</sup> Mark Mullen of NBC continued this description: "Late today, President Bush arrived in New Orleans, his third tour of the region since Katrina touched down. The president is hoping to reassure victims and local leaders that federal help is here and available. Is it too little too late? Some supplies and personnel have arrived, though there are still cries for help."<sup>376</sup> Again, stressing the tardiness and insufficiency of the president's visits and resources, CBS's Bob Schieffer and Byron Pitts reported, "President Bush went back to New Orleans today, but he didn't find much good news. . . BYRON PITTS: Hours earlier, President Bush was in town, managing his own political crisis. This marked the president's third trip to the city, his first actual on-the-ground survey of the devastation. But if he was hoping to reach out to the citizens of New Orleans, he was too late, since most of the victims are out of town, evacuated days ago."<sup>377</sup>

Acting within this uncontrollable scene with a delayed response and insufficient agency was an agent characterized as a weak leader, contradicting himself, not addressing incompetence within the situation, and clearly out of touch with the reality of the crisis. Throughout their coverage, the networks cited numerous occasions where the president's statements or actions were contradictory. ABC's Dan Harris explained, "President Bush speaking at the airport in New Orleans after having concluded an aerial tour of the massive destruction from Hurricane Katrina. The president started this day at the White House, sounding a less optimistic note, saying that the rescue, the rescue efforts this far had not been acceptable. He ended the day in that press conference there talking about a flow of progress, saying that good progress had been made and he said that the City of New Orleans will rise again."<sup>378</sup>

In a report about Michael Brown and FEMA, NBC reporter David Gregory focused on the shortcomings of Brown, citing his inexperience, appointed to the position solely because of his college roommate, and stating that these issues probably played a significant role in his failure in this situation. After this explanation, then Gregory states, "However, on Friday, the

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<sup>375</sup> John Roberts, "FEMA Chief Michael Brown Reassigned to Washington, Coast Guard Official Takes over Katrina Relief Efforts," *CBS Evening News*, 9 September 2005.

<sup>376</sup> John Seigenthaler, "Some Businesses in New Orleans Opening, Including a Hotel with Power, as President Bush Arrives for Third Tour," *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2005.

<sup>377</sup> Schieffer, "Calls to 911."

<sup>378</sup> Dan Harris, "Special Report," *ABC World News Tonight*, 2 September 2005.

president expressed confidence in Brown. PRESIDENT BUSH: Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job. The FEMA director is working 24/7."<sup>379</sup> Gloria Borger of CBS quoted the president claiming, "PRESIDENT BUSH: Bureaucracy's not going to stand in the way of getting the job done for the people." However immediately following the quote, Borger commented, "But in fact, bureaucracy may have been responsible for a devastating delay in the rescue effort... One Air Force Reserve colonel says his unit was crippled by red tape."<sup>380</sup>

Other reports continued this depiction of the president's inconsistencies. ABC reporter Terry Moran explained, "The president promised a thorough review of the government's failures. . . But all today, the White House refused to discuss holding anyone accountable."<sup>381</sup> Elizabeth Vargas of ABC continued, "Heads didn't exactly roll today. But they might as well have. The man in charge of the Federal Emergency Agency, FEMA, will no longer be in charge of the single biggest relief effort the agency, or the country, has ever undertaken. Today, the Bush administration insisted that Michael Brown is keeping his job. That he is just being sent back to Washington to help plan for future disasters. . . It was just a week ago that Brown got a folksy "atta boy" from the president. PRESIDENT BUSH: And Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job."<sup>382</sup> CBS reporter Bill Whitaker openly stated that the president was sending mixed signals: "And President George W. Bush who last week said the US didn't need foreign help, this week said thank you. PRESIDENT BUSH: In this time of struggle, the American people need to know we're not struggling alone. WHITAKER: But some critics say the usually tough-talking Bush administration is sending mixed signals."<sup>383</sup>

Brown's resignation shortly followed this story, which sent even more ambiguous messages. This was the instance that Brown's "pat on the back" quote issued by the president on the ground in Louisiana continuously came back to haunt him. NBC's Kelly O'Donnell reported, "[T]he president distanced himself from the biggest political casualty of the Katrina disaster, FEMA director Michael Brown, who submitted his resignation today. . . Only 10 days ago, Mr.

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<sup>379</sup> John Seigenthaler, "FEMA Director Michael Brown Drawing Criticism for Rescue Efforts in Louisiana," *NBC Nightly News*, 4 September 2005.

<sup>380</sup> Roberts, "Washington Officials."

<sup>381</sup> Charles Gibson, "Dealing with Disaster White House Damage Control," *ABC World News Tonight*, 6 September 2005.

<sup>382</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "FEMA Michael Brown Removed from Katrina Relief," *ABC World News tonight*, 9 September 2005.

<sup>383</sup> Russ Mitchell, "New Figures out Today Showing Damage Estimates from Hurricane Katrina Could Climb to \$200 Billion and Top More Than \$300 Billion," *CBS Evening News*, 10 September 2005.

Bush stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Brown. PRES BUSH: Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job."<sup>384</sup> Echoing this coverage, CBS reporter Jim Stewart assessed, "Rarely has White House favorite fallen so fast. Little more than a week ago, FEMA Director Mike Brown was lavished with praise for his job on Hurricane Katrina. The president even called him by nickname. PRESIDENT BUSH: And, Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job. STEWART: But a week later, Brown had been replaced."<sup>385</sup>

A second characteristic of the agent in this drama was incompetence. As ABC's John Yang explained, "It's been six days since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and the Bush Administration is playing catch up. In a rare live broadcast of his weekly radio address, the president himself acknowledged the response is still falling short."<sup>386</sup> CBS anchor Bob Schieffer furthered this case, reporting, "If the mayor is right when he says 10,000 that will be more than three times the death toll on 9/11. President Bush went back to the area today, but there is so little coordination and so much friction between the national and local officials, that the governor's office learned of the president's itinerary from a news reporter."<sup>387</sup>

Numerous reports quoted hurricane survivors and other government officials commenting on the president's lack of effectiveness. NBC reporter David Gregory alluded to Senator Mary Landrieu stating, "Today, the president was again the target of criticism for the government's response to Katrina. SENATOR MARY LANDRIEU: When the people of Louisiana called for help, they were told, 'get behind the people of Iraq.'"<sup>388</sup> Bob Schieffer of CBS reported, "Back in Washington, the president said there will be time enough to pass judgment later. PRESIDENT BUSH: I think one of the things that people want us to do here is play a blame game. We got to solve problems; we're problem-solvers. There'll be ample time for people to figure out what went right and what went wrong. SCHIEFFER: No, said Aaron Broussard, Washington still doesn't hear us. Heads should roll and roll now. Take whatever idiot they have at the top of whatever agency, give me a better idiot. You know, give me a caring idiot, give me a sensitive idiot, just don't give me the same idiot."<sup>389</sup> NBC's Mark Mullen quoted the mayor of New

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<sup>384</sup> Williams, "Director of FEMA."

<sup>385</sup> Bob Schieffer, "FEMA Director Michael Brow Resigns," *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2005.

<sup>386</sup> Woodruff, "Death Toll."

<sup>387</sup> Bob Schieffer, "Recovery Effort Finally Seems to Be Gaining Traction in New Orleans," *CBS Evening News*, 5 September 2005.

<sup>388</sup> Brian Williams, "Bush Asks Congress for More Aid to Help Louisiana," *NBC Nightly News*, 7 September 2005.

<sup>389</sup> Bob Schieffer, "White House and Louisiana Officials in Disagreement over Where the Blame Lies for the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina," *CBS Evening News*, 6 September 2005.

Orleans, stating, “MAYOR RAY NAGIN: I think the president, for some reason, probably did not understand the full magnitude of this – this catastrophe on the front end.”<sup>390</sup>

Other coverage specifically spoke to the lack of confidence in the president as a leader. CBS reporter Gloria Borger explained, “There’s no rallying around the president as there was after 9/11. This time, the enemy is incompetence. . . . No matter who was at fault, a new CBS poll shows that two out of three Americans think the president himself responded too slowly. His leadership rating usually his strong suit is the lowest of his presidency, a full 35 points less than it was after 9/11. . . . The president declared September 16<sup>th</sup> a national day of prayer, but national unity may be harder to come by.”<sup>391</sup> John Brzezinski of CBS recounted, “The president is known for taking control in times of disaster, like 9/11. What happened here? Why is he coming off to some as so tone deaf? JOIE CHEN: Well Mika, a couple of things come to mind right off. You know some of the people who were really his inner circle – Karen Hughes, Condoleezza Rice – they no longer work right here in the West Wing with the president. Last week, it turns out Karl Rove was out sick for a few days. So he didn’t have his regular sounding boards. The other thing is that the president is known for being a big-picture type of guy. Leave the details to others. And in this case, it seems that maybe the bubble was drawn a little bit too tight. It left him looking like he was a little out of touch, and it’s left a lot of Americans feeling that he hasn’t handled the crisis well.”<sup>392</sup>

All of this coverage of the agent culminated to the classification of the president as being “out of touch” with reality and the situation around him. When talking about the scene in New Orleans, CBS’s John Roberts interviewed Wendell Shingler, the Director of the Federal Protective Services, who described it as “a mess.” Shingler explained, “It was a mess. Because there was just so much confusion, so much devastation, the need for law enforcement was vital.” Roberts responded, “It’s a scene President Bush didn’t witness today. He returned to Louisiana, but only to Baton Rouge to meet with survivors. Later in Mississippi, he insisted he’s got the picture. PRESIDENT BUSH: I understand the damage. I understand the devastation. I understand the destruction. I understand how long it’s going to take and we’re with you.”<sup>393</sup> The news media depicted Bush as being partially blind to his surroundings. ABC anchor Bob

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<sup>390</sup> Seigenthaler, "Some Businesses in New Orleans Opening."

<sup>391</sup> John Roberts, "Criticism of Governmental Response to Hurricane Katrina Continues, Investigation Planned," *CBS Evening News*, 8 September 2005.

<sup>392</sup> Brzezinski, "President Bush Returning."

<sup>393</sup> Schieffer, "Recovery Effort."

Woodruff explained, "President Bush came to the hurricane zone today and acknowledged what many people have been saying for days. The results of this relief effort are unacceptable."<sup>394</sup>

The news media cited another government official, Senate Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, claiming Bush was out of touch with reality: "When I said to the president that he should fire Michael Brown, he said, 'Why would I do that?' I said, 'Because of all that went wrong, with all that didn't go right last week.' And he said, 'What didn't go right?' Oblivious, in denial, dangerous."<sup>395</sup> The discussion about Brown continued throughout the coverage. Anchor Bob Schieffer of CBS pointed out, "The criticism just keeps coming for the federal government for its handling of Hurricane Katrina. And one of the main targets is Michael Brown, the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA. GLORIA BORGER: In grading the job FEMA Director Michael Brown is doing, it's hard to find anyone echoing the president's assessment. PRES BUSH: And, Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job."<sup>396</sup> NBC reporter David Gregory reiterated this message, highlighting Bush's shortcomings of being cognizant of what was going on in his country: "But the only thing that's clear is that a lot has changed since the president appeared with his FEMA director a week ago in the hurricane zone. PRESIDENT BUSH: And, Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job. GREGORY: The first week of this disaster amounted to a split screen America. Officials saying the situation was in hand while the television pictures told the horrifying story of death and devastation."<sup>397</sup> Reporter Joie Chen of CBS revealed, "On Wednesday, the president flew over the devastation, but not until Friday, as he was headed to the region for a firsthand look did he reportedly see a worst-of-the-worst reel of TV newscasts, put together to persuade him of the scope of the disaster."<sup>398</sup> CBS's Bob Schieffer, following this same line of criticism, speculated that the public "had to wonder if Washington officials and the people in the disaster area were even talking about the same problem."<sup>399</sup>

***Intermission: Analysis and Discussion.*** With their ongoing coverage, the networks continued to unfold the storyline within this drama, extending the scene and characterization of

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<sup>394</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "President Visits Hurricane Zone," *ABC World News Tonight*, 2 September 2005.

<sup>395</sup> Bob Schieffer, "Continuing Criticism of FEMA Director Michael Brown," *CBS Evening News*, 7 September 2005.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>397</sup> Brian Williams, "FEMA Director Michael Brown Relieved from Hurricane Katrina Disaster Duties," *NBC Nightly News*, 9 September 2005.

<sup>398</sup> Brzezinski, "President Bush Returning."

<sup>399</sup> Schieffer, "White House and Louisiana Officials in Disagreement."

the agent. The news media extended the illustration of the scene by comparing it to the events of September 11 and deeming it an uncontrollable “political crisis” for the agent. They described the agent as responding to this apolitical scene rather than responding to the scene of devastation and destruction that the victims suffered within (scene-act). Because the response (act) focused on the political realm rather than what was actually happening on the ground (scene), the agencies seemed arbitrary and the agent, President Bush, was conveyed as being out of touch with reality (scene-act-agent). According to the coverage, the crisis for President Bush was his falling poll numbers, not the delayed response or the suffering victims.

The president did little to counter this characterization. First, the news media visibly depicted the federal government’s response efforts as delayed, ineffective, and inefficient. After traveling down to the Gulf region and viewing the devastation first-hand, seeing the lack of relief, and speaking to the victims about their unmet needs, President Bush praised the person in charge of the federal relief efforts. Amidst the devastation and noticeably inept response, the president put his arm around FEMA Director Brown in Mobile, Alabama, giving him an “atta-boy” pat on the back and stating, “Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job.” This statement was just as symbolic as the president flying over the unfolding crisis in Act I. He clearly did not acknowledge that the relief efforts and his surrogate agent had in some sense failed due to the delay of resources reaching the Gulf region. Reinforcing this denial and defense, on numerous occasions the president claimed, “*If* it’s not going exactly right, we’re going to make it go exactly right. *If* there’s problems, we’re going to address the problems. And that’s what I’ve come down to assure people of.” This designation of “if” created the impression that the president did not consider what was occurring on the Gulf Coast, and more specifically New Orleans, as a problem. Naming the events at the Superdome as an “issue” the president failed to address the situation and scene surrounding the crisis. These instances created a clear contradiction between the messages created by the president and the news media. His depictions of the crisis did not match what the media deemed important.

The contradiction in the description of the situation, which the news media undoubtedly conveyed, clearly presented an agent who was now present, however visibly out of touch with reality and solely reacting to the crisis out of defense of his administration. The news media painted the picture of an uncontrollable scene that the agent just could not grasp. Rather than acting in the scene, President Bush was reacting. While the news media described a scene of

death and destruction, deeming it the real crisis, they described a president who was contradictory, ineffective, and most of all, out of touch with reality (scene-act-agent).

### **ACT III: *The star shows up, too little too late...***

The analysis below reviews the president's statements and news coverage during the two days immediately leading up to the president's speech.<sup>400</sup> This exposes the final thoughts of the news media prior to the president's address to the nation.

***The President's Script.*** On September 13, President Bush made an unprecedented announcement. In a news conference with President Jalal Talabani of the Iraqi transitional government, the president stood side by side with the interim president and discussed the situation in Iraq. When opening the floor to questions, he announced, "A couple of questions, two each." The first question asked concerned the events of Hurricane Katrina: "Mr. President, given what happened with Katrina, shouldn't Americans be concerned if their Government isn't prepared to respond to another disaster or even a terrorist attack?" After a brief pause, the president responded, "Katrina exposed serious problems in our response capability at all levels of government. And to the extent that the Federal Government didn't fully do its job right, I take responsibility." He continued, "I want to know what went right and what went wrong. I want to know how to better cooperate with State and local government, to be able to answer that very question that you asked." The president contended that it was in our national interest to find out exactly what "went on" and that he was not going to defend the process, but stressed he was definitely going to defend the people who were on the frontline, including the Coast Guard, and any first-responders whether they were State or local. He explained, "There's a lot of people that are—have done a lot of hard work to save lives." Finally, he stated, "And so, I want to know what went right and what went wrong, to address those."<sup>401</sup>

Earlier that afternoon, the White House announced the president would address the nation about Hurricane Katrina disaster on Thursday night, September 15, at 9 p.m. ET. According to Press Secretary Scott McClellan, "The president will talk to the American people about the

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<sup>400</sup> Act II began on September 13, 2005 and ended with September 15, 2005.

<sup>401</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," 1388.

recovery and the way forward on the longer-term rebuilding."<sup>402</sup> The president did not comment on Hurricane Katrina again until the address.

*News Media's Script.* The news coverage took yet another slight shift in focus following the announcement of the speech and the president's statement. Although the coverage still highlighted the crisis at hand, the media's description of the agent and scene continued to expand as the last part of the drama unfolded prior to the speech. ABC's Elizabeth Vargas reported, "An extraordinary admission from President Bush. He takes responsibility for the government's failures after Katrina, and wonders whether the country is prepared for another disaster."<sup>403</sup> The news media defined the president taking responsibility for the delayed response as a rare occurrence. Labeling the response as a reaction to criticism, NBC reporter David Gregory explained, "But the war has, for now, been overshadowed by crisis at home. Under fire for the administration's botched response to Katrina, Mr. Bush today took the rare step of admitting a mistake, saying the storm exposed serious problems in the government's response capability."<sup>404</sup> In a similar report, Terry Moran of ABC pointed out, "An extraordinary moment in this presidency George W. Bush has never said anything like this before. He's a man who does not like to look back or admit mistakes. He did both today. Appearing with Iraq's president, Mr. Bush, in what seemed to be a difficult moment for him, acknowledged his administration's failures and accepted a share of the blame. . . And when, when asked directly if given the failures during Katrina, the US government is prepared to respond today to a major terrorist attack or disaster, Mr. Bush could not say yes. . . The president's rare expression of contrition comes as his public support is hemorrhaging badly, even among his base, 57 percent of Americans now disapprove of his performance as president, according to the latest ABC News poll. And that negative view is up across the board. . . By acknowledging all of the problems, and taking responsibility for them, Mr. Bush has found one point of common ground with his fiercest critics, there's a lot of work to be done."<sup>405</sup>

With the act of accepting responsibility taking the spotlight, reports began centering on an agent who finally understood the magnitude of the crises they had been describing all along;

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<sup>402</sup> John King and Suzanne Malveaux, "Bush: 'I Take Responsibility' for Federal Failures after Katrina," review of Reviewed Item, *CNN.com*, (2005), <http://www.cnn.com/2005/POLITICS/09/13/katrina.washington/index.html>.

<sup>403</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "Admission from President Bush," *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2005.

<sup>404</sup> Brian Williams, "President Bush Takes Responsibility for Federal Government's Delay Helping Hurricane Katrina Victims," *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2005.

<sup>405</sup> Elizabeth Vargas, "Presidential Apology Bush Takes Responsibility for Hurricane Failures," *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2005.

however, they questioned if this epiphany had come too late to help the victims or fulfill his purpose of recovering his plummeting approval ratings. NBC anchor Brian Williams explained, "This week's Newsweek magazine reports that President Bush's staff put together a DVD for him to watch while on Air Force One on his first trip down to see the aftermath on the ground of Katrina. The DVD featured a compilation of evening newscasts including this one. After watching it, the president understood the scope of the tragedy and the failure of the response. Since then a lot has changed. The top man at FEMA is out, and today the president said federal responsibility is his, and he'll say it again to the nation this week."<sup>406</sup> Elizabeth Vargas of ABC continued, "President Bush was here at the White House today, after returning from three Hurricane zones. For the first time, he took ultimate responsibility for the Federal government's failures in the wake of Katrina. Mr. Bush also admitted what people all over the country have been saying for the last two weeks, namely, that there are serious problems with the way the government responded to disasters."<sup>407</sup> NBC's David Gregory pointed out, "It's a huge shift, for an administration and particularly for a president who is loathe to admit mistakes. . . Now the White House understands there has to be accountability. They've governed through 9/11. They witnessed the tsunami. And there's a lot of questions about why this administration, on the president's own admission, dropped the ball when it came to the biggest natural disaster in the history of this country."<sup>408</sup>

Coverage leading up to the evening of the speech continued to stress the president's admissions, while discussing the advance copy of the speech and questioning if it was going to be enough or deemed yet another delayed response. ABC anchor Bob Woodruff reported, "President Bush ambitious plan to rebuild the Gulf Coast. A huge amount of money, but can he rebuild his administrations reputation? He speaks to the nation from New Orleans tonight."<sup>409</sup> Informing the audience about the president's approval ratings, NBC's *Meet the Press*'s Tim Russert exclaimed, "[This has been] the lowest favorable rating in the five-year presidency of George Bush." He continued by stating, "Which leads us to our program note. We're going back to New Orleans. This broadcast will originate from there tomorrow night and Friday evening. Then at 9:00 Eastern Time tomorrow night, NBC News will have live coverage of President

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<sup>406</sup> Williams, "President Bush Takes Responsibility."

<sup>407</sup> Vargas, "Presidential Apology."

<sup>408</sup> Williams, "President Bush Takes Responsibility."

<sup>409</sup> Bob Woodruff, "President Bush's Ambitious Plan to Rebuild the Gulf Coast," *ABC World News Tonight*, 15 September 2005.

Bush's address to the nation on Hurricane Katrina."<sup>410</sup> Directly highlighting the question, David Gregory of NBC pointed out, "According to an advanced copy of the president's speech, Mr. Bush will refer to the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast region as one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen, and he will promise that federal government will cover most of the costs. With approval of his leadership at the lowest point of his presidency, Mr. Bush made his fourth visit to the hurricane zone. . . Tonight's speech is one critics say Mr. Bush should have made sooner."<sup>411</sup>

***Intermission: Analysis and Discussion.*** In the final days of news coverage leading up to the speech, the news media highlighted an agent coming to terms with the scene surrounding him. At last, the agent, President Bush, acknowledged that there was an actual problem (act), partially pertaining to the federal government under his command, which was a rarity for the president. However, after taking the first step of recognizing there was more than an "issue" surrounding the situation, the media questioned if the president's acknowledgment of responsibility (act) and agencies of investigation and speechmaking (agency) were too late for the agent to regain control of the crisis (scene) that for so long had controlled him (scene-act; scene-agency). They depicted President Bush's (agent) statement of responsibility (act) as a reaction to the criticism (scene) with a purpose to boost his confidence and credibility with the American public.

### **The Monolog: President's Address to the Nation**

On September 15, seventeen days after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, the president and his administration decided to address the entire nation about the natural disaster and the relief effort debacle that continued to unfold.<sup>412</sup> Broadcasting live from Jackson Square, New Orleans, President Bush spoke to the nation in his first direct, televised statement to explain the situation at hand and describe what the government and administration was going to do in response to the crisis. At this point, shelters that were not equipped to handle the massive numbers of people needing food, water, and toiletries continued to house victims. The affected

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<sup>410</sup> Brian Williams, "NBC News/Wall Street Journal Polls Shows President Bush Has Lowest Favorable Ratings in Presidency," *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2005.

<sup>411</sup> Brian Williams, "Advanced Copy of President Bush's Speech Promises Help to Hurricane Katrina Victims," *NBC Nightly News*, 15 September 2005.

<sup>412</sup> George W. Bush, "President Discusses Hurricane Relief in Address to the Nation," (2005). See Appendix 1-B for a copy of the speech.

areas were still in shock, wondering why they had received so little assistance, how they were going to recover from this horrific event, and left with feelings of hopeless and the anguish of being forgotten. As one reporter stated, “He has the opportunity tonight [September 15] to make Americans think that he is the leader that took them through 9/11. Their sense of that has been often absent in the last couple of weeks.”<sup>413</sup>

*The President’s Script.* The president began the speech by instantly setting the scene for the drama. The first evidence of this was the immediate physical scene of the speech. President Bush selected the storm-wrenched New Orleans for the location of the address, in an attempt to set a solemn tone for the address. Extending this throughout the speech, the president painted the current condition of the devastated areas. He promptly began the speech by describing the scene of his current location, New Orleans, Louisiana. “Good evening. I am speaking to you from the city of New Orleans – nearly empty, still partly under water, and waiting for life and hope to return. Eastward from Lake Pontchartrain, across the Mississippi coast, to Alabama into Florida, millions of lives were changed in a day by a cruel and wasteful storm.”<sup>414</sup> The president continued, “In the aftermath, we have seen fellow citizens left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones, and grieving for the dead, and looking for meaning in a tragedy that seems so blind and random. We’ve also witnessed the kind of desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know – fellow Americans calling out for food and water, vulnerable people left at the mercy of criminals who had no mercy, and the bodies of the dead lying uncovered and untended in the streets.”<sup>415</sup> This was the first time, in light of recent events, that he explicitly acknowledged amount of suffering that was taking place in the Gulf Coast. Detailing the devastation and destruction that the storm had left along the Gulf Coast, he explained, “Along this coast, for mile after mile, the wind and water swept the land clean. In Mississippi, many thousands of houses were damaged or destroyed. In New Orleans and surrounding parishes, more than a quarter-million houses are no longer safe to live in. Hundreds of thousands of people from across this region will need to find longer-termed housing.”<sup>416</sup> He also portrayed the racial inequality exposed by the disaster. “As all of us saw on television,

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<sup>413</sup> Williams, "Advanced Copy of Speech."

<sup>414</sup> Bush, "President Addresses Hurricane Relief," ¶1.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., ¶2.

<sup>416</sup> Ibid., ¶12.

there's also some deep persistent poverty in this region, as well. That poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America.”<sup>417</sup>

President Bush went on to illustrate the various relief and rescue efforts that were currently taking place. “The work of rescue is largely finished: the work of recovery is moving forward. In nearly all of Mississippi, electric power has been restored. Trade is starting to return to the Port of New Orleans. . . All major gasoline pipelines are now in operation. . . breaks in the levees have been closed, the pumps are running, and the water here in New Orleans is receding by the hour.”<sup>418</sup>

Using narratives, he also described the elements of hope in this scene of devastation, focusing on the first-responders and victims who were assisting others. He exclaimed, “These days of sorrow and outrage have also been marked by acts of courage and kindness that make all Americans proud. . . Many first responders were victims themselves, wounded healers, with a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. When I met Steve Scott of the Biloxi Fire Department, he and his colleagues were conducting a house-to-house search for survivors. Steve told me this: “I lost my house and I lost my cars, but I still got my family... and I still got my spirit.””<sup>419</sup> He highlighted the victims in the scene, giving them credit and praise for surviving through the storm and attesting to their strength and endurance. “Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost much, and suffered much, and given to the limit of their power, we are seeing that same spirit – a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away, and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before.”<sup>420</sup> Other organizations commended by the president included America’s “armies of compassion,” such as the non-profits and faith-based groups assisting the victims. “It is the armies of compassion – charities and houses of worship and idealistic men and women – that give our reconstruction efforts its humanity. They offer to those who hurt a friendly face, an arm around the shoulder, and the reassurance that in hard times, they can count on someone who cares. By land, by sea, and by air, good people wanting to make a difference deployed to the Gulf Coast, and they’ve been working around the clock ever since.”<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid., ¶18.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., ¶7.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., ¶4.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., ¶5.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., ¶25.

After initially setting the scene, it became evident that the main agent in this drama was the Bush administration, i.e. the federal government, with a driving purpose of rebuilding the Gulf Coast “bigger and better than before.” This agent was actively pursuing whatever it took in what the president labeled as the “largest reconstruction effort the world has ever seen.” President Bush explained, “Tonight so many victims of the hurricane and the flood are far from home and friends and familiar things. You need to know that our whole nation cares about you, and in the journey ahead, you’re not alone. To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country. To every person who has served and sacrificed in this emergency, I offer the gratitude of our country. And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes, to help the citizens rebuild their communities and their lives. And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know there is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again.”<sup>422</sup> Throughout the speech, he used pronouns such as “we” and “our” to refer to the government and administration. “Our first commitment. . . We need to know who you are. . . In addition, we’re taking steps to ensure that evacuees do not have to travel. . . Our goal is to get people out of the shelters by the middle of October. . .”<sup>423</sup> He characterized the agent as willing to do whatever it takes to rebuild the Gulf Coast.

According to President Bush, the agent, or the government, was taking vigorous measures in the relief effort, including making commitments, implementing policies, and reexamining already existing agencies that had failed. The three commitments of the government he presented included meeting the “immediate needs of those who had to feel their homes,”<sup>424</sup> helping “the citizens of the Gulf Coast overcome this disaster, put their lives back together, and rebuild their communities,”<sup>425</sup> and finally rebuilding the communities “even better and stronger than before.”<sup>426</sup> He introduced various plans of action that the federal government would embark on in order to help with the recovery effort. The three major policies included: the creation of the Gulf Opportunity Zone, which would “provide immediate incentives for job-creating investment, tax relief for small businesses, incentives to companies that create jobs, and loans and loan

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid., ¶6.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., ¶8-10.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., ¶9.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., ¶13.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., ¶19.

guarantees for small businesses;”<sup>427</sup> the creation of Worker Recovery Accounts, in which the “federal government would provide accounts of up to \$5,000, which these evacuees could draw upon for job training and education to help them get a good job, and for child care expenses during their job;”<sup>428</sup> and the implementation of the Urban Homesteading Act, which would “identify property in the region owned by the federal government, and provide building sites to low-income citizens free of charge.”<sup>429</sup> In addition to discussing the agencies of policy and legislation, President Bush discussed each of the government entities that were going to insure the adherence to these plans. The bodies mentioned for implementation included the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration, Army Corps of Engineers, and even the Postal Service.

The president continued to assure the American people that the government would provide direct assistance to the victims of this devastating storm, providing housing, food, healthcare, and other necessities. “I have signed an order providing immediate assistance to the people in the disaster area. As of today, more than 500,000 evacuee families have gotten emergency help to pay for food, clothing, and other essentials.”<sup>430</sup> He continued, “In addition, we’re beginning to bring in mobile homes and trailers for temporary use. To relieve the burden on local health care facilities in the region, we’re sending extra doctors and nurses to these areas. We’re also providing money that can be used to cover overtime pay for police and fire departments while the cities and towns rebuild.”<sup>431</sup> In addition, he committed the government not only to rebuilding the area destroyed by the hurricane, but ensured the victims that the government would enact a plan enabling the region to rebuild bigger and better. “When communities are rebuilt, they must be even better and stronger than before the storm. . . We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action. . . When the streets are rebuilt, there should be many new businesses, including minority-owned businesses, along those streets. When houses are rebuilt, more families should own, not rent those houses. When the regional economy revives, local people should be prepared for the jobs being created.”<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Ibid., ¶22.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., ¶23.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., ¶24.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid., ¶9.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., ¶14.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid., ¶18.

Finally, the president described an agent who was fully aware of the current situation and was on a quest to find out what went wrong with the system. “The government of this nation will do its part as well. Our cities must have clear and up-to-date plans for responding to natural disasters, and disease outbreaks or a terrorist attack, for evacuating large numbers of people in an emergency, and for providing the food and water and security they would need. In a time of terror threats and weapons of mass destruction, the danger to our citizens reaches much wider than a fault line or a flood plain. I consider detailed emergency planning to be a national security priority, and therefore, I’ve ordered the Department of Homeland Security to undertake an immediate review, in cooperation with local counterparts, of emergency plans in every major city in America.”<sup>433</sup> The president even went as far as taking on the agent’s faults, and assuming responsibility for the federal government’s response: “Four years after the frightening experience of September 11, Americans have every right to expect a more effective response in a time of emergency. When the federal government fails to meet such an obligation, I, as President, am responsible for the problem, and for the solution.”<sup>434</sup>

***Intermission: Analysis and Discussion.*** Throughout this speech, the president greatly detailed the scene of the drama. Fully describing the destruction, devastation and the victims it caused, explaining the current relief efforts, and praising those participating in the scene of the relief efforts, the president portrayed an agent, the federal government, who was dedicated to the act of the “largest reconstruction effort the world has ever seen.” Utilizing whatever means necessary, including the agencies of policies, legislations, and funding, the government was striving for a purpose of rebuilding the Gulf Coast “bigger and better than before.” According to the president, the agent was truly committed to helping the victims no matter what the cost, and provided specific agencies for accomplishing this act (agent-act). The driving agent and scene, along with the stated act and purpose, led to the unveiling of the ultimate motive of the speech, to demonstrate to the American public that the Bush administration and the federal government not only understood the situation at hand, but also had a handle on the crisis.

For the first time since the crisis began, the president described a scene similar to the news media. Bush pointed out that victims had experienced “desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know – fellow Americans calling out for food and

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid., ¶30.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

water, vulnerable people left at the mercy of criminals who had no mercy, and bodies of the dead lying uncovered and untended in the streets.”<sup>435</sup> He illustrated the horrible damage the hurricane caused, the effects it had on the people living in the area, and the needs this disaster created for the Gulf Coast: “Hundreds of thousands of people from across his region will need to find longer-term housing.”<sup>436</sup> However, the president also attested to the positive aspects occurring in the scene, highlighting narratives of victims helping other victims and the successes of the current relief efforts taking place. “The work of rescue is largely finished; the work of recovery is moving forward.”<sup>437</sup> By depicting the good, the bad, and the ugly of the scene, the president was presenting evidence calling for the agent’s act and purpose, “rebuilding bigger and better” in the largest rebuilding effort anyone had ever seen. Secondly, by finally acknowledging the full scope of the scene with the stated purpose at hand, the president was able to achieve the motive of the speech, signifying to the American public that the government (agent) had fully grasped and controlled crisis (agent-scene) and had a definite plan (act and agency) for the relief effort (purpose). The agent was now controlling the scene.

### **Post-News Coverage: The finale**

Following the speech, there was a distinct shift in the focus of news coverage pertaining to president’s response to Hurricane Katrina.<sup>438</sup> Although there were only five stories pertaining to Hurricane Katrina and the president, a consistent theme ran throughout all of them: the cost of the relief effort.<sup>439</sup>

*News Media Script.* Coverage of the scene continued to describe the physical situation in the devastated areas. NBC’s Brian Williams summarized the news media’s depiction very well: “And good evening again from New Orleans, the city where the president addressed the nation last night, the population hub of this still crippled region that’s now going to be the center of a massive reconstruction project that may cost \$200 billion. The president described the

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<sup>435</sup> Ibid., ¶2.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., ¶12.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., ¶7.

<sup>438</sup> Post-coverage began on September 16, 2005 and ended with September 17, 2005.

<sup>439</sup> The president only spoke once during the two days following the speech. This utterance was his address at the Washington National Cathedral on the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance service for the Hurricane Katrina victims. Because this is not the focus of this study, nor was it a significant topic of discussion in the network news coverage, this paper will not address its contents. However, future analysis on the National Day of Prayer address may further enlighten this study.

government response as inadequate, people died in this city as a result. As we go on the air tonight, about 40 percent of the city of New Orleans is still under water. And we got a new measure today of the toll of this catastrophe. In a survey of New Orleans evacuees who are now living in shelters in Houston, 84 percent said their homes have been either seriously damaged or destroyed entirely. And many say they will not be coming back here, even after the massive reconstruction effort.”<sup>440</sup> Labeled as the “largest reconstruction effort the world has ever seen,” coverage of the scene illustrated the destruction and devastation the people in the area continued to face; however, unlike the pre-speech coverage, post-speech reports focused on the costs of the recovery efforts. Rosiland Jordan of NBC reported, “The rebuilding of cities and town and businesses along the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast has begun, a challenge some experts say is much larger than most people in government realize. RICHARD ROSAN (Urban Land Institute): Whole communities have been wiped out, whole areas have been devastated. Infrastructures have been totally damaged to the point where some of them probably don't work at all.”<sup>441</sup> She continued, “White House budget officials say the president's job creation and education plans announced Thursday night could cost about \$4 billion. But one conservative think tank says the final bill could be more than \$200 billion.”<sup>442</sup>

Within this scene, the news media portrayed President Bush as being committed to the relief effort, but commented that he was still ambiguous and inflexible on how to accomplish this task. As Amy Robach of NBC reported, “President Bush has committed to rebuild the devastated Gulf Coast, but no specific money has yet been committed to the effort.”<sup>443</sup> As CBS’s John Roberts accounted, the president planned to rebuild the hurricane-ravaged area at all costs: “Today the White House got cracking on its plans for a massive rebuilding effort--repair the infrastructure, roads, bridges, schools and water systems; offer tax breaks to businesses for start-up, repair or expansion; give away vacant federally owned housing and building lots to people who have lost their homes; and set up \$5,000 worker recovery accounts for the unemployed to get job training, child care and transportation. Where would the money come from? Taxpayers,

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<sup>440</sup> Brian Williams, "President Bush Pledges to Rebuild New Orleans," *NBC Nightly News*, 16 September 2005.

<sup>441</sup> Amy Robach, "Questions Raised About the Cost of Rebuilding Areas Hit by Katrina," *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2005.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

said the White House today. It could add \$200 billion to the deficit, a figure Republican budget hawks complain is out of control. . . Mr. Bush ruled out a tax hike.”<sup>444</sup>

A dominant question posed by the news media inquired about the monetary source of the Katrina relief efforts. CBS anchor Bob Schieffer pointed out, “The president said today he is convinced there's no need for a tax hike but that other programs may have to be cut.”<sup>445</sup> NBC reporter Rosiland Jordan stated, “The Bush administration is sticking to its guns, committed to cutting both spending and taxes. But what it hasn't committed to yet is finding the money to pay for the rebuilding after Katrina.”<sup>446</sup> David Gregory of NBC explained, “Americans will pay a steep price to rebuild the Gulf Coast region after Katrina. The president today said the country can handle it, but he hasn't spelled out exactly how we can afford it. After pledging to launch the largest reconstruction effort the world has ever seen, today the president was asked to confront the country's financial realities. PRESIDENT BUSH: Well, it's going to cost whatever it costs, and we're going to be wise about the money we spend. GREGORY: But today, Mr. Bush ruled out tax hikes, saying Americans are getting hit hard enough by high gas prices. PRES BUSH: And that is going to mean cutting other programs. GREGORY: Today, White House economic advisers declined to identify where the cuts will come from, only acknowledging Katrina costs will run up the deficit already projected to be \$333 billion this year.”<sup>447</sup>

According to the coverage, the plan proposed by the president included cutting government spending in other areas. Anchor Bob Woodruff of ABC labeled the cost of Katrina as “massive” and explained that President Bush “says the government will have to cut spending elsewhere in order to rebuild.”<sup>448</sup> He continued: “Can the country afford both war and disaster? President Bush laid out a broad vision last night for rebuilding property and lives along the Gulf Coast. Now, the cost. Today, one influential conservative think tank estimated that the effort is going to help drive the budget deficit to three quarters of a trillion dollars within the next ten years. Mr. Bush said today he that will not raise taxes to pay for it. The money will have to come from spending cuts. Deciding which programs will be trimmed and by how much is going to be a

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<sup>444</sup> Bob Schieffer, "President Bush Saying He Is Convinced There's No Need for Tax Hike but That Other Programs May Have to Be Cut," *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2005.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Robach, "Questions Raised."

<sup>447</sup> Williams, "President Bush Pledges."

<sup>448</sup> Bob Woodruff, "The President's Plan Katrina's Cost," *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2005.

very delicate political problem.”<sup>449</sup> Quoting the president, ABC’s Linda Douglas reported, “But there is no consensus on how to pay for the disaster, or its price. Today, a senior White House official did not dispute estimates that rebuilding and relief will cost at least \$200 billion. Whatever it costs, he said, "it's coming from the American taxpayer. PRESIDENT BUSH: So you bet this is going to cost money. And, but I'm confident we can handle it. It's gonna mean that we're gonna have to make sure we cut unnecessary spending.”<sup>450</sup>

Finally, media coverage highlighted the purpose of the president and the administration funding the relief effort: “turning over a new leaf” for the leadership of this administration. David Gregory of NBC, along with other networks, mentioned a subtle purpose of the government funding of the relief efforts: reforming the administration for political advancement. Reiterating the main purpose of eradicating poverty, Gregory explained, “However big the price tag, Katrina's political costs has transformed the Bush presidency from a focus on security, to the safety net. . . It is, some believe, the new start of a second term. Mr. JOHN DICKERSON (Slate Magazine Political Correspondent): On Katrina he can put down a plan, and he's got some chance of being able to actually implement that plan given the tools a president has. GREGORY: Last night, the president was forced to acknowledge that the government was overwhelmed by Katrina. Now he is determined to demonstrate at great cost what his administration can fix.”<sup>451</sup> Reporter Linda Douglass of ABC also mentioned this point in passing, commenting, “The president's promise not to raise taxes may not be enough to satisfy those critics in his party who are complaining that government spending has gone up 33 percent on Mr. Bush's watch.”<sup>452</sup>

***Intermission: Analysis and Discussion.*** Network coverage took a new focus following the president’s address to the nation about Hurricane Katrina. Still focusing on the scene of destruction, the news media shifted the spotlight to the costs of the relief effort. Describing the agent with a new commitment to implement a massive relief effort, reports concentrated on the considerable amounts of funding it would require to complete the plans President Bush proposed in his speech. According to the media, although the agent may “get” the physical scene, he was still not grasping the magnitude of funding it would take to implement his response. Not only did this question the credibility of his proposed plan, it questioned his credibility as an agent. The

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<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> Williams, "President Bush Pledges."

<sup>452</sup> Woodruff, "The President's Plan."

news media suggested that an unavoidable tax hike was a significant means for accomplishing the president's plans, a solution the agent animatedly rejected. Instead, the president (agent) was proposing a cut in government spending (agency) to fund the relief plans (act), which the media implied was solely a ploy to gain political popularity (purpose) after suffering a hefty loss during the crisis (scene). This again presented the acts, agencies, and purpose as not fitting with the scene of the devastation (scene-act, scene-agency, scene-purpose).

### **Closing the Curtain: Summary and Conclusions**

It was important in this particular case to examine both the president's utterances and the network news coverage in segments of time to investigate the entire drama that unfolded. After reviewing the president's utterances and the network news media pre-speech coverage, the president's address to the nation, and the post-network coverage, it is obvious there were two conflicting messages presented. Initially, the two rhetors were describing very different types of scenes with a different type of agent acting within that scene. In his comments, the president stressed that the government (agent) had control (act) of the situation at hand (scene) and continued to praise what he labeled as a "successful relief effort" (agency). The network news media, on the other hand, was presenting a scene of devastation, destruction, and suffering that the acts and agencies of the agent, President Bush, were not addressing. The coverage initially portrayed the president as being absent from the scene; however, later coverage depicted an agent who finally became present, yet the scene surrounding him controlled his acts highlighting them as reactions rather than purposeful acts. His acts – responding to the political crisis – defined him as an agent that was out of touch with reality and not fully grasping the situation surrounding him. Finally, following the president's acknowledgement of something actually going wrong, the last piece of news coverage illustrated an agent who eventually was forced to become cognizant of the situation, but questioned whether the president's (agent) realization (act) came too late for any real assistance for the victims (purpose) in the crisis (scene).

The president addressed some of these issues in his speech to the nation. He straightforwardly described "the good, the bad, and the ugly" aspects of the scene, reflecting the picture the networks' had originally painted. Bush portrayed a dominant agent, the federal government, as doing whatever they could (agency) to alleviate crisis in the "largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen" (act) with a goal to rebuild the Gulf Coast bigger

and better than before (purpose). The higher reaching goal of this speech, or motive of President Bush, was to demonstrate to the public that his administration and the federal government understood the crisis and had a definite solution to fix the situation.

Following the speech, the post-news coverage recognized the agent, President Bush, as coming to terms with the crisis and having a plan of action; however, they questioned his credibility and emphasized that he had no legitimate plan on how to fund it. The president was trying to create a scene in which there was a viable solution, but the media doubted the validity of the solution because of the surrounding financial scene and the reliability of the agent. Therefore again, there was a discrepancy in the reality of the situation at hand, with the agent proposing an illegitimate agency (cut in government funding) to fund the relief plan (act) in order to gain political advancement (purpose) within a scene of the political crisis. This was simply a continuation the contradicting messages exposed between the president and the news media throughout this drama. Whereas the news media coverage consistently focused on the scene dictating the act and agent in the drama, the president's rhetoric focused on the agent controlling the scene and act.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION: SEPTEMBER 11 vs. HURRICANE KATRINA

In a quest to explore the mediated presidential discourse occurring during the events of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, I conducted a pentadic analysis of the primetime network news broadcasts and the presidential speeches during each event. This analysis explored many concepts of rhetoric and political communication to further understand the dynamics and implications these events may have on future mediated discourse and the presidency.

As noted in Chapter 2, the role of the president is diverse and evolving in many ways. Although the formality of the institution will always stand as created by the nation's founders, the presidency is a product of interaction with the society that surrounds it. Not only does the president serve in the traditional roles of Chief of State, Chief Executive, Chief Diplomat, Commander-in-Chief, and Chief Legislator, the occupant also holds a symbolic role. This position emphasizes the president's interaction with the public, operating as the *only* elected representative serving *all* Americans. The power granted by this arrangement has been progressively more dependent on leadership skills and the ability to interact, communicate, and persuade.

The president is the central focus of our democratic political system; therefore, presidential leadership calls for the ability to communicate with the people, define situations, and justify actions for the wellbeing of the citizens in this democratic nation. Strategies of "going public" are a growing trend to promote these tasks and create a link between presidents and the public they serve. This interaction is brought to the forefront during crises. Crisis situations provide a unique opportunity for the president to identify and define the situation, create and execute solutions, and express a sense of decisiveness and determination. All of these activities highlight the characteristics of a strong presidential leader.

A second important participant in the democratic political system is the news media. Every day the news media are responsible for narrating the top events and issues in an organized fashion for the American public. With this narration comes the power to identify and define situations in a particular manner, highlighting some characteristics of a situation while ignoring others. Similar to the president, the news media's power to describe the perceived reality becomes extremely important during a crisis. Their instantaneous coverage of the crisis heightens their influences on the public's perception of the situation.

In theory, the news media provide a constant link between political representatives and the represented. They serve as a liaison between the leaders and the led, between political figures and the mainstream society the figures serve. Therefore, how the news media portrays the political figures within their coverage greatly influences the public's perceptions of leaders, and in a broader sense, the entire political system. One of the most important links the news media creates is between the president and the public. Although the news media generally privilege the voice of the presidency – meaning when the president speaks, the news media cover it – their definitions of events do not always match with the president's message.

Kenneth Burke contends that humans create “reality” through the active choosing and using of language. For example, when a rhetor labels something an “issue,” it creates a completely different reality surrounding that situation than if he were to call it a “crisis.” Any particular situation gains its definition from the framework or lens of interpretation that we apply to it; therefore, different interpretations lead to different conclusions of reality. On that note, Burke suggests that we present reality much like a drama and through this presentation we reveal our particular view of the situation—our reality. He creates an analytical system, the pentad, comprised of five terms he deems as the “grammar of motives.” *Act* is what took place. The person, or kind of person, who performs the act is the *agent*, while the means he or she uses to commit the act is the *agency*. *Scene* is the background of the event or the situation in which the act occurred. *Purpose* is why the person is committing the act. With this tool, a critic can examine the motive of the rhetoric and expose how the use of language determines the rhetor's interpretation and experience of the world—their reality.<sup>453</sup>

In this study, I examined the mediated presidential discourse of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina. Using the pentad, I unveiled the perceived reality of the rhetors. Ultimately, I wanted to explore the drama portrayed by television network news media in comparison to the descriptions narrated within the president's response. By inspecting both cases, I hoped to reveal the possible effects of the news media coverage on the president's response. Both contributors had the power to define the situation and context for the American public. However, in one case – September 11 – the media reflected and enhanced the president's definition of reality, rendering the president as a strong, determined leader who cared about the American public. In the second instance – Hurricane Katrina – the news media mitigated and challenged the

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<sup>453</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*.

president's messages about the crisis, depicting him as out of touch with reality and insensitive to the victims of the disaster. After reviewing the context and examining the artifacts through a pentadic lens, the analysis uncovered several interesting points of comparison that gave insight to the crises and responses. I will now discuss some of these comparisons, including the ratio analysis and motives, the timeline of events, the presidential addresses, and expectations of the president.

**Motives.** In his seminal work, *A Grammar of Motives*, Kenneth Burke poses the driving question of motive: "What is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?"<sup>454</sup> According to Burke, a clear comprehension of motive allows for insight and understanding of underlying human reasons for discourse. This also enables the assessment of techniques and strategies humans employ in their description of reality. As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, Burke assesses that human beings generally have a particular disposition to define their realities in one consistent fashion, with one term or ratio. We also reflect that disposition through our explanation and response to the world around us. Burke connects these driving terms with a particular philosophical system that may help the critic generate ideas about the possible motive of the rhetoric.

It is evident that the rhetoric used by both parties, the television network news media and President George W. Bush, was driven by a dominant term. The network news media coverage focused on the grammatical term *scene* in both 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina; interestingly enough, President Bush defined the drama highlighting the term *agent* in both cases.

*Scene* is linked to the philosophical term of materialism. Burke explains, "With materialism the circumference of scene is so narrowed as to involve the reduction of action to motion."<sup>455</sup> In its purest form, materialism is the idea that all facts and realities are explainable through motion and matter; the scene is responsible for the action. Although in both cases the media portrayed the drama as being driven by the scene, the scenes did not completely reduce President Bush's actions into pure motion. He did have some choices on how he acted within each scene; however, the news media's scenic depiction heavily constrained and restricted the president's actions and responses to the scene. The scene clearly defined whether the president's actions fit the container he was acting within.

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

The news media coverage during 9/11 defined the scene as a “warzone” and “new reality.” This was a clear reflection of the administration’s message. The news coverage presented the drama in such a way that it focused Bush’s actions in light of the scene. The president was acting because of the new scene that surrounded him. This new scene limited what would be deemed as appropriate actions or responses, dictating the effectiveness of the act. The scene contained the act and determined the nature of the agent’s acts, purpose, and agencies. Because the scene described by the news media was a reflection of the scene set up by the Bush administration, the president was acting and reacting within the same constraints set by the news media’s description. In a sense, they were reading the same script. This displayed the acts as fitting to the constraints of the scene in the news media’s narrative, portraying the agent, President Bush, as a strong leader who was in control, despite the dictating scene. In depicting reality utilizing scenic terms, the network news’ motive was to highlight how the agent’s acts, purpose, and agencies were appropriate in addressing the scenic constraints.

Coverage of Hurricane Katrina depicted a scene of devastation and destruction. Unlike 9/11, this was not a reflection of the president’s description. Because the news media focused the narrative in light of the scene, it again became the motivating factor of the drama, determining the characteristics and nature of the agent’s act. President Bush was responding to a different scene. He had a completely different script. Therefore, his responses within the news media’s scene were ill fitting. The news media’s script emphasized the scene as containing the rest of the drama, constricting the president’s actions to that container. This portrayed President Bush’s characterization as agent as being controlled by the scene, rendering him as out of touch with reality and absent. The president was put on the defense making his actions seem more like reactions constrained by the scene. The news media used very scenic terms to convey the drama, this time as a way to highlight how the scene was controlling the acts of an irresponsive and ineffective agent.

In contrast to the network news media, President Bush centered on the agent within his rhetoric during 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. The grammatical term *agent* connects to the philosophical term of *idealism* “and it would amount to an ‘agentification’ of scene even though the terms of scene were placed in dialectical opposition to the terms for agent.”<sup>456</sup> This system views the experience of the mind or spirit as fundamentally real and the existence of material

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<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

things as a construction of the mind. The agent determines the nature of the act and the situation surrounding it.

During his 9/11 address, President Bush emphasized the American people as agents in the scene of the “new reality” that the terrorists created. He clearly pointed out “this country will define our times, not be defined by them.” The American people as agents would define the scene; we would act to achieve a purpose we had already defined within us well before this scene ever arose. The agent was in control. President Bush focused on the agent with a motive to rally and unite Americans and the world to wage the war on terror.

The president’s Hurricane Katrina address also accentuated the role of agent. In this case, the president portrayed the federal government (agent) as utilizing whatever means necessary (agency) to control and recreate the scene and rebuild the Gulf Coast “bigger and better than before” in an act of the relief effort. According to the president, the agent dictated the scene (agent-scene) and the act (agent-act). By emphasizing the agent, it is clear that the president’s motive was to demonstrate to the American public that the Bush administration and the federal government (agent) not only understood the situation at hand, but also was in control of crisis and rebuilding process.

How were the same presidential strategies of emphasizing “the agent controlling the scene” effective in one case, unifying the nation and leading the media to reflect the message, while in the other case fell short? After examining the context and the artifacts, two possible reasons could explain this occurrence. First, in 9/11, the media actively reflected the administration’s messages and descriptions of the situation, quoting the president, using similar terms, and stating phrases verbatim from the president’s script. They treated the president as if he were a news source. The reflection of the narrative set up similar scenic constraints as the president’s drama. Although the scene contained the acts of the president, the president and the news media were reflecting a similar scene and therefore the president’s acts fit the scene. They were following the same script.

However, the Hurricane Katrina news media coverage challenged the president’s messages, presenting a different scene with different constraints that conflicted with the president’s description. Because the president and the media’s interpretation of the scene differed, the president’s acts were constrained by the media’s driving scene, portraying the president’s acts as ill fitting and controlled by the scene.

Secondly, the president expressed a different type of higher purpose in each case, or what Kenneth Burke would call “motive.”<sup>457</sup> As I stated before, Burke links agent-driven rhetoric to the philosophy of idealism: “Words of this sort are particularly serviceable when unity having given way to disunity, there is a call for unification.... Dialectically, any conflict between two concepts of justice can be removed by the adoption of a remoter term broad enough to encompass both.”<sup>458</sup> September 11 brought forth a motive of unity. The president was actively stressing an agent-act-scene and agent-purpose ratio throughout his description of reality with a motive to unify the nation and the world to bring the terrorists to justice in this war on terror. Other studies on “war rhetoric” have proven agent identification rhetoric to be effective when trying to precipitate unity in bringing an enemy to justice in war.<sup>459</sup> Burke continues by saying that “justice in such an over-all sense would obviously serve the ends of unification... materialist ‘debunkers’ of such legal idealism can then interpret the ‘ideal’ in terms of its ‘betrayal’; for ‘unification’ is not unity, but a compensation for disunity – hence, any term for ideal justice can be interpreted as a rhetorical concealment for material injustice.”<sup>460</sup>

The president’s Hurricane Katrina address unveiled a different type of motive. He was not attempting to unify the nation against an enemy, nor bring an enemy to justice. Here, the president was stressing agent with a motive to restore a unified vision of the government having control of the scene. However, as mentioned earlier, the news media were actively debunking his attempt, contradicting his messages and emphasizing the disunity between the president’s acts within the scene. The news media was also successful in portraying the federal government as part of the problem. President Bush was unifying the country against a horrible storm, which did not have the same effect as the unification against a known enemy such as the terrorists. Therefore, attempting to highlight agent with a motive to create unity in this case was not effective.

***Types of Responses.*** In addition to the theoretical aspects of this analysis, it is important to discuss and compare the type of responses within the timeline of events.<sup>461</sup> Using a side-by-side comparison, I observed a few similarities among the president’s rhetorical actions during

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<sup>457</sup> According to Burke, motives give meaning to motion. This is the driving force of symbolic action.

<sup>458</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*.

<sup>459</sup> John R. Butler, "Somalia and the Imperial Savage: Continuities in the Rhetoric of War," *Western Journal of Communication* 66, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>460</sup> Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*.

<sup>461</sup> See Appendix A-1 and Appendix A-2 for a complete list of utterances from the president in each case.

each event. One of these similarities was the president's initial response to the situations. In both cases, the president immediately addressed the events as soon as he became aware of the situation. Secondly, the president held news conference about each event two days following their occurrence. The president traveled to the scene of the crisis in both events. Finally, President Bush delivered a primetime address to the nation speaking about the situation and the government's response to the crisis.

With the similarities of response, however, there were also differences within the timeline. For example, immediately following the September 11 attacks, President Bush spoke to the nation upon arriving at Barksdale Air Force base and again later that night from the Oval Office. In comparison, during Hurricane Katrina, the president addressed the situation in a brief statement one day prior to the inevitable natural disaster forecasted to hit the Gulf Coast. Secondly, the day after the terrorist attacks, the president spoke onsite at the Pentagon, and then again on the following day to the press. Two days following Hurricane Katrina, the president held a press conference speaking to the news media and the nation about the event and discussing the "fly-over" to view the devastation. On September 14, 2001, three days after the attacks, the president visited the area where the twin towers once stood, talking to the victims, and reassuring the nation that we would overcome this crisis. On September 2, 2005, four days after the hurricane hit the Gulf Coast, the president traveled to the devastated areas to see the destruction firsthand and reassure the hurricane survivors that they would get through this crisis. Finally, on September 20, 2001, nine days following the attacks, the president addressed a joint session of Congress and the nation concerning the events of 9/11. Seventeen days following Hurricane Katrina, President Bush addressed the nation in New Orleans, Louisiana to discuss the relief efforts and plans for progressing forward in the rebuilding of the coast.

The importance of these comparisons is two-fold. First, although there were a few similarities in the types of rhetorical action, there was a significant difference in timeline and level of engagement from the president. For instance, in the September 11 situation, despite the security risks, President Bush left the next day to visit the Pentagon on the ground to directly speak to the victims and physically see the effects of the terrorist attacks. In Hurricane Katrina's case, he simply flew over the area for a firsthand view, neglecting to consider what that act might have meant to the victims and symbolically displayed to the American people. Instead of being present in the situation and getting an "on the ground" view of the devastation, the president

“flew-over” the developing crisis, possibly indicating a sign of indifference on his part and signaling that the situation was not a priority for his administration. Presenting an argument for the president’s actions, Hurricane Katrina was a *localized natural disaster*. In the normal chain of events, a president would not make it a priority to view the devastation immediately. Additionally, a visit from the president would require top-security and an entire entourage of staff, perhaps causing more harm than good. However, one could make the argument that even the president himself classified this storm as being “one of the worst natural disasters in our Nation’s history.”<sup>462</sup> Designating it as such may have increased expectations for the immediacy of a response and greater interaction from the president. This signifies the first instance of disengagement of the administration.

Secondly, this timeline demonstrated that despite the news media’s portrayal of disengagement during the Hurricane Katrina crisis, in actuality President Bush was significantly engaged in this event from a federal standpoint. Considering he was reacting to a *localized natural disaster*, his actions surpassed a “normal” federal response: speaking before the hurricane hit, flying over the devastated areas, holding a press conference regarding the relief efforts, and speaking the entire nation in a primetime televised address.

However, two of the main differences between 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina were the description of the scene and the publicity of the president’s interaction. In his first visit to the Pentagon, President Bush physically saw the damage caused by the attacks, the volunteers working to find survivors, and the general despair of the scene. Rightfully so, he expressed a feeling of sadness and anger, stating that going there “makes me sad, on the other hand; it also makes me angry.”<sup>463</sup> He was clearly able to observe the situation and demonstrate the emotions it evoked within him, reflecting the scene and the emotions of the victims and the nation. The pictures of President Bush on the ground with the victims, standing on top of the rubble, and handing out water to the volunteers, just to name a few, were irrefutable evidence that the president was there in the scene; he was in the moment. In addition, he was able to convey that scene with accuracy to the nation, partly because he had physically witnessed it firsthand. In turn, the news media coverage reflected his description of the scene and portrayal of the mood almost verbatim, using the same descriptors and messages as the administration. The president

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<sup>462</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents."

<sup>463</sup> Bush, "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents."

was seeing and describing the same picture and reality that the news media showed to the American public.

The president's ability to express the mood and scene of a crisis to the nation also played an integral role during Hurricane Katrina. Following the "fly-over," President Bush held a press conference addressing the scene that he supposedly viewed first hand from the window seat on Air Force One. He went on to describe this scene in the news conference, praising the relief efforts and issuing statements of optimism about the rebuilding process. Bush spoke again on September 2, right before leaving for his first physical visit to the Gulf Coast. Although both utterances mention the destruction, devastation, and the "difficult road" ahead, he never mentioned the crisis that was unfolding. By not physically landing to see the devastation and talk to the victims, he was not able to accurately depict the scene or express the mood of the scene to the nation when he initially spoke to the American people. The president did not see the victims who were suffering in the Superdome, an event he solely referred to as an "issue." He did not express any type of emotion about the effectiveness of the response effort thus far. He was not upset at the inefficiency of the response, concerned about the huge problem this crisis exposed, or angry that the victims, American citizens, were suffering without adequate food, water, and other necessities. President Bush simply described the plans implemented by the local, state, and federal government. Taking an optimistic tone, the president praised the progress he assumed was taking place and everyone involved with the relief effort.

On the other hand, the news media presented a completely different description of the scene. Focusing on the devastation, the media blanketed the coverage with pictures of victims crying out in desperation, begging for food, and living in very unsanitary conditions. The president was nowhere to be found in these visuals. The only visual the public had of the president was of Air Force One flying over the crisis. This completely conflicted with the president's messages of optimism and progress.

Overall, President Bush initially allowed the news media to define the unfolding crisis during Hurricane Katrina, which was not the case after September 11. Immediately following 9/11, the president viewed the devastation firsthand and accurately reflected the scene and mood of the crisis. The news media showed various photographs of the president in the scene and actively reflected his message. In contrast, the news media pictured the president flying over the scene after Hurricane Katrina. Despite the devastation described by the news media in Hurricane

Katrina, President Bush portrayed a scene of optimism and success in contradiction with the intense visuals. This inaccuracy hampered the president's credibility. It also gave the media control of the message and allowed them to characterize the president as an agent who was absent, disengaged, and out of touch with reality. Never seeing the devastation from the ground, President Bush only had reports to document the scene when he first spoke about the crisis. The news media, on the other hand, had pictures and video footage to support their message, none of which contained the president. There was a significant difference between the two representations.

I would argue, despite the flyover incident, if President Bush would have accurately described the crisis that was unfolding, the public and the news media might have perceived him a more effective leader. By the president describing the scene that the media vividly displayed and expressing some sort of disappointment about the situation as a whole, the news media would not have had so much ammunition to aim at him. This also could have led to a different focus of the news coverage, such as the possibility of centering criticism on the local and state governments, the entities actually responsible for natural disaster response. Secondly, if the president would have addressed the nation on September 2 as he did on September 20, he may have been able to regain control of the crisis a lot sooner, negating the media's characterizations of him as a disengaged agent. Therefore, the problem in the case of Hurricane Katrina was not an issue of inactivity by the president or the neglect of the federal government; the problem was the lack of full acknowledgement of the crisis and the presence of the president in the scene in a timely manner.

*Presidential Addresses.* Another interesting finding possibly influencing the effectiveness of the president's addresses to the nation arose following a closer examination of each speech. After situating each artifact within the context and examining them through a pentadic lens, it was clear that President Bush had a different goal for each instance.<sup>464</sup> During September 11, the president positioned himself in this drama as a strong Commander-in-Chief, a caring "Consoler in Chief," and the world's leader in this fight against terrorism. His motive was to unite the nation and the world, to support the American purpose of protecting freedom and defending democracy, joining us in this war on terror. His speech strived for unity and he presented himself as a strong and compassionate leader. In his Hurricane Katrina address, the

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<sup>464</sup> By goal, I am referring to "higher purpose or motive in Burke's terms, for symbolic action.

president mainly presented himself as a representative of the government. Stressing the agent as being in control of the scene, the president finally portrayed the “good, bad, and ugly” of the situation, with a motive of assuring the hurricane victims and the American people that the Bush administration had a strong handle on the crisis and a clear response plan for the rebuilding process. Although he issued a few consoling statements throughout the speech, they seemed forced and served more as evidence of him understanding and controlling the scene rather than him actually caring about the victims. Bush was nowhere near fulfilling the role of “Consoler in Chief” as he did in September 11.

There was a good possibility that expectations were high for the “Consoler” of 9/11 as the news media placed the Hurricane Katrina crisis in comparison to 9/11. In addition, the fourth year anniversary of the terrorist attacks occurred a week prior to the speech. Therefore, if there were expectations for the “Consoler in Chief” of 9/11 to address the nation that evening, these expectations were left unfulfilled. The time for consoling had long past; it was time for action.

A second aspect possibly influencing the effectiveness of the speeches was the venue of each address. President Bush and his public relations staff strategically selected the locations for the speeches in an attempt to set the mood and tone of the content. During his 9/11 speech, the president chose to address a live audience, a joint session of Congress, to deliver his speech. He could have picked the Oval Office, the Rose Garden, or even on location at the Pentagon or “ground zero.”<sup>465</sup> However, by choosing a joint session of Congress, not only was he speaking to a live audience, one of President Bush’s known strengths, he was also surrounding himself with the historic symbols that represented democracy, freedom, and the institution of the presidency. The audience witnessed the president explaining and defining the situation to a unified Congress supporting their strong, consoling Commander-in-Chief. The visual was powerful and strong.

Four years later, the president decided on a different approach. President Bush selected Jackson Square to deliver his Hurricane Katrina address. This location was in the center of hurricane-ravaged New Orleans, Louisiana. At that point, Jackson Square, along with most of the hurricane-devastated areas, was still powerless. Therefore, the president brought in generators to run the lighting specifically for the address. Entering the television’s frame from the bushes, a dim, blue hue encircled the president in the background making St. Louis Cathedral look more like the Disneyland castle. Although the speech was live, there were no audience members or

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<sup>465</sup> After the towers fell in New York City, the area commonly became known as “ground zero.”

hurricane victims at the actual location, which was a possible detriment to the president's performance. Overall, the president was trying to set a solemn tone for the speech and present himself as physically in the middle of the devastation. Instead, the setting created a very artificial feel to the speech. Because the illuminated setting encompassed a castle-like figure in the background, the president found himself presenting a contradictory message. He was supposedly on location, in the middle of the desolated area; however, the scene he was depicting in his speech did not match the physical scene he was speaking in, even though he was trying to portray them as one.<sup>466</sup> In short, I argue that the physical scene selected by president for the September 11 address seemed more conducive to the message he was delivering than in the case of Hurricane Katrina, possibly adding to the successes in former and hampering the latter.

***Expectations of the President.*** Finally, after comparing the context and symbolic action surrounding the two crises, it is clear that there was a distinct shift in expectations for the federal government between 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. In 9/11, President Bush and his administration had a primary national purpose: to find the terrorists and bring them to justice. Although the federal government supported the local and state governments in New York, its role there was not central. The president's job transcended the immediate response on the local and state levels in order to prepare an international response to this new reality. He took on the responsibility of rallying the nation and the world to support a war on terror. During Hurricane Katrina, the president continued this strategy by maintaining this transcendent role, overlooking the local and state response; however, because there was no clear national leadership position, or "greater cause" that would require him to serve as a strong leader, he was perceived as absent from the scene and "out of touch" with the crisis. The leadership expectations set up by 9/11 were left unfulfilled during Hurricane Katrina.

***Summary.*** President Bush and the news media used similar rhetorical strategies to describe the crisis of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. After reviewing each artifact through a pentadic lens, it was clear that each rhetor defined and explained the dramas using the same dominant term in each case. The news media coverage described the situations though scenic terms, reducing the president's actions into pure motions. The president, on the other hand,

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<sup>466</sup> The president specifically began his speech with: "I am speaking to you from the city of New Orleans -- nearly empty, still partly under water, and waiting for life and hope to return." He continued throughout his speech to describe the devastation that surrounded the area, however none of which was visible from the location he was speaking from.

utilized agent-centered terms to illuminate each drama. During September 11, the strategy was successful for President Bush due to the reflections of the media. In contrast, the same strategy was unsuccessful in the Hurricane Katrina crisis. The news media defined the president's acts within the scene. Because this scene was different from the scene presented by President Bush, the news media depicted the Hurricane Katrina crisis as beyond the president's control. Essentially, the clashing narratives of Hurricane Katrina served as a spotlight portraying the ineffectiveness of President Bush, whereas the harmonious narratives following September 11 had the opposite effect.

There were also many other possibilities explaining the effectiveness of the president within the two situations. Bush's level of interaction, visibility within the public eye, and timing of responses were different. Secondly, the purpose and venue of each address was conducive in one situation while disadvantageous in the other. Finally, the events September 11 heightened and expanded expectations of the president and the federal government, which were not met in the crisis of Hurricane Katrina. Collectively, these aspects served as explanations of the discrepancies between the two events.

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION: SURVIVING THROUGH CRISIS

In chapter one, I stated that the object of this study was practical. Similar to Amos Kiewe, my goal in this analysis was to further the understanding of crisis discourse, shedding light on the role of the modern presidency during crisis situations. I also listed a few driving questions for this study. Ending this analysis, I respond to those driving questions with the knowledge uncovered from the rhetorical analysis and offer conclusions drawn from the completion of this study. Finally, I discuss a few possible limitations and extensions, and close with some final thoughts.

***Overarching question.*** The overarching question posed in the beginning of this study was as follows: How does a president react appropriately in one case, comforting and uniting the public, and provide a completely inappropriate response in another case? After examining the artifacts, I found that the response in the second case was not exactly inappropriate in terms of a presidential response to a hurricane. However, because of the September 11 terrorist attacks, expectations of presidential and federal government response had changed, classifying the president's actions as falling short in the Hurricane Katrina crisis.

During 9/11, it was naturally the president's job to rise as a strong leader and unite the country. The attacks were an issue of national security, so there was no question of whose responsibility it was to respond to the situation. The federal government supported the local and state agencies in the localized relief efforts; however, the central role of the president and his administration transcended above the managerial component of the relief effort to rise as a strong, uniting leader rallying the nation together in this new war on terror.

In contrast, Hurricane Katrina was technically a *localized natural disaster*. The crisis was not the hurricane; the crisis was the after-effects of the hurricane and the mismanagement of the response efforts in the given situation. The responsibilities of the initial evacuations and hurricane response relied first and foremost on the local and state governments. Following the standard presidential role in this situation, Bush simply oversaw the local and state relief efforts and provided federal support when necessary. The president did not want to infringe on the local and state powers. Secondly, he did not want to criticize the predominately Democratic presence leading the hurricane-stricken provinces out of fear of partisan accusations. Unfortunately for the administration, although the president was trying to console the victims and praise the volunteers,

Bush was still keeping his distance. It was not his job. When the hurricane hit initially, Bush had Brown, the current director of FEMA, and the rest of his staff members doing the legwork, providing the localities with the resources they needed, and keeping him updated on the progress.

FEMA and Homeland Security are both federal agencies. As soon as these departments entered the spotlight, the media and the American public viewed the president as the main manager of this unfolding crisis being top-leader of the federal government, Although Michael Brown was the head of FEMA and Michael Chertoff was the director of Homeland Security, both men were under President Bush's watch. As is often the case in management or leadership positions, one is only as strong or effective as one's staff. In this instance, it seemed that Bush's staff had failed him. Both Brown and Chertoff were consistently stating how well the relief efforts were going, even after being in close contacts with the mayor and the governor of New Orleans and Louisiana. They were responsible for briefing the president and keeping him "in the know" about the situation that was unfolding. Unfortunately, they failed. As a result, the news media were able to define the situation and characterize President Bush as the out of touch, irresponsible leader of the crisis.

One would wonder how the media could get away with criticizing President Bush for this localize natural disaster, while also not criticizing the inept response of the local and state governments. The shift in the level of expectations played a key role in answering this question. Public expectations of the president and the federal government in crisis had changed. After 9/11, we had a strong, proactive administration that was very successful in responding to crisis. They immediately took action following the attacks and vowed that this nation would be prepared for whatever else may happen, including anthrax, bioterrorism, and weapons of mass destruction to name a few. The United States was supposed to be equipped to handle a significant terrorist attack, and yet the local, state, and federal government's response to a predicted and known hurricane was flawed. This raised clear concerns about our ability and our leader's ability to handle the unpredictable and unknown. This is a classic case of crisis management where timing and meeting the public's expectations played a significant part in the success of the organization.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>467</sup> See Timothy Coombs and Sherry Holladay, "An Extended Examination of the Crisis Situations: A Fusion of the Relational Management and Symbolic Approaches," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 13, no. 4 (2001), Timothy Coombs and Sherry Holladay, "Helping Crisis Managers Protect Reputational Assets: Initial Tests of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory," *Management Communication Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (2002).

***Rhetorical Responses.*** The second driving inquiry questioned whether President Bush's responses were truly different or solely portrayed differently by the news media; the answer is both. Although there was a comparison by the news media during the Katrina coverage associating President Bush's 9/11 address with the one delivered in New Orleans, the responses were different. At a glimpse, each speech would seem to serve a similar purpose: both speeches involved the president tending to a nation desperately trying to make sense out of what was occurring around them; both of the speeches broadcast live via primetime television with a goal to address the entire nation; and both came as a response to an outside crisis.<sup>468</sup>

As discussed in the last chapter, a close examination of the addresses unveiled a few interesting findings. In both cluster of terms, the president explained and described the drama utilizing a similar pentadic ratio, agent-act-purpose. That is not surprising, as Burke notes that humans generally explain the world around them using a particular disposition.<sup>469</sup> However, it is obvious that the addresses were serving two different purposes, issued in two different contexts, and essentially became two different types of responses.

The first speech aimed at unifying the nation under one sole purpose: defending and protecting freedom by bringing the terrorists to justice in this war on terrorism. The president was very effective in serving as both Commander and Consoler before, during, and after the speech. He accurately portrayed the mood and the scene of the attacks, immediately setting the stage as the crisis continued to unfold. The Hurricane Katrina address involved defending and repairing the federal government's image of control over the situation. He did not portray himself as the Commander because he did not think that role belonged with this drama. It was the local and state governments' job to take control of the situation. Bush also had completely lost the role of Consoler because he did not recognize the extent of the suffering. The president did not accurately acknowledge the major issues in the crisis allowing the media to define the crisis for him and set the stage for his response.

The news media's coverage of the president in these crises also differed. They played a *major* role in each event by characterizing the president, reflecting and challenging his messages,

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<sup>468</sup> President Bush was responding to an outside crisis, as opposed to a created crisis. See Chapter 2 p.14.

<sup>469</sup> See Chapter 2 p. 24.

and aiding in the successes and failures of his responses.<sup>470</sup> During 9/11, the news media reflected the president's message almost verbatim. Because the president was successful in immediately defining the situation and was physically present in the scene, the news media followed his depictions with their coverage. This allowed the president to set his own stage in which his roles, definitions, and actions would be fitting for the drama he set up. The news media's reflection of the president's message reinforced the image of a strong, consoling leader, which the president echoed again in his address. President Bush successfully set the stage for his performance and the news media served as his spotlight.

In the case of Katrina, the news media constantly refuted president's messages. Not recognizing the unfolding crisis or the increased expectations for his response, President Bush allowed the news media to set the stage this time, which deemed the roles, definitions, and actions of the president as ill fit for the drama. The news media's role expanded from the spotlight to the production and backstage crew. They set the stage in this drama and when the president tried to play his role, Bush had the wrong script. This was a pivotal case demonstrating the influence of the news media and the public's shifting expectations of the president's leadership. They wanted more than a strong Commander-in-Chief, with a sense of decisiveness and determination, but also as a sincere "Consoler in Chief" accurately describing the scene of the suffering by visibly comforting victims for the rest of the nation to see.

***Limitations & Extensions.*** As with any study that encompasses a selection a certain set of data, this analysis has a few limitations and the possibility of extension. Only analyzing primetime network news coverage limits the generalization of this investigation in its examination of the network television news media. A significant exclusion was the morning news shows – NBC's *The Today Show*, CBS's *The Early Show*, and ABC's *Good Morning America* – and the "Special Report" coverage beginning immediately after the terrorist attacks. In addition, the nightly news programs such as NBC's *Nightline*, CBS's *60 minutes*, and ABC's *Primetime Tonight* were also excluded. It would be interesting to see how the stories within these programs compared to the nightly news segments.

Secondly, this was a broad generalization of broadcast media coverage during the two crises events. An expansion of this study could look at Fox News, CNN, and possibly MSNBC

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<sup>470</sup> The final question posed asked what role did the news media play in the success or failure of the president's strategy in each case. This analysis addresses the answer to this final question, along with providing evidence for the second question.

to evaluate how the 24-hour news networks coverage compared to network evening news. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how broadcast news compared to major print mediums, such as *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *L.A. Times*, as well as the local print mediums such as the *Times Picayune*.<sup>471</sup>

Finally, there are a few critics that might beg the question: Are these two events truly comparable? One event was a terrorist attack on our nation, an act of war if you will, while the other was a localized natural disaster. How can one come close to comparing the two events? I recognize and acknowledge that the two events were different in many ways. As mentioned above, one was an issue of national security and an act of war. This precipitated a completely different set of emotions touching the entire nation, unifying the nation with a patriotic purpose, and provoked a different sense of immediacy and threat.

Nevertheless, there are two implications exposed by this comparison that are important to note. First, a crisis is a crisis; although they were two different types of crises, there are still standard steps that any organization should follow to effectively deal with the situation.<sup>472</sup> It is important to examine how an administration can effectively follow those steps, successfully handling such a massive national crisis with rhetorical prowess and fall short with a much smaller domestic crisis. Most importantly, however, this study clearly shows the shift in response expectations for the federal government. The success of response and promise of preparedness during 9/11 inevitably raise the bar for the federal government and the president; a bar that President Bush did not meet during the crisis of Hurricane Katrina.

***Final Thoughts.*** The events of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina were unquestionably devastating. Both events called for a strong, consoling leader. NBC reporter David Gregory summarized the situations well: "It was 9/11 that defined George Bush as a strong leader... Then came Katrina and a very different image emerged."<sup>473</sup> This study provided a descriptive analysis of the context, communication strategies, and effects of each event. After examining the news media coverage and president's response, one can now see how the great Commander and Consoler of 9/11 fell short in the events of Hurricane Katrina.

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<sup>471</sup> One study has already begun to touch on the newspaper coverage of President Bush during Hurricane Katrina. See Brooke Fisher Lui, "President Bush's Major Post-Katrina Speeches: Enhancing Image Repair Discourse Theory Applied to the Public Sector," *Public Relations Review* 33 (2006).

<sup>472</sup> See Coombs and Holladay, "An Extended Examination of Crisis.", Coombs and Holladay, "Helping Crisis Managers."

<sup>473</sup> Gregory, "Memories of Katrina." Rather, "Top Headlines."

## **APPENDIX A. President George W. Bush's Utterances: Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents**

### **A-1: Presidential Utterances Pertaining to the September 11 Terrorist Attacks (September 11, 2001 – September 20, 2001)**

- (11 September 2001a) Remarks on the Terrorist Attack on New York City's World Trade Center in Sarasota, Florida
- (11 September 2001b) Remarks by the President upon arrival at Barksdale Air Force Base
- (11 September 2001c) Statement by the President in his address to the nation
- (12 September 2001) Remarks by the President while touring damage at the Pentagon
- (13 September 2001) Remarks by the President to the travel pool after visiting Washington Hospital
- (14 September 2001a) Remarks at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service
- (14 September 2001b) Remarks to Police, Firemen, and Rescue workers at the World Trade Center Site in New York City
- (15 September 2001a) Remarks in a Meeting with the National Security Team and an Exchange With Reporters at Camp David, Maryland
- (15 September 2001) Radio address of the President to the nation'
- (16 September 2001) Remarks on Arrival at the White House and an Exchange with Reporters
- (17 September 2001a) Remarks to Employees in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building and an Exchange with Reporters
- (17 September 2001b) Remarks to Employees at the Pentagon and an Exchange with Reporters in Arlington, Virginia
- (17 September 2001c) Remarks at the Islamic Center of Washington
- (18 September 2001) Remarks Honoring Charitable Organizations
- (18 September 2001) Remarks Prior to Discussions with President Jacques Chirac of France and an Exchange with Reporters
- (19 September 2001) Remarks Prior to Discussions with President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia and an Exchange with Reporters
- (19 September 2001) Remarks Following a Meeting with Congressional Leaders and an Exchange with Reporters
- (20 September 2001) Remarks on Departure for Capitol Hill with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an Exchange with Reporters
- (20 September 2001) Address to a joint session of Congress and the American people

**APPENDIX A. President George W. Bush's Utterances:  
Weekly Compilations of Presidential Documents (continued)**

**A-2: Presidential Utterances Pertaining to the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina  
(August 28, 2005 – September 15, 2005)**

- (28 August 2005) Remarks on Hurricane Katrina and the Iraqi Constitution in Crawford, Texas
- (29 August 2005) Remarks in a Discussion on Medicare in El Mirage, Arizona
- (29 August 2005) Remarks in a Discussion on Medicare in Rancho Cucamonga, California
- (30 August 2005) Remarks on the 60th Anniversary of V-J Day in San Diego, California
- (31 August 2005) Remarks on the Relief Efforts for Hurricane Katrina Press Conference
- (1 September 2005) Remarks Following a Meeting with Former President George Bush and Former President William J. Clinton
- (2 September 2005) Remarks on Departure for a Tour of Gulf Coast Areas Damaged by Hurricane Katrina
- (2 September 2005) Remarks on the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in Mobile, Alabama
- (2 September 2005) Remarks Following a Walking Tour of Areas Damaged by Hurricane Katrina and an Exchange with Reporters in Biloxi, Mississippi
- (2 September 2005) Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts in Kenner, Louisiana
- (3 September 2005) The President's Radio Address
- (4 September 2005) Remarks at the American Red Cross Disaster Operations Center
- (5 September 2005) Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts and an Exchange with Reporters in Baker, Louisiana
- (5 September 2005) Remarks at the Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- (5 September 2005) Remarks to the Community in Poplarville, Mississippi
- (6 September 2005) Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange with Reporters
- (6 September 2005) Remarks on Efforts to Assist Students and School Districts Displaced by Hurricane Katrina
- (6 September 2005) Remarks Following a Meeting with National Voluntary Organizations Representatives
- (8 September 2005) Remarks on Hurricane Katrina Recovery Efforts
- (9 September 2005) Remarks at the 9/11 Heroes Medal of Valor Award Ceremony
- (10 September 2005) The President's Radio Address
- (12 September 2005) Remarks on the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and an Exchange with Reporters in New Orleans, Louisiana
- (12 September 2005) Remarks on the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and an Exchange with Reporters in Gulfport, Mississippi
- (13 September 2005) The President's News Conference with President Jalal Talabani of the Iraqi Transitional Government
- (14 September 2005) Remarks to the Plenary Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City
- (14 September 2005) Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations in New York City
- (15 September 2005) Address to the Nation on Hurricane Katrina Recovery from New Orleans, Louisiana
- (16 September 2005) Remarks at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service

## APPENDIX B. Presidential Addresses

### **B-1: Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People**

*September 20, 2001, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C.*

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tempore, members of Congress, and fellow Americans:

- ¶1: In the normal course of events, Presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the Union. Tonight, no such report is needed. It has already been delivered by the American people.
- ¶2: We have seen it in the courage of passengers, who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground -- passengers like an exceptional man named Todd Beamer. And would you please help me to welcome his wife, Lisa Beamer, here tonight. (Applause.)
- ¶3: We have seen the state of our Union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion. We have seen the unfurling of flags, the lighting of candles, the giving of blood, the saying of prayers -- in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. We have seen the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own.
- ¶4: My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our Union -- and it is strong. (Applause.)
- ¶5: Tonight we are a country d and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done. (Applause.)
- ¶6: I thank the Congress for its leadership at such an important time. All of America was touched on the evening of the tragedy to see Republicans and Democrats joined together on the steps of this Capitol, singing "God Bless America." And you did more than sing; you acted, by delivering \$40 billion to rebuild our communities and meet the needs of our military.
- ¶7: Speaker Hastert, Minority Leader Gephardt, Majority Leader Daschle and Senator Lott, I thank you for your friendship, for your leadership and for your service to our country. (Applause.)
- ¶8: And on behalf of the American people, I thank the world for its outpouring of support. America will never forget the sounds of our National Anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the streets of Paris, and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.
- ¶9: We will not forget South Korean children gathering to pray outside our embassy in Seoul, or the prayers of sympathy offered at a mosque in Cairo. We will not forget moments of silence and days of mourning in Australia and Africa and Latin America.
- ¶10: Nor will we forget the citizens of 80 other nations who died with our own: dozens of Pakistanis; more than 130 Israelis; more than 250 citizens of India; men and women from El Salvador, Iran, Mexico and Japan; and hundreds of British citizens. America has no truer friend than Great Britain. (Applause.) Once again, we are joined together in a great cause -- so honored the British Prime Minister has crossed an ocean to show his unity of purpose with America. Thank you for coming, friend. (Applause.)
- ¶11: On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars -- but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war -- but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks -- but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this

was brought upon us in a single day -- and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.

- ¶12: Americans have many questions tonight. Americans are asking: Who attacked our country? The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda. They are the same murderers indicted for bombing American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, and responsible for bombing the USS Cole.
- ¶13: Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world -- and imposing its on people everywhere.
- ¶14: The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics -- a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam. The terrorists' directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to kill all Americans, and make no distinction among military and civilians, including women and children.
- ¶15: This group and its leader -- a person named Osama bin Laden -- are linked to many other organizations in different countries, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries. They are recruited from their own nations and neighborhoods and brought to camps in places like Afghanistan, where they are trained in the tactics of terror. They are sent back to their homes or sent to hide in countries around the world to plot evil and destruction.
- ¶16: The leadership of al Qaeda has great influence in Afghanistan and supports the Taliban regime in controlling most of that country. In Afghanistan, we see al Qaeda's vision for the world.
- ¶17: Afghanistan's people have been brutalized -- many are starving and many have fled. Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough.
- ¶18: The United States respects the people of Afghanistan -- after all, we are currently its largest source of humanitarian aid -- but we condemn the Taliban regime. (Applause.) It is not only repressing its own people, it is threatening people everywhere by sponsoring and sheltering and supplying terrorists. By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder.
- ¶19: And tonight, the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban: Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. (Applause.) Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens, you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities. (Applause.) Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating.
- ¶20: These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. (Applause.) The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.
- ¶21: I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims throughout the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah. (Applause.) The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. The enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them. (Applause.)

- ¶22: Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated. (Applause.)
- ¶23: Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber -- a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms -- our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.
- ¶24: They want to overthrow existing governments in many Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. They want to drive Israel out of the Middle East. They want to drive Christians and Jews out of vast regions of Asia and Africa.
- ¶25: These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us, because we stand in their way.
- ¶26: We are not deceived by their pretenses to piety. We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions -- by abandoning every value except the will to power -- they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way, to where it ends: in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies. (Applause.)
- ¶27: Americans are asking: How will we fight and win this war? We will direct every resource at our command -- every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war -- to the disruption and to the defeat of the global terror network.
- ¶28: This war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat.
- ¶29: Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. (Applause.) From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.
- ¶30: Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attack. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans. Today, dozens of federal departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments, have responsibilities affecting homeland security. These efforts must be coordinated at the highest level. So tonight I announce the creation of a Cabinet-level position reporting directly to me -- the Office of Homeland Security.
- ¶31: And tonight I also announce a distinguished American to lead this effort, to strengthen American security: a military veteran, an effective governor, a true patriot, a trusted friend -- Pennsylvania's Tom Ridge. (Applause.) He will lead, oversee and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to safeguard our country against terrorism, and respond to any attacks that may come.
- ¶32: These measures are essential. But the only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it, and destroy it where it grows. (Applause.)

- ¶33: Many will be involved in this effort, from FBI agents to intelligence operatives to the reservists we have called to active duty. All deserve our thanks, and all have our prayers. And tonight, a few miles from the damaged Pentagon, I have a message for our military: Be ready. I've called the Armed Forces to alert, and there is a reason. The hour is coming when America will act, and you will make us proud. (Applause.)
- ¶34: This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.
- ¶35: We ask every nation to join us. We will ask, and we will need, the help of police forces, intelligence services, and banking systems around the world. The United States is grateful that many nations and many international organizations have already responded -- with sympathy and with support. Nations from Latin America, to Asia, to Africa, to Europe, to the Islamic world. Perhaps the NATO Charter reflects best the attitude of the world: An attack on one is an attack on all.
- ¶36: The civilized world is rallying to America's side. They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror, unanswered, can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments. And you know what -- we're not going to allow it. (Applause.)
- ¶37: Americans are asking: What is expected of us? I ask you to live your lives, and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight, and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat.
- ¶38: I ask you to uphold the values of America, and remember why so many have come here. We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith. (Applause.)
- ¶39: I ask you to continue to support the victims of this tragedy with your contributions. Those who want to give can go to a central source of information, [libertyunites.org](http://libertyunites.org), to find the names of groups providing direct help in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.
- ¶40: The thousands of FBI agents who are now at work in this investigation may need your cooperation, and I ask you to give it.
- ¶41: I ask for your patience, with the delays and inconveniences that may accompany tighter security; and for your patience in what will be a long struggle.
- ¶42: I ask your continued participation and confidence in the American economy. Terrorists attacked a symbol of American prosperity. They did not touch its source. America is successful because of the hard work, and creativity, and enterprise of our people. These were the true strengths of our economy before September 11th, and they are our strengths today. (Applause.)
- ¶43: And, finally, please continue praying for the victims of terror and their families, for those in uniform, and for our great country. Prayer has comforted us in sorrow, and will help strengthen us for the journey ahead.
- ¶44: Tonight I thank my fellow Americans for what you have already done and for what you will do. And ladies and gentlemen of the Congress, I thank you, their representatives, for what you have already done and for what we will do together.
- ¶45: Tonight, we face new and sudden national challenges. We will come together to improve air safety, to dramatically expand the number of air marshals on domestic flights, and take new measures to prevent

hijacking. We will come together to promote stability and keep our airlines flying, with direct assistance during this emergency. (Applause.)

¶46: We will come together to give law enforcement the additional tools it needs to track down terror here at home. (Applause.) We will come together to strengthen our intelligence capabilities to know the plans of terrorists before they act, and find them before they strike. (Applause.)

¶47: We will come together to take active steps that strengthen America's economy, and put our people back to work.

¶48: Tonight we welcome two leaders who embody the extraordinary spirit of all New Yorkers: Governor George Pataki, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. (Applause.) As a symbol of America's resolve, my administration will work with Congress, and these two leaders, to show the world that we will rebuild New York City. (Applause.)

¶49: After all that has just passed -- all the lives taken, and all the possibilities and hopes that died with them -- it is natural to wonder if America's future is one of fear. Some speak of an age of terror. I know there are struggles ahead, and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world. (Applause.)

¶50: Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom -- the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time -- now depends on us. Our nation -- this generation -- will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail. (Applause.)

¶51: It is my hope that in the months and years ahead, life will return almost to normal. We'll go back to our lives and routines, and that is good. Even grief recedes with time and grace. But our resolve must not pass. Each of us will remember what happened that day, and to whom it happened. We'll remember the moment the news came -- where we were and what we were doing. Some will remember an image of a fire, or a story of rescue. Some will carry memories of a face and a voice gone forever.

¶52: And I will carry this: It is the police shield of a man named George Howard, who died at the World Trade Center trying to save others. It was given to me by his mom, Arlene, as a proud memorial to her son. This is my reminder of lives that ended, and a task that does not end. (Applause.)

¶53: I will not forget this wound to our country or those who inflicted it. I will not yield; I will not rest; I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.

¶54: The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them. (Applause.)

¶55: Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice -- assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may He watch over the United States of America.

Thank you. (Applause.)

## APPENDIX B. Presidential Addresses (continued)

### B-2: President Discusses Hurricane Relief in Address to the Nation

*September 15, 2005, Jackson Square, New Orleans, Louisiana*

- ¶1: THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. I'm speaking to you from the city of New Orleans -- nearly empty, still partly under water, and waiting for life and hope to return. Eastward from Lake Pontchartrain, across the Mississippi coast, to Alabama into Florida, millions of lives were changed in a day by a cruel and wasteful storm.
- ¶2: In the aftermath, we have seen fellow citizens left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones, and grieving for the dead, and looking for meaning in a tragedy that seems so blind and random. We've also witnessed the kind of desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know -- fellow Americans calling out for food and water, vulnerable people left at the mercy of criminals who had no mercy, and the bodies of the dead lying uncovered and untended in the street.
- ¶3: These days of sorrow and outrage have also been marked by acts of courage and kindness that make all Americans proud. Coast Guard and other personnel rescued tens of thousands of people from flooded neighborhoods. Religious congregations and families have welcomed strangers as brothers and sisters and neighbors. In the community of Chalmette, when two men tried to break into a home, the owner invited them to stay -- and took in 15 other people who had no place to go. At Tulane Hospital for Children, doctors and nurses did not eat for days so patients could have food, and eventually carried the patients on their backs up eight flights of stairs to helicopters.
- ¶4: Many first responders were victims themselves, wounded healers, with a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. When I met Steve Scott of the Biloxi Fire Department, he and his colleagues were conducting a house-to-house search for survivors. Steve told me this: "I lost my house and I lost my cars, but I still got my family. . . and I still got my spirit."
- ¶5: Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost much, and suffered much, and given to the limit of their power, we are seeing that same spirit -- a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away, and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before.
- ¶6: Tonight so many victims of the hurricane and the flood are far from home and friends and familiar things. You need to know that our whole nation cares about you, and in the journey ahead you're not alone. To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country. To every person who has served and sacrificed in this emergency, I offer the gratitude of our country. And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes, to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives. And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know there is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again.
- ¶7: The work of rescue is largely finished; the work of recovery is moving forward. In nearly all of Mississippi, electric power has been restored. Trade is starting to return to the Port of New Orleans, and agricultural shipments are moving down the Mississippi River. All major gasoline pipelines are now in operation, preventing the supply disruptions that many feared. The breaks in the levees have been closed, the pumps are running, and the water here in New Orleans is receding by the hour. Environmental officials are on the ground, taking water samples, identifying and dealing with hazardous debris, and working to get drinking water and waste water treatment systems operating again. And some very sad duties are being carried out by professionals who gather the dead, treat them with respect, and prepare them for their rest.
- ¶8: In the task of recovery and rebuilding, some of the hardest work is still ahead, and it will require the creative skill and generosity of a united country.

- ¶9: Our first commitment is to meet the immediate needs of those who had to flee their homes and leave all their possessions behind. For these Americans, every night brings uncertainty, every day requires new courage, and in the months to come will bring more than their fair share of struggles.
- ¶10: The Department of Homeland Security is registering evacuees who are now in shelters and churches, or private homes, whether in the Gulf region or far away. I have signed an order providing immediate assistance to people from the disaster area. As of today, more than 500,000 evacuee families have gotten emergency help to pay for food, clothing, and other essentials. Evacuees who have not yet registered should contact FEMA or the Red Cross. We need to know who you are, because many of you will be eligible for broader assistance in the future. Many families were separated during the evacuation, and we are working to help you reunite. Please call this number: 1-877-568-3317 -- that's 1-877-568-3317 -- and we will work to bring your family back together, and pay for your travel to reach them.
- ¶12: In addition, we're taking steps to ensure that evacuees do not have to travel great distances or navigate bureaucracies to get the benefits that are there for them. The Department of Health and Human Services has sent more than 1,500 health professionals, along with over 50 tons of medical supplies -- including vaccines and antibiotics and medicines for people with chronic conditions such as diabetes. The Social Security Administration is delivering checks. The Department of Labor is helping displaced persons apply for temporary jobs and unemployment benefits. And the Postal Service is registering new addresses so that people can get their mail.
- ¶13: To carry out the first stages of the relief effort and begin rebuilding at once, I have asked for, and the Congress has provided, more than \$60 billion. This is an unprecedented response to an unprecedented crisis, which demonstrates the compassion and resolve of our nation.
- ¶14: Our second commitment is to help the citizens of the Gulf Coast to overcome this disaster, put their lives back together, and rebuild their communities. Along this coast, for mile after mile, the wind and water swept the land clean. In Mississippi, many thousands of houses were damaged or destroyed. In New Orleans and surrounding parishes, more than a quarter-million houses are no longer safe to live in. Hundreds of thousands of people from across this region will need to find longer-term housing.
- ¶15: Our goal is to get people out of the shelters by the middle of October. So we're providing direct assistance to evacuees that allows them to rent apartments, and many already are moving into places of their own. A number of states have taken in evacuees and shown them great compassion -- admitting children to school, and providing health care. So I will work with the Congress to ensure that states are reimbursed for these extra expenses.
- ¶16: In the disaster area, and in cities that have received huge numbers of displaced people, we're beginning to bring in mobile homes and trailers for temporary use. To relieve the burden on local health care facilities in the region, we're sending extra doctors and nurses to these areas. We're also providing money that can be used to cover overtime pay for police and fire departments while the cities and towns rebuild.
- ¶17: Near New Orleans, and Biloxi, and other cities, housing is urgently needed for police and firefighters, other service providers, and the many workers who are going to rebuild these cities. Right now, many are sleeping on ships we have brought to the Port of New Orleans -- and more ships are on their way to the region. And we'll provide mobile homes, and supply them with basic services, as close to construction areas as possible, so the rebuilding process can go forward as quickly as possible.
- ¶18: And the federal government will undertake a close partnership with the states of Louisiana and Mississippi, the city of New Orleans, and other Gulf Coast cities, so they can rebuild in a sensible, well-planned way. Federal funds will cover the great majority of the costs of repairing public infrastructure in the disaster zone, from roads and bridges to schools and water systems. Our goal is to get the work done quickly. And taxpayers expect this work to be done honestly and wisely -- so we'll have a team of inspectors general reviewing all expenditures.

- ¶19: In the rebuilding process, there will be many important decisions and many details to resolve, yet we're moving forward according to some clear principles. The federal government will be fully engaged in the mission, but Governor Barbour, Governor Blanco, Mayor Nagin, and other state and local leaders will have the primary role in planning for their own future. Clearly, communities will need to move decisively to change zoning laws and building codes, in order to avoid a repeat of what we've seen. And in the work of rebuilding, as many jobs as possible should go to the men and women who live in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.
- ¶20: Our third commitment is this: When communities are rebuilt, they must be even better and stronger than before the storm. Within the Gulf region are some of the most beautiful and historic places in America. As all of us saw on television, there's also some deep, persistent poverty in this region, as well. That poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America. We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action. So let us restore all that we have cherished from yesterday, and let us rise above the legacy of inequality. When the streets are rebuilt, there should be many new businesses, including minority-owned businesses, along those streets. When the houses are rebuilt, more families should own, not rent, those houses. When the regional economy revives, local people should be prepared for the jobs being created.
- ¶21: Americans want the Gulf Coast not just to survive, but to thrive; not just to cope, but to overcome. We want evacuees to come home, for the best of reasons -- because they have a real chance at a better life in a place they love.
- ¶22: When one resident of this city who lost his home was asked by a reporter if he would relocate, he said, "Naw, I will rebuild -- but I will build higher." That is our vision for the future, in this city and beyond: We'll not just rebuild, we'll build higher and better. To meet this goal, I will listen to good ideas from Congress, and state and local officials, and the private sector. I believe we should start with three initiatives that the Congress should pass.
- ¶23: Tonight I propose the creation of a Gulf Opportunity Zone, encompassing the region of the disaster in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama. Within this zone, we should provide immediate incentives for job-creating investment, tax relief for small businesses, incentives to companies that create jobs, and loans and loan guarantees for small businesses, including minority-owned enterprises, to get them up and running again. It is entrepreneurship that creates jobs and opportunity; it is entrepreneurship that helps break the cycle of poverty; and we will take the side of entrepreneurs as they lead the economic revival of the Gulf region.
- ¶24: I propose the creation of Worker Recovery Accounts to help those evacuees who need extra help finding work. Under this plan, the federal government would provide accounts of up to \$5,000, which these evacuees could draw upon for job training and education to help them get a good job, and for child care expenses during their job search.
- ¶25: And to help lower-income citizens in the hurricane region build new and better lives, I also propose that Congress pass an Urban Homesteading Act. Under this approach, we will identify property in the region owned by the federal government, and provide building sites to low-income citizens free of charge, through a lottery. In return, they would pledge to build on the lot, with either a mortgage or help from a charitable organization like Habitat for Humanity. Home ownership is one of the great strengths of any community, and it must be a central part of our vision for the revival of this region.
- ¶26: In the long run, the New Orleans area has a particular challenge, because much of the city lies below sea level. The people who call it home need to have reassurance that their lives will be safer in the years to come. Protecting a city that sits lower than the water around it is not easy, but it can, and has been done. City and parish officials in New Orleans, and state officials in Louisiana will have a large part in the engineering decisions to come. And the Army Corps of Engineers will work at their side to make the flood protection system stronger than it has ever been.

- ¶27: The work that has begun in the Gulf Coast region will be one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen. When that job is done, all Americans will have something to be very proud of -- and all Americans are needed in this common effort. It is the armies of compassion -- charities and houses of worship, and idealistic men and women -- that give our reconstruction effort its humanity. They offer to those who hurt a friendly face, an arm around the shoulder, and the reassurance that in hard times, they can count on someone who cares. By land, by sea, and by air, good people wanting to make a difference deployed to the Gulf Coast, and they've been working around the clock ever since.
- ¶28: The cash needed to support the armies of compassion is great, and Americans have given generously. For example, the private fundraising effort led by former Presidents Bush and Clinton has already received pledges of more than \$100 million. Some of that money is going to the Governors to be used for immediate needs within their states. A portion will also be sent to local houses of worship to help reimburse them for the expense of helping others. This evening the need is still urgent, and I ask the American people to continue donating to the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, other good charities, and religious congregations in the region.
- ¶29: It's also essential for the many organizations of our country to reach out to your fellow citizens in the Gulf area. So I've asked USA Freedom Corps to create an information clearinghouse, available at [usafreedomcorps.gov](http://usafreedomcorps.gov), so that families anywhere in the country can find opportunities to help families in the region, or a school can support a school. And I challenge existing organizations -- churches, and Scout troops, or labor union locals to get in touch with their counterparts in Mississippi, Louisiana, or Alabama, and learn what they can do to help. In this great national enterprise, important work can be done by everyone, and everyone should find their role and do their part.
- ¶30: The government of this nation will do its part, as well. Our cities must have clear and up-to-date plans for responding to natural disasters, and disease outbreaks, or a terrorist attack, for evacuating large numbers of people in an emergency, and for providing the food and water and security they would need. In a time of terror threats and weapons of mass destruction, the danger to our citizens reaches much wider than a fault line or a flood plain. I consider detailed emergency planning to be a national security priority, and therefore, I've ordered the Department of Homeland Security to undertake an immediate review, in cooperation with local counterparts, of emergency plans in every major city in America.
- ¶31: I also want to know all the facts about the government response to Hurricane Katrina. The storm involved a massive flood, a major supply and security operation, and an evacuation order affecting more than a million people. It was not a normal hurricane -- and the normal disaster relief system was not equal to it. Many of the men and women of the Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the United States military, the National Guard, Homeland Security, and state and local governments performed skillfully under the worst conditions. Yet the system, at every level of government, was not well-coordinated, and was overwhelmed in the first few days. It is now clear that a challenge on this scale requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the armed forces -- the institution of our government most capable of massive logistical operations on a moment's notice.
- ¶32: Four years after the frightening experience of September the 11th, Americans have every right to expect a more effective response in a time of emergency. When the federal government fails to meet such an obligation, I, as President, am responsible for the problem, and for the solution. So I've ordered every Cabinet Secretary to participate in a comprehensive review of the government response to the hurricane. This government will learn the lessons of Hurricane Katrina. We're going to review every action and make necessary changes, so that we are better prepared for any challenge of nature, or act of evil men, that could threaten our people.
- ¶33: The United States Congress also has an important oversight function to perform. Congress is preparing an investigation, and I will work with members of both parties to make sure this effort is thorough.

- ¶34: In the life of this nation, we have often been reminded that nature is an awesome force, and that all life is fragile. We're the heirs of men and women who lived through those first terrible winters at Jamestown and Plymouth, who rebuilt Chicago after a great fire, and San Francisco after a great earthquake, who reclaimed the prairie from the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Every time, the people of this land have come back from fire, flood, and storm to build anew -- and to build better than what we had before. Americans have never left our destiny to the whims of nature -- and we will not start now.
- ¶35: These trials have also reminded us that we are often stronger than we know -- with the help of grace and one another. They remind us of a hope beyond all pain and death, a God who welcomes the lost to a house not made with hands. And they remind us that we're tied together in this life, in this nation -- and that the despair of any touches us all.
- ¶36: I know that when you sit on the steps of a porch where a home once stood, or sleep on a cot in a crowded shelter, it is hard to imagine a bright future. But that future will come. The streets of Biloxi and Gulfport will again be filled with lovely homes and the sound of children playing. The churches of Alabama will have their broken steeples mended and their congregations whole. And here in New Orleans, the street cars will once again rumble down St. Charles, and the passionate soul of a great city will return.
- ¶37: In this place, there's a custom for the funerals of jazz musicians. The funeral procession parades slowly through the streets, followed by a band playing a mournful dirge as it moves to the cemetery. Once the casket has been laid in place, the band breaks into a joyful "second line" -- symbolizing the triumph of the spirit over death. Tonight the Gulf Coast is still coming through the dirge -- yet we will live to see the second line.

Thank you, and may God bless America.

## APPENDIX C. Network News Broadcasts

### C-1. September 11 Terrorist Attacks (September 11, 2001 – September 22, 2001)

#### NBC Nightly News

1. Tom Brokaw. "President Bush Returns to White House on Marine One." *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2001.
2. Tom Brokaw. "The Situation Room in the White House as Bush Returns." *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2001.
3. Tom Brokaw. "Chronology of Terrorist Events that Occurred Today." *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2001.
4. Tom Brokaw. "President Bush's Reaction to the Terrorist Attacks." *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2001.
5. Tom Brokaw. "Worldwide Investigation into Attack on World Trade Center Moving Swiftly." *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.
6. Tom Brokaw. "Bush Administration Claims Air Force One and White House Possible Targets of Terrorist Attack." *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.
7. Tom Brokaw. "US Military Officials Working on Plan to Retaliate." *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.
8. Tom Brokaw. "Large Amounts of Intelligence to Analyze Makes it Difficult to Determine Terrorist Threats." *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.
9. Tom Brokaw. "FBI Arrests Suspects at Kennedy Airport and Flight Data Recorder Found on Hijacked Plane." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.
10. Tom Brokaw. "President Bush Visits Bombing Victims in Washington, Vows He'll Visit New York Also." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.
11. Tom Brokaw. "Possible US Relation Against Terrorist Organizations." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.
12. Tom Brokaw. "House and Senate Discuss Money and Power in Wake of Terrorist Attacks." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.
13. Tom Brokaw. "Country Behind the President in Dealing with Terrorist Attacks." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2001.
14. Tom Brokaw. "NBC Nightly News 6:30 p.m." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.
15. Tom Brokaw. "President Bush Visits Weary Rescuers as Operations Continue." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.
16. Tom Brokaw. "Bush and Four Former Presidents Attend Memorial Service." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.
17. Tom Brokaw. "Bush Calls Up 50,000 Reserves to Defend America Against Further Terrorist Attacks." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.
18. Tom Brokaw. "Osama bin Laden, the Mastermind Behind Terrorism, is Discussed." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.
19. Tom Brokaw. "Congress and Senate Support President Bush." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2001.
20. Tom Brokaw. "President Bush Warns Americans to Prepare for War." *NBC Nightly News*, 15 September 2001.
21. Tom Brokaw. "Update on Damage at Pentagon." *NBC Nightly News*, 15 September 2001.
22. Tom Brokaw. "Back to Business in America as Death and Missing Toll Rises." *NBC Nightly News*, 16 September 2001.
23. Tom Brokaw. "Bush Assures America Terrorists Will Pay." *NBC Nightly News*, 16 September 2001.
24. Tom Brokaw. "Stock Market Takes Big Plunge as Nation Tries to Regroup After Terrorist Attack." *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2001.
25. Tom Brokaw. "Bush Assembling International Coalition Against Terrorism, Hunting for bin Laden." *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2001.
26. Tom Brokaw. "Military Plans to Map Out Strategy to Attack bin Laden's Stronghold." *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2001.
27. Tom Brokaw. "Hate Crimes on Rise in America Since Terrorist Attack." *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2001.
28. Tom Brokaw. "White House Observes Moment of Silence." *NBC Nightly News*, 18 September 2001.

29. Tom Brokaw. "Former President Clinton Discusses the World Trade Center Bombing and His Administration's Efforts to Capture Osama bin Laden." *NBC Nightly News*, 18 September 2001.
30. Tom Brokaw. "President and Officials Discuss Fighting Terrorism." *NBC Nightly News*, 18 September 2001.
31. Tom Brokaw. "Bush Trying to Solidify International Coalition Against Terrorism as Foreign Leaders Visit." *NBC Nightly News*, 19 September 2001.
32. Tom Brokaw. "America on Alert: Presidential Address to Joint Congress." *NBC Nightly News*, 20 September 2001.
33. Tom Brokaw. "Bush Will Address Nation Tonight Concerning War on Terrorism." *NBC Nightly News*, 20 September 2001.
34. Tom Brokaw. "Taliban's Continued Rejection of White House Plans Will Result in Accelerated War Preparations." *NBC Nightly News*, 21 September 2001.
35. Tom Brokaw. "US officials still believe bin Laden is in Afghanistan as Taliban poises for attack." *NBC Nightly News*, 21 September 2001.
36. Tom Brokaw. "New Cabinet Post Could Make Things Tougher for Terrorists." *NBC Nightly News*, 21 September 2001.
37. John Seigenthaler. "President to Name Specific Terrorist Groups, Ask Treasury to Freeze Their US Assets and Issue Worldwide Arrest Warrants." *NBC Nightly News*, 22 September 2001.

*CBS Evening News*

38. Dan Rather. "Damage and Injuries From Attack on American Sites in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC." *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2001.
39. Dan Rather. "Continuing Coverage of the Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon." *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2001.
40. Dan Rather. "Aftermath of Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon." *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2001.
41. Dan Rather. "Continuing Coverage of the Aftermath of Terrorist Attacks in New York and Washington DC." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.
42. Dan Rather. "Continuous Coverage of the Attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon." *CBS Nightly News*, 12 September 2001.
43. Dan Rather. "Today's Key Developments in the Attacks on America." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.
44. Dan Rather. "President Bush and the White House Were Targets of the Terrorist Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.
45. Dan Rather. "Plans for Possible Military Response Against Those Behind the Terror Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.
46. Dan Rather. "Continuing Coverage of the Attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2001.
47. Dan Rather. "Top Headlines." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
48. Dan Rather. "Taliban Rulers Brace for US Military Response." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
49. Dan Rather. "News Headlines of the Hour." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
50. Dan Rather. "Reaction of NATO Nations and Other US Allies to the September 11th Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
51. Dan Rather. "Top Headlines Involving the Terrorist Attack Investigation." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
52. Dan Rather. "Possibly Two of the Four Hijacked Airliners Were Bound for Washington, DC." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
53. Dan Rather. "Chronology of Events for the Last Few Hours of the Four Hijacked Airliners." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2001.
54. Dan Rather. "Headlines and Upcoming Stories." *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.
55. Dan Rather. "Problems US Faces in Mounting War on Terrorism." *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.
56. Dan Rather. "Today's Top News Headlines in Connection with the Terrorist Attacks on the United States." *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.
57. Dan Rather. "President Bush visits New York City to View the Wreckage and Offer Support to the Victims of Tuesday's Terrorist Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.

58. Dan Rather. "Defense Department Calls on 35,000 Reservists to Help and in Recovery Efforts." *CBS Evening News*, 14 September 2001.
59. John Roberts. "Latest Developments in the Terrorist Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2001.
60. John Roberts. "President Bush Meets with His Aides, As He Says Any Conflict Against Terrorists Will Not Be Short." *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2001.
61. John Roberts. "Recovery of Bodies from Pentagon Continues, as Authorities Say New Additions to the Building May Have Saved Some Lives." *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2001.
62. Dan Rather. "Latest Developments in Terrorist Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.
63. Dan Rather. "President Bush Urges Americans to Go Back to Work With Renewed Dedication." *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.
64. Dan Rather. "President Bush and His Aides Trying to Prepare Americans for Long Struggle Against Terrorism." *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.
65. Dan Rather. "Reports of Lethal Attack Authorized by President Clinton Against Osama bin Laden that Failed." *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.
66. Dan Rather. "Acts of Violence Against Arab Americans in the Wake of Tuesday's Terrorist Attacks on the US." *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2001.
67. Dan Rather. "President Bush Ordering Aides to Prepare a Comprehensive Plan for Helping the Financially Battered Airline Industry." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
68. Dan Rather. "President Preparing Country for a Different Kind of War." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
69. Dan Rather. "Evening News." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
70. Dan Rather. "Update on the Aftermath of the Terrorist Attacks on New York City and Washington." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
71. Dan Rather. "President Bush Vows to Punish Osama bin Laden for Last Week's Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
72. Dan Rather. "Military Officials Weigh Their Options in Regards to Locating Osama bin Laden." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
73. Dan Rather. "Images From Around the Nation in Wake of Last Week's Terrorist Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 17 September 2001.
74. Dan Rather. "Pakistani Delegation Delivers to Afghanistan a US Ultimatum to Turn Over Osama bin Laden." *CBS Evening News*, 18 September 2001.
75. Dan Rather. "Desperate Pleas for Financial Help by the Nation's Airlines." *CBS Evening News*, 18 September 2001.
76. Dan Rather. "President Bush Preparing to Address Congress." *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.
77. Dan Rather. "Egyptian Residents Divided on Support for US in War on Terrorism." *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.
78. Dan Rather. "Latest Developments in the Aftermath of the Terror Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.
79. Dan Rather. "Military Buildup for the War Against Terrorism is Beginning." *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.
80. Dan Rather. "President Bush Preparing American People for What's Ahead in the War Against Terrorism." *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.
81. Dan Rather. "Financial Fallout of the Terror Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 19 September 2001.
82. Dan Rather. "CBS Evening News Expanded Coverage." *CBS Evening News*, 20 September 2001.
83. Dan Rather. "President Bush to Address Congress and the Nation Tonight About the Current Crisis." *CBS Evening News*, 20 September 2001.
84. Dan Rather. "President Bush Attempt to Rally the Nation Tonight as the US Prepares for a Long Fight Against Worldwide Terrorism." *CBS Evening News*, 20 September 2001.
85. Dan Rather. "Latest Developments in the Aftermath of the Terrorist Attacks." *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.
86. Dan Rather. "US Military Forces Rapidly Being Deployed." *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.
87. Dan Rather. "President Bush Demands that the Taliban Government Hand Over Osama bin Laden." *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.
88. Dan Rather. "US Efforts Build a Convincing Case Against Osama bin Laden in the Terror Attacks Last Week." *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

89. Dan Rather. "Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge and His New Post as the Head of the Office of Homeland Security." *CBS Evening News*, 21 September 2001.

*ABC World News Tonight*

90. Peter Jennings. "America Under Attack." *ABC World News Tonight*, 11 September 2001.
91. Peter Jennings. "FBI Has Identified 12 Men Involved in Bombings." *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.
92. Peter Jennings. "Americans React to the Terrorist Bombings as Some Seek Retaliation." *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.
93. Peter Jennings. "US Retaliation Against Terrorists is Discussed." *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.
94. Peter Jennings. "Support for Israel Probably Main Reason Arabs, Terrorists Turn Against US." *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.
95. Peter Jennings. "America Under Attack 6 p.m." *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2001.
96. Peter Jennings. "People Rescued: Destruction in the City." *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2001.
97. Peter Jennings. "Donald Rumsfeld Discusses the Current Situation at the Pentagon." *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2001.
98. Peter Jennings. "Osama bin Laden is Protected by the Taliban." *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2001.
99. Peter Jennings. "America Under Attack 6:00 p.m." *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2001.
100. Peter Jennings. "President Bush Visits New York City to See for Himself the Devastation." *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2001.
101. Peter Jennings. "American Law Enforcement Being Vigilant." *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2001.
102. Peter Jennings. "Photographers James Nakwe Discusses World Trade Center Destruction." *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2001.
103. Peter Jennings. "America Under Attack 6:00PM." *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2001.
104. Peter Jennings. "Current Knowledge of Events." *ABC World News Tonight*, 15 September 2001.
105. Peter Jennings. "President Bush on the Terrorist Attacks." *ABC World News Tonight*, 15 September 2001.
106. Charles Gibson. "President Bush Reacts to the Terrorism." *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2001.
107. Charles Gibson. "President Bush Prepares the Nation for War." *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2001.
108. Charles Gibson. "Pakistan Agrees to Support US in Attacks Against Afghanistan." *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2001.
109. Peter Jennings. "President Warns Afghanistan Not to Take Our Warnings Lightly." *ABC World News Tonight*, 17 September 2001.
110. Peter Jennings. "Bush Getting Visitors From Overseas to Fight Terrorism." *ABC World News Tonight*, 18 September 2001.
111. Peter Jennings. "US Getting More Allies as Countries Surrounding Afghanistan Offer Help." *ABC World News Tonight*, 18 September 2001.
112. Peter Jennings. "President Bush Meets With the President of Indonesia." *ABC World News Tonight*, 19 September 2001.
113. Peter Jennings. "President Bush Will Address Congress and Nation." *ABC World News Tonight*, 20 September 2001.
114. Peter Jennings. "People in Afghanistan and Pakistan Fear War." *ABC World News Tonight*, 21 September 2001.
115. Peter Jennings. "President Appoints New Office to His Cabinet." *ABC World News Tonight*, 21 September 2001.
116. Peter Jennings. "People Worry About War." *ABC World News Tonight*, 21 September 2001.

## APPENDIX C. Network News Broadcasts (continued)

### C-2. Hurricane Katrina (August 29, 2005 – September 17, 2005)

#### NBC Nightly News

1. Brian Williams. "Hurricane Katrina Hit Hard, Dwindled Fast, Did Damage." *NBC Nightly News*, 29 August 2005.
2. Brian Williams. "President Bush Says Recovery From Hurricane Katrina Will Take Years." *NBC Nightly News*, 31 August 2005.
3. Brian Williams. "Nightly News Headlines." *NBC Nightly News*, 1 September 2005.
4. Brian Williams. "Overview of Government Response to Hurricane and Why It Failed." *NBC Nightly News*, 2 September 2005.
5. John Seigenthaler. "Some Critical of Response Time of Rescue Efforts." *NBC Nightly News*, 3 September 2005.
6. John Seigenthaler. "Federal Government Called to Task for Being So Slow to Respond." *NBC Nightly News*, 4 September 2005.
7. John Seigenthaler. "FEMA Director Michael Brown Drawing Criticism for Rescue Efforts in Louisiana." *NBC Nightly News*, 4 September 2005.
8. Brian Williams. "Democrats Call for Commission to Study Katrina." *NBC Nightly News*, 6 September 2005.
9. Brian Williams. "New Orleans Paramedics Donny Lirette and Dr. Christopher Najberg helping Hurricane Katrina flood." *NBC Nightly News*, 6 September 2005.
10. Brian Williams. "Bush Asks Congress for More Aid to Help Louisiana." *NBC Nightly News*, 7 September 2005.
11. Brian Williams. "FEMA Director Michael Brown Relieved From Hurricane Katrina Disaster Duties." *NBC Nightly News*, 9 September 2005.
12. John Seigenthaler. "Hurricane Handling Affects Bush Poll Numbers." *NBC Nightly News*, 10 September 2005.
13. John Seigenthaler. "Some Businesses in New Orleans Opening, Including a Hotel with Power, as President Bush arrives for third tour." *NBC Nightly News*, 11 September 2005.
14. Brian Williams. "Director of FEMA Michael Brown Resigns." *NBC Nightly News*, 12 September 2005.
15. Brian Williams. "NBC Nightly News 6:30 p.m." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2005.
16. Brian Williams. "President Bush Takes Responsibility for Federal Government's Delay Helping Hurricane Katrina Victims." *NBC Nightly News*, 13 September 2005.
17. Brian Williams. "President Bush Addresses the UN." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2005.
18. Brian Williams. "NBC News/Wall Street Journal Polls Shows President Bush Has Lowest Favorable Ratings in Presidency." *NBC Nightly News*, 14 September 2005.
19. Brian Williams. "Advanced Copy of President Bush's Speech Promises Help to Hurricane Katrina Victims." *NBC Nightly News*, 15 September 2005.
20. Brian Williams. "President Bush Pledges to Rebuild New Orleans." *NBC Nightly News*, 16 September 2005.
21. Amy Robach. "Questions Raised About the Cost of Rebuilding Areas Hit by Katrina." *NBC Nightly News*, 17 September 2005.

#### CBS Evening News

22. John Roberts. "Thousands of People Seeking Shelter in the Louisiana Superdome; Winds from Hurricane Katrina Rip Off Parts of the Dome Roof." *CBS Evening News*, 29 August 2005.
23. Bob Schieffer. "New Orleans Suffering Through the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 31 August 2005.
24. Bob Schieffer. "Gasoline Prices on the Rise Following Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 31 August 2005.
25. Bob Schieffer. "Update on the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 31 August 2005.
26. Bob Schieffer. "Many Louisiana Communities Suffering Following Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 1 September 2005.
27. Bob Schieffer. "Bush Under Intense Pressure to Hurry Aid to Hurricane Victims." *CBS Evening News*, 1 September 2005.

28. Bob Schieffer. "Gas Prices Surge in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 1 September 2005.
29. John Roberts. "Federal Response Too Slow According to Some Refugees and Some States Officials." *CBS Evening News*, 2 September 2005.
30. Thalia Assuras. "Heart-wrenching Images and Haunting Moments of the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 3 September 2005.
31. John Roberts. "Bush White House Scrambling to Show They Are on Top of the Hurricane Recovery Effort and Pointing Blame at Local Officials." *CBS Evening News*, 4 September 2005.
32. Bob Schieffer. "Recovery Effort Finally Seems to be Gaining Traction in New Orleans." *CBS Evening News*, 5 September 2005.
33. John Roberts. "People of Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, Still Waiting for Federal Help." *CBS Evening News*, 5 September 2005.
34. Bob Schieffer. "Texas Couple Opens Up Their Home to Hurricane Katrina Evacuees." *CBS Evening News*, 5 September 2005.
35. Bob Schieffer. "White House and Louisiana Officials in Disagreement Over Where the Blame Lies for the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 6 September 2005.
36. John Roberts. "Washington Officials Begin Finger-pointing Over Who is to Blame for the Poor Response to Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 6 September 2005.
37. Bob Schieffer. "Continuing Criticism of FEMA Director Michael Brown." *CBS Evening News*, 7 September 2005.
38. John Roberts. "Criticism of Governmental Response to Hurricane Katrina Continues, Investigation Planned." *CBS Evening News*, 8 September 2005.
39. John Roberts. "Officials Should Not Have Been Surprised by Katrina's Devastation; Study Last Summer Accurately Predicted the Effects of Such a Storm." *CBS Evening News*, 8 September 2005.
40. John Roberts. "CBS Evening News 6:30 p.m." *CBS Evening News*, 9 September 2005.
41. John Roberts. "FEMA Chief Michael Brown Reassigned to Washington, Coast Guard Official Takes Over Katrina Relief Efforts." *CBS Evening News*, 9 September 2005.
42. Russ Mitchell. "New Figures Out Today Showing Damage Estimates from Hurricane Katrina Could Climb to \$200 Billion and Top More Than \$300 Billion." *CBS Evening News*, 10 September 2005.
43. Mika Brzezinski. "President Bush returning to New Orleans as Effort is Made to Find Out Why So Many Things There Went Wrong." *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2005.
44. Mika Brzezinski. "What Can be Expected From John Roberts' Confirmation Hearings." *CBS Evening News*, 11 September 2005.
45. Bob Schieffer. "Calls to 911 Reveal Opening Hours of Hurricane Katrina Disaster in New Orleans." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2005.
46. Bob Schieffer. "FEMA Director Michael Brow Resigns." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2005.
47. Bob Schieffer. "Firefighters Answer Call to Help in New Orleans But Many Get Mired in Bureaucracy." *CBS Evening News*, 12 September 2005.
48. Bob Schieffer. "CBS Evening News 6:30 p.m." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2005.
49. Bob Schieffer. "Bush Takes Responsibility for Slow Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 13 September 2005.
50. Bob Schieffer. "Federal Government Taking Steps to Avoid Abuses and Waste of Money Earmarked to Rebuild Areas Hit by Hurricane Katrina." *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2005.
51. Bob Schieffer. "Federal and State Disaster Teams in North Carolina with Hurricane Ophelia Battering the Coast." *CBS Evening News*, 15 September 2005.
52. Bob Schieffer. "President Bush Saying He is Convinced There's No Need for Tax Hike But That Other Programs May Have to be Cut." *CBS Evening News*, 16 September 2005.

*ABC World News Tonight*

53. Charles Gibson. "Direct Hit Howard Street Stories." *ABC World News Tonight*, 30 August 2005.
54. Charles Gibson. "Phoning Home Making Contact." *ABC World News Tonight*, 31 August 2005.
55. Charles Gibson. "Gas Crisis? Soaring Prices." *ABC World News Tonight*, 31 August 2005.
56. Charles Gibson. "The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina." *ABC World News Tonight*, 31 August 2005.
57. Elizabeth Vargas. "Price Watch Katrina's Ripple Effect." *ABC World News Tonight*, 1 September 2005.
58. Bob Woodruff. "Asking Questions Federal Responsibility." *ABC World News Tonight*, 1 September 2005.
59. Elizabeth Vargas. "President Visits Hurricane Zone." *ABC World News Tonight*, 2 September 2005.

60. Dan Harris. "Special Report." *ABC World News Tonight*, 2 September 2005.
61. Bob Woodruff. "World News Tonight Saturday." *ABC World News Tonight*, 3 September 2005.
62. Bob Woodruff. "Death Toll: Potentially in the Thousands." *ABC World News Tonight*, 3 September 2005.
63. Charles Gibson. "The FEMA Director Michael Brown's Inexperience Spotlighted." *ABC World News Tonight*, 5 September 2005.
64. Bob Woodruff. "Helping Hands Foster Families Take in Hurricane Victims." *ABC World News Tonight*, 5 September 2005.
65. Charles Gibson. "Boots on the Ground Reclaiming New Orleans." *ABC World News Tonight*, 5 September 2005.
66. Charles Gibson. "World News Tonight 6:30 p.m." *ABC World News Tonight*, 5 September 2005.
67. Bob Woodruff. "A Closer Look Blame Game." *ABC World News Tonight*, 6 September 2005.
68. Charles Gibson. "Dealing With Disaster White House Damage Control." *ABC World News Tonight*, 6 September 2005.
69. Charles Gibson. "Largest Migration in 70 Years Evacuees Flown to Thirty States." *ABC World News Tonight*, 6 September 2005.
70. Charles Gibson. "Price Watch at the Pump." *ABC World News Tonight*, 7 September 2005.
71. Charles Gibson. "Time to go Forced Evacuations Begin." *ABC World News Tonight*, 7 September 2005.
72. Elizabeth Vargas. "A Closer Look Anatomy of a Crisis." *ABC World News Tonight*, 8 September 2005.
73. Bob Woodruff. "Where to Find the Money? War, Hurricane Relief, and Tax Cuts Don't Mix." *ABC World News Tonight*, 8 September 2005.
74. Elizabeth Vargas. "System Strained Debit Card Fiasco." *ABC World News Tonight*, 8 September 2005.
75. Elizabeth Vargas. "Interview Colin Powell." *ABC World News Tonight*, 9 September 2005.
76. Elizabeth Vargas. "FEMA Michael Brown Removed From Katrina Relief." *ABC World News tonight*, 9 September 2005.
77. Terry Moran. "Progress and Problems Clean-up From Katrina Continues." *ABC World News Tonight*, 11 September 2005.
78. Elizabeth Vargas. "Brown's Out FEMA Director Mike Brown Resigns." *ABC World News Tonight*, 12 September 2005.
79. Elizabeth Vargas. "Presidential Apology Bush Takes Responsibility for Hurricane Failures." *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2005.
80. Elizabeth Vargas. "Admission From President Bush." *ABC World News Tonight*, 13 September 2005.
81. Elizabeth Vargas. "Day of Bombs Massacre in Iraq." *ABC World News Tonight*, 14 September 2005.
82. Bob Woodruff. "Disaster Zone Bush Speech." *ABC World News Tonight*, 15 September 2005.
83. Bob Woodruff. "President Bush's Ambitious Plan to Rebuild the Gulf Coast." *ABC World News Tonight*, 15 September 2005.
84. Bob Woodruff. "The President's Plan Katrina's Cost." *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2005.
85. Bob Woodruff. "World News Tonight Headlines." *ABC World News Tonight*, 16 September 2005.

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# Nadia Michele Aljabri

## Curriculum Vitae

### EDUCATION

**M.A., Communication; Emphasis: Campaign and Political Communication**, May 2007  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Va.

**Future Professorate Graduate Certificate**, completed Fall 2006  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Va.  
Courses: Contemporary Pedagogy, Preparing the Future Professorate, Communication Education, and GTA Training Workshop

**B.A., Communication; Emphasis: Public Relations; Minor: Political Science and Sociology**,  
Magna Cum Laude, May 2005  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Va.  
Overall GPA: 3.68/4.0, In-major GPA: 3.8/4.0

**Central Europe Study Abroad**, Summer 2004, Courses: International Communications and Photojournalism; Countries: Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic

### ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

**Graduate Instructor, Public Speaking, Department of Communication at Virginia Tech**  
*Blacksburg, Va., August 2005 – May 2007*

- Taught up to 80 students per semester
- Content included the fundamentals of public speaking, speech writing, and presentations

**Graduate Research Assistant, Dr. Jim A. Kuypers, Virginia Tech**  
*Blacksburg, Va., August 2006 – May 2007*

- Assisted in various research projects including the professor's current book publication
- Compiled data to present in an easy to use format

**Reference Assistant, Newman Library, Virginia Tech**  
*Blacksburg, Va., August 2006 – May 2007*

- Worked at the main reference desk in the lobby serving as the "public face" of the library
- Assisted patrons in various aspect of academic research, including the use of databases, websites, and other non-traditional resources available through the library

**Teaching Assistant, Creative Dance, Virginia Tech**  
*Blacksburg, Va., Fall 2003, Fall 2004*

- Assisted in demonstrations, lecturing, set-up, and execution of classroom techniques

**Undergraduate Assistant, Introduction to Communication, Virginia Tech**  
*Blacksburg, Va., Fall 2002*

- Assisted Dr. Matt McAllister in lecturing and tutoring the 500 student course

**College Ambassador, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Virginia Tech**  
*Blacksburg, Va., August 2003 – May 2005*

- Served on the Coordinating Board
- Represented the college at various alumni and prospective student events such as the donor dinner and open house

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **Work Study / Intern, News Bureau Office, Virginia Tech**

*Blacksburg, Va., August 2004 – May 2005*

- Created press releases and media advisories to be released to the university and general public
- Assisted with managing the media during special events, including speakers Al Sharpton, James Carville & Mary Matalin, and Elie Wiesel

### **Volunteer Public Relations Coordinator, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation**

*Roanoke, Va., 2003 - 2004*

- Created news releases, public service announcements, brochures, and newsletters
- Worked with the Special Events Coordinator to develop new ideas for fundraising and media coverage

### **Coordinator and Hostess of Golf “Fore” a Cure Classic, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation**

*Prince George, Va., July 2002 – present*

- Created, coordinated and hosted golf tournament to raise money and awareness for the organization
- Raised more than \$10,000

### **Walk for a Cure, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation**

*Richmond, Va., September 2000, 2001, Roanoke, VA, September 2003, 2004*

- Assisted special events coordinator with press releases and media coverage (2003)
- Raised more than \$1000

### **Managing Editor, “Bugle,” Yearbook at Virginia Tech**

*Blacksburg, Va., August 2002 – May 2003*

- Assisted in writing and/or rewriting stories, creating page layouts, and editing copy
- Trained and advised staff members

### **Miss Roanoke Valley 2005, Roanoke Scholarship Pageants, Inc.**

*Roanoke, Va., March 2005 – March 2006*

- Served as an ambassador and public spokesperson within the community
- Volunteered more than 500 hours of community service speaking at events, participating in fundraisers, and promoting my platform of Diabetes Awareness

## ACADEMIC SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

President, Communication Graduate Student Association, Virginia Tech, 2006-2007

Fundraising Chair, Communication Graduate Student Association, Virginia Tech, 2006-2007

Board Member, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Alumni Board, Virginia Tech, 2006-2007

Member, National Communication Association, 2005-2007

Member, Southern States Communication Association, 2006-2007

Search Committee Member, Department of Communication, Virginia Tech, 2005-2006

Fundraising Board, Communication Graduate Student Association, Virginia Tech, 2005-2006

## ACADEMIC HONORS & AWARDS

- Top Student Paper, Political Communication Division, Southern States Communication Association (2007)
- Virginia Tech Citizen Scholar (2006-2007)
- Phi Kappa Phi, National Honor Society, Virginia Tech Chapter (2006)
- Miss Roanoke Valley 2005 (2005-2006)
- Kappa Omicron Nu National Honor Society of the college of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (2004)
- Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society of Virginia Tech (2003, 2004)
- Ed Ewing Study Abroad Scholarship (2003)
- Edward Cooke Estate Scholarship (2003, 2004)
- Eugene & Mary Rowe Scholarship (2004)
- Floyd-Francis Scholarship (2003)
- Miss New River Valley 2003 (2003-2004)
- Virginia Tech Alumni Scholarship (2001)
- Presidential Student Service Award for Community Service (2000)

## SCHOLARSHIP & RESEARCH

- **“A Comparative Pentadic Analysis of Mediated Presidential Discourse During 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina,”** Master’s Thesis, Completed April 2007
- **“Hurricane Katrina: President Bush vs. Network News – A Comparative Rhetorical Framing Analysis of the Media’s Coverage and President Bush’s Hurricane Katrina Address,”** Top Student Paper in the Political Communication Division, presented at the Southern States Communication Association Convention 2007. Louisville, KY
- **“The Confusion of Hurricane Katrina: A Pentadic Analysis of President Bush’s Address to the Nation,”** presented at the Southern States Communication Association Convention 2007. Louisville, KY
- **“REAL Public Speaking: Resource Management, Online Instruction, and Communities of Practice for GTAs and Undergrads,”** Panel Member, presented at the Southern States Communication Association Convention 2007. Louisville, KY
- **“When Humor isn’t Humorous: A Pentadic Analysis of the Danish Cartoon Incident,”** Co-author with Dr. Edd Sewell, presented at the International Society for Humor Conference 2006. Copenhagen, Germany