

# A Way With Words? Communication Frames and the Potential for Presidential Leadership

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## Abstract

Recent scholarly work suggests that communication frames are a potentially important element of presidential leadership. However, students of the presidency provide little evidence about whether presidents can use frames to change policy-relevant discourse. This study develops a framework for testing this possibility, and applies it to an important rhetorical test case: George W. Bush's campaign to build support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Using a Bayesian cluster analysis, we first identify frames in Bush's public statements about Iraq and then evaluate these frames' prominence in media outlets that encapsulate the post-broadcast era. The results suggest that journalists and opinion columnists responded to changes in Bush's Iraq rhetoric during the fall 2002 campaign, but this pattern did not continue in the face of an empowered opposition in the final months before the invasion. In terms of its contribution, this study produces evidence on the strengths and limitations of a president's rhetorical leadership through framing.

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The sources and nature of presidential power are central themes within studies of the American presidency, and scholars have long viewed public rhetoric as a viable mechanism of presidential influence (e.g., Tulis 1987; Kernell 1993). However, with regard to its influence on other democratic actors, including policy-makers (Canes-Wrone 2001), the media agenda (Wood and Peake 1998; Edwards and Wood 1999), and public opinion (Kernell 1993; Cohen 1995; Hill 1998; Edwards 2003), studies consistently find a limited role for presidential rhetoric. These results have prompted some scholars to reassess how political communication creates opportunities for leadership. According to one revisionist account, a president’s “primal” leadership opportunity is not shaping the media agenda or persuading the public, but setting or shifting the terms of policy debate (Skowronek 2005, 818; also see Edwards 2009*b*).

In attempting to frame policy deliberations, the *potential* for rhetorical leadership is clear. If presidents raise to prominence their preferred ideas and perspectives, then they structure how other democratic actors think about and discuss policy problems. What is equally clear, however, is current scholarly understanding about the topic: “Despite the substantial efforts presidents make to frame issues,” Edwards writes, “we know almost nothing about their success” (2009*a*, 191).

In the pages that follow, we begin to build evidence on framing as a pathway to presidential leadership. The challenges in this effort include identifying issue frames within presidential communications, and defining what it means for a president to frame a policy debate. We draw on two observations about the contemporary political communication system to address these challenges. First, like all politicians, presidents seek to disseminate “frames in communication” (Druckman 2001, 227) by developing strategic language that links political issues with ideas and events and promotes a particular interpretation (Entman 2004; Jacobs and Shapiro 2000). Second, presidents are now unlikely to communicate directly with a national public audience (Baum and Kernell 1999). Instead, they seek indirect influence through the various mediated communication channels that comprise the “post-broadcast”

media environment (Cohen 2008, 2010). Taken together, these observations are helpful because they imply an initial necessary condition for rhetorical leadership through framing: a president’s strategic language must be replicated across multiple media outlets and formats.

We test this condition using a recent case, George W. Bush’s campaign to build support for a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. On the one hand this case is favorable to finding success, both because a president’s influence on media content is greatest on foreign policy (Baum and Groeling 2010; Edwards and Wood 1999) and because descriptive accounts conclude that Bush shaped media coverage of Iraq (e.g., Boehlert 2006; Hiro 2004). On the other hand, longstanding evidence on the ineffectiveness of presidential communication gives reason to question Bush’s ability to change media discourse. In this study, we propose to reconcile these discrepant accounts with a straightforward claim: a president’s changing authority in the news media “index” (Bennett 1990) should engender *conditional* rhetorical leadership.

We evaluate Bush’s political communication strategy using a Bayesian cluster analysis, which classifies a president’s speeches into groups of shared rhetorical patterns that approximate issue frames. After identifying four rhetorical profiles in Bush’s Iraq rhetoric, we estimate the probability of observing similar patterns in news articles and op-ed columns, thus producing evidence on presidential rhetoric’s diffusion across multiple outlets and formats. Between September 2001 and March 2003, real-world events structured three distinct eras of Iraq media debate (Woodward 2004). Because these events affected the indexed quality of coverage (Hayes and Guardino 2010), our analysis of media actors’ use of Bush rhetoric from era to era tests the conditional leadership hypothesis. We estimate that journalists and op-ed columnists changed their language in response to changes in Bush’s rhetoric during the fall 2002 campaign season, although not in ways or to the extent that popular accounts suggest. We find, too, that Bush’s leadership was short-lived: as U.N. inspectors gained increased authority between mid-November and March 2003, news and op-ed columns ceased to respond credibly to Bush’s rhetoric. While the extent of presidential framing success would likely differ across policy domains and for different levels of partisan and public opposition, this

study contributes some of the first systematic evidence on the availability and limitations of framing-directed presidential leadership.

## Rhetorical Leadership and Issue Frames

Scholarly interest in the nature and content of presidential communication strategies has a long history (e.g., Hart 1987; Tulis 1987; Kernell 1993; Cohen 2010). But sophisticated and rigorous work shows that presidential rhetoric mostly lacks an independent influence on public policy (Canes-Wrone 2001), the media's and mass public's issue agendas (Edwards and Wood 1999; Page, Shapiro and Dempsey 1987; Hill 1998), and public opinion (Edwards 2003). In responding to these findings, recent research suggests presidents are more likely to gain influence by exploiting existing opportunities than by creating new ones (Edwards 2009*b*). As a means to seize on existing opportunities, these scholars have argued that presidents might develop and emphasize issue frames (e.g., Skowronek 2005; Edwards 2009*b*).

By pushing a particular frame of reference, presidents can set or shift the focusing ideas, events, and values that structure congressional deliberations and journalistic coverage (Riker, Calvert, Mueller and Wilson 1996; Entman 2004; Zarefsky 2004). If these rhetorical constructions diffuse widely, then a president's preferred frame determines the premises on which the public evaluates policies. Their potential for empowering presidents by exploiting opportunity is thus clear: issue frames link political issues with ideas the mass public already supports (Edwards 2009*b*, 62–74).

To advance these issue-idea linkages presidents develop and reiterate strategic rhetoric. In Jacobs and Shapiro's theory of "crafted talk" (1994; 2000, also see Druckman, Jacobs and Ostermeier 2004), politicians identify the words, arguments, and symbols that are both favorable to their position and likely to resonate among members of the mass public. After "crafting talk" to fit this strategic profile, they use it in public appeals designed to increase media attention and maintain or strengthen public support. A related line of work maintains

that political actors forge issue-idea connections by developing “frames in communication,” which is to say, the “the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker uses when relaying information to another” (Druckman 2001, 227). In this account, these actors disseminate frames by “selecting and highlighting...events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Entman 2004, 5).

Theory is not required to see how presidents employ political rhetoric. In a telling real-world example from August 2009, the Obama administration announced to journalists and policymakers that they should no longer use three terms – “war on terror,” “jihadist,” and “global war” – to describe aspects of US anti-terrorism policy. In emphasizing terminology, the move signaled the administration’s belief that Bush-era words circumvented its foreign policy campaign. In rejecting them, Homeland Security Secretary John Brennan argued the administration could push a “new way of seeing” the fight against terrorists.<sup>1</sup> Brennan’s statement shows presidents lead by attempting to change media policy discussions. That these administrations focus on particular terms underscores how positioning (and removing) language in mediated communication is instrumental to promoting desired policy perspectives.

Thus, both established theory and real-world events suggest that the power of framing rests not simply on the issues or values a president mentions, but more concretely on words. Because presidents craft language to link policy issues with consensual values and ideals, students of rhetorical leadership might reasonably examine the usage of and associations among a president’s strategic terms. After all, when presidents seek to change media coverage and create or maintain a supportive mass public using frames, the communication strategy’s character will be manifested in the structure of their rhetoric.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/aug/06/white-house-war-terrorism-over/> (Accessed 21 August 2009)

## Successfully Framing Debate in the Post-Broadcast Era

The *effectiveness* of a frame depends on the mass public's reaction to its central claims. But success in communicating a frame depends on whether its claims and arguments reach the mass public. Between the 1960s and mid-1980s, during a period Baum and Kernell (1999) have labeled the “golden age of broadcasting,” presidents could reliably transmit this rhetoric directly to a national audience via three major television networks. Beginning in the mid-1980s, however, the ease of a national communications campaign faltered. Characterizing the problem through a network news lens, Baum and Kernell noted that “[p]residents appear to be losing their television audience at precisely the time they most need it” (Baum and Kernell 1999, 99).

The reasons for the declining viability of traditional communication routes are detailed by Cohen (2008).<sup>2</sup> Its importance here is that the post-broadcast environment makes presidential communication with a national audience difficult (Young and Perkins 2005; Cohen 2010). The post-broadcast era is made up of hard news sources with declining audiences and opinionated outlets that represent various ideological perspectives (Prior 2007; Cohen 2008). In addition, it finds many audience members drawing on news sources that have a partisan slant (Baum and Groeling 2008). Media fragmentation is important because it increases the number of forums presidents must penetrate to promote their preferred policy perspectives. Ideological diversity increases people's opportunities to encounter frames that oppose those of the president.

With regard to framing debate, then, the post-broadcast era raises two challenges for presidents. First, since they cannot easily command national attention, presidents must position strategic rhetoric throughout various channels of mediated communication. Second, the increased presence of diverse forms of political media implies that broad influence only occurs by reaching “hard news” sources *and* opinionated “soft” media. Although structuring

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<sup>2</sup>They include changes in the arrival of new technologies, changes in communications regulations, and changes in how reporters interact with the president.

discussion in prominent newspapers like the *New York Times* and network television is a boon to presidential leadership, these sort of media comprise a relatively narrower part of the post-broadcast information environment.

Accordingly, scholars interested in examining a president's rhetorical influence now must cast a wide media net. This study examines the effects of presidential language on the content of traditional news articles and a second class of political media – the columns written by nation's leading political columnists. The main difference between news articles and political columns is the latter's ideological orientation (Page 1996; Entman 2004). In a world that finds ordinary people turning increasingly to like-minded elites for political information (Dancey and Goren 2010; Stroud 2008), columnists could be a leading source of exposure to elite policy frames. Adoption of a president's strategic language seems likely among like-minded columnists, but framing success in a post-broadcast era requires that presidents also set or shift the discourse of their ideological opponents.

That presidents might frame debate among supporters *and* opponents highlights an assumption of our framework that deserves elaboration: if media discourse mirrors the structure of a president's frames in communication, then it is an example of success in communicating a frame *regardless of media valence*. It is easy to imagine journalists, especially columnists, challenging rather than praising a president's issue frame, and such unfavorable coverage is likely to limit a frame's effectiveness in moving public opinion. However, negative coverage is consistent with successful communication, because it puts a president's ideas and concepts within the mass public's mindset.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>This agnostic standard is perhaps a first (but necessary) step in evaluating presidential leadership via framing. Presidential rhetoric cannot effectively persuade the public if it is not first replicated by the political media. As in other investigations of media frames and rhetorical influence, attention to valence (Baum and Groeling 2010) and frame strength (Chong and Druckman 2007) are important conditions that should play a part in a frame's effectiveness.

## **Indexing and Influence**

Given the longstanding case for limited influence and the president's decreased media command, one might expect that presidents rarely frame debate successfully. However, established journalism standards raise possible counterpoints. First, reporters rely on credible sources, and presidents are "classic authoritative sources" (Cook 1998, 134). Equally important, real-world events and opposition forces can increase or decrease a president's perceived authority. Thus, variability in a president's media authority should affect a president's framing opportunities. We test this possibility by accounting for the balance of presidential versus opposition perspectives in hard news coverage, or what Bennett (1990) terms the mass media "index."

How should a president's authority in the media index condition framing success? With regard to framing hard news coverage, the president's preferred issue perspectives are most likely to appear when the president dominates the index. Past studies suggest that this will occur when elites agree about an appropriate policy solution (Hallin 1986) and when a president's opposition is weak (Entman 2004, Chapter 4). Indexing is also likely to affect columnists' use of presidential rhetoric, as the index reveals what issues and figures are likely to garner audience interest. When a president is prominent in the index, columnists have incentives to discuss presidential claims and ideas whether they support the president or not.

## **Moving Forward**

In summary, our framework to study framing and leadership is built upon three points. First, an important and concrete aspect of understanding presidential frames centers on identifying patterns of words and phrases. If the constellation of ideas and events a president links to issues changes, then so too should the structure of presidential rhetoric. Second, to assess the broad-based consequences of frames in communication, it is important to allow for post-broadcast media fragmentation. To do so, we examine the replication of presidential rhetoric in news coverage *and* opinionated media. Third, the extent to which presidents are



seen as uncontested and dominate authority figures determines the indexed nature of news. For this reason, the president's prominence in the media index should condition successful communication of frames.

## The Iraq Policy Debate

To apply this framework we need to identify an appropriate test case. Doing so can be difficult, both because debates in American politics are often short-lived and because the goals and strategies of key players are often opaque. We select the test case of President Bush's Iraq public relations campaign, in part, because it is not limited in either fashion.

Three other features of the Iraq case make it beneficial for a language-centered analysis. The first is that we can contrast our findings with descriptive accounts of the case. To a great extent, these accounts conclude that the Bush administration's efforts altered media content in the direction of Bush's statements about Iraq's weapons program and the threat posed by Saddam Hussein (e.g., Fritz, Keefer and Nyhan 2004; Boehlert 2006; Hiro 2004). At the same time, these claims for Bush's success contrast with political scientists' expectations about rhetorical leadership. In testing presidential framing on Iraq, therefore, we conduct "expectations arbitration" by way of empirical tests.

A second key feature of the Iraq case is that the Bush administration's campaign was transparent. Several journalistic accounts detail Bush's campaign tactics and explain how the Bush administration crafted talk to use 9/11 as a "teachable, plastic moment" (Woodward 2004, 85) and advocate "regime change" in Iraq. In having details about the content of the Bush campaign *a priori*, we are able to gauge whether our findings are consistent with several of the the Bush communication campaign's known quantities. Transparency, in other words, helps validate this study's results.

Third and finally, we know the timing of key developments, communications, and public statements in the Iraq debate. Journalists have documented how the administration's

rhetorical campaign evolved across three distinct eras that are important for this study's research design. Before explaining why, we describe features of each era in brief.

The September 11 terrorist attacks gave rise to the first era, termed here the "Post-9/11" era. During this period, concern about the appropriate U.S. response enveloped the Washington establishment. As *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne, Jr. noted, debate was both wide-ranging and "non-partisan."<sup>4</sup> The Bush administration gave Iraq limited attention, and did not widely publicize its thinking about Iraq. The second era of Iraq debate, which we term the "Fall Campaign," occurred between late August and mid-November of 2002. This era coincided with not only the first anniversary of September 11 and the onset of the 2002 mid-term elections, but also the administration's full-force Iraq public relations campaign. Speaking about the strategic intent of such timing, Chief of Staff Andrew Card argued "you don't introduce new products in August."<sup>5</sup> Finally the third, "End Game" era, occurred between November 13, the date U.N. weapons inspectors were readmitted into Iraq, and the invasion in March 2003.

Why are these three era-specific events important in our assessment? In short, they affected Bush's status within the media index. During the fall campaign, in the face of a forceful administration effort, an absence of Iraq-relevant external events, and limited vocal opposition, Bush dominated the index (Hayes and Guardino 2010, also see ahead). But the U.N.'s reentry into Iraq in November brought about a decrease in Bush's authority, presumably because U.N. inspectors now constituted for journalists a credible second authority, and moreover, one likely to push a contrasting narrative about options for Iraq (Bennett, Lawrence and Livingstone 2007). The fall 2002 campaign era, therefore, is pivotal in this analysis of framing and leadership. The lack of external events and a relatively weak opposition imply that any changes in media discourse during this era represent the media's response to Bush's Iraq rhetoric.

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<sup>4</sup>E.J. Dionne, Jr., "To Go On Being Americans" *The Washington Post* September 14, 2001

<sup>5</sup>Elisabeth Bumiller, "Traces of terror: the strategy" *New York Times* September 7, 2002

# Data

We turn now to the data and methods that allow us to test investigate this possibility. As a first step, we describe how we collected and analyzed data generated from three sources of political text:

**Bush Rhetoric:** President Bush’s rhetoric is taken from the Public Papers of the President. The papers contain an assortment of presidential announcements, proclamations, speeches, remarks at appearances, press conferences, formal declarations, and other forms of public communication. Given our interest in the rhetoric Bush directs to the public and the press, our data include all recorded statements from press conferences, weekly radio addresses, campaign or policy speeches, and informal remarks.<sup>6</sup>

**News Coverage:** We use newspapers to measure mediated communication for two reasons: their content is electronically accessible, and newspapers were still a dominant political-communication medium in the run-up to the Iraq war. Within the hard news category we focus on three newspapers in the “inner ring” of newsmaking: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. Stories from these newspapers might not diffuse at the same level as wire reports, but they should be relatively more influential among the political elite. In addition, their news content and focus influence future direction and content in regional and local newspapers (Shaw and Sparrow 1999). Using LexisNexis, we downloaded all front-section news stories from the three major newspapers printed from January 2001 until the week before the invasion in Iraq, collecting a total of over 80,000 articles.<sup>7</sup>

**The Commentariat:** We also collected as many national columnists’ Opinion-Editorials (from the population of the top 100 in circulation in 2007) as possible via LexisNexis’s newspaper archive. We obtain the list of columnists and their ideological classification from

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<sup>6</sup>We exclude President Bush’s joint statements with foreign leaders or formal declarations from our analysis since they did not seem directed at the press or the public and the nature of his rhetoric within these declarations consistently differed in both style, format, and tone.

<sup>7</sup>Our sample of front-section news stories excludes any stories designated as obituaries, editorials, op-eds, or corrections to previous stories

the liberal advocacy organization Media Matters.<sup>8</sup> Of the 100 columnists identified in the Media Matters study, we obtain columns over the 2001–2003 period for 66 writers belonging to the conservative, moderate, and liberal camps. Many of the columnists are syndicated, and so their columns are published in national and local newspapers.<sup>9</sup>

## Quantifying Iraq Rhetoric

Before we can evaluate whether Bush’s Iraq rhetoric is replicated by these media outlets, it is first necessary to identify what words Bush used when discussing Iraq. We rely on automated coding techniques and methods from statistical natural language processing to conduct this measurement task (e.g., Manning and Schütze 1999; Hopkins and King 2010; Quinn, Monroe, Colaresi, Crespín and Radev 2010). The large amount of rhetoric and diversity of opinions surrounding Iraq would have required a large number of human coders and extensive assessments and reexaminations of coding schemes. Since Iraq remains a visible political issue, it is also possible that human coders would have preconceptions about what was communicated during the debate. A statistical and automated analysis of text avoids these problems because it places no *a priori* structure on Bush’s frames in communication.<sup>10</sup>

Identifying Iraq-related terms across the three outlets is not a straightforward task. Although Op-ed columns are typically written about a single topic, news stories and presidential statements, especially campaign speeches and press conferences, frequently discuss multiple topics. So if we were to code documents at the speech or news article level, the resulting word-usage comparison would be misleading. Our solution to the levels-of-analysis problem

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<sup>8</sup>See the full report at: <http://mediamatters.org/reports/oped/>. The authors of the Media Matters report identified the top-100 population as follows: First, they used *Editor & Publisher International Year Book: The Encyclopedia of the Newspaper Industry* to identify newspaper editors. Then, they contacted the editors and asked what political columnists the paper published regularly.

<sup>9</sup>The list of the columnists is presented in the appendix in Table A.1.

<sup>10</sup>Our perspective is that statistical estimates provide neither a more accurate nor more valid perspective of public debate relative to human coder approaches. However, we find that they offer a cogent alternative method for identifying the nature of political debate and its across-time changes, as the automated approach requires no pre-existing conceptions about either aspect of political communication. In addition, the method is pragmatic, as our analysis literally codes tens of thousands of pages of text. For an alternative perspective on coding frames see Chong and Druckman (2010).

is to standardize Bush and columnist language by measuring Iraq-related word usage at the sentence level. After parsing each source of rhetoric into sentences and standardizing text to root word stems,<sup>11</sup> we identify Iraq-relevant sentences using a simple rule: If a sentence includes variants of the words “Iraq” or “Saddam,” then we compute a count for every word in this sentence and the two contiguous sentences.<sup>12</sup> We establish a floor for a term’s relevance by restricting attention to words that appear in Bush’s Iraq speeches at least three times. We store counts for every single-word stem (unigram), and ordered two-word (bigram) and three-word (trigram) stem combinations.<sup>13</sup> Relative to unigrams, the bigrams and trigrams are more likely to signal the intentions inherent in Bush’s Iraq rhetoric. Finally, after generating a list of over 1200 unique unigrams, bigrams, and trigrams from our rules for coding Bush’s Iraq rhetoric, we count these terms’ usage frequency within front-section news and op-ed columnist rhetoric – specifically, stemmed sentences identified using our simple rule.<sup>14</sup>

## Bayesian Cluster Analysis of Iraq Communication

With text data in hand, the goal of our analysis is twofold: to identify the structured patterns in Bush’s Iraq rhetoric, and to estimate whether changes in these patterns are followed by similar changes in news articles and op-ed columns. Our statistical evaluation of Bush’s rhetoric thus requires several steps. First, we categorize Bush’s Iraq speeches into groups based on emphasized and ignored terms. Terms that are prominent within a

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<sup>11</sup>Further details about the techniques used to pre-process and standardize text for our analysis are presented in the methodological appendix.

<sup>12</sup>We deviate from this tactic for classifying Bush news conferences, such that when a reporter asks a question about Iraq all of Bush’s response is considered to be about that topic. In total, from the beginning of his administration until the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, we coded 189 separate speeches in which Bush made reference to or was asked about Saddam Hussein or Iraq. Over that same time period, our three newspapers printed over 7800 stories mentioning Iraq or Saddam Hussein

<sup>13</sup>We started by including any trigrams if they were used by Bush in at least three of his 189 speeches. We then compared this list to a list of all bigrams used by Bush in at least four of his speeches. If a bigram term was not already nested or if the bigram was the more natural variant of the term, then we included that bigram for coding news coverage and columnist rhetoric. We then compared this list to all unigrams that were found to be used in four or more of Bush speeches. If a unigram was not nested within any of the pre-selected bigram or trigram terms, then we also included that unigram term for analysis.

<sup>14</sup>By debate era, these terms account for about 28% of all the terms used within news media coverage of Iraq, and between 23–28% of all terms used by conservative, moderate, and liberal op-ed columnists.

group provide information about what ideas and events Bush linked strategically to Iraq and Saddam. Using the estimated terms’ usage patterns in each profile, we then evaluate how Bush’s issue-idea linkages changed with time, and whether these changes are consistent with era-to-era changes in media rhetoric.

Throughout our analysis we implement a Bayesian cluster analysis approach (Quinn et al. 2010) to classify, describe, and quantify the extent to which Bush’s speeches belong to distinct and meaningful categories or types of rhetoric. While making relatively few assumptions, this method ultimately enables us to: (1) classify Bush’s speeches probabilistically into an optimal number of rhetorical profiles; (2) identify what terms were prominently featured within each of these profiles to assess whether they approximate frames; (3) estimate Bush’s usage of these profiles in each debate era; and (4) test the era-to-era prominence of these profiles in the media.

## Measurement Model Specification and Estimation

We conceptualize a communication frame as an unobserved pattern of words and ideas, which arises through a president’s attempt to link issues and ideas and push a strategic perspective. Our cluster analysis of Bush’s speeches identifies the number and rhetorical character of these latent patterns. Following Quinn et al. (2010), we assume that each Bush speech on Iraq belongs to one of  $K$  distinct groups based on its observed rhetoric. For each group  $k$ , we seek to estimate a vector of probabilities,  $\theta_k$ , which represents the group’s latent rhetorical profile – more precisely, Bush’s underlying tendency to emphasize or ignore terms within these speeches.

For each individual speech  $i$ , we observe a vector of term counts across our selection of unigrams, bigrams, and trigrams:

$$\mathbf{y}_i = (y_{iU}, y_{iB}, y_{iT}),$$

where, for example,  $y_{iB}$  is a vector of counts  $y_{ib}$ , which records the number of times Bush mentioned bigram  $b$  within speech  $i$  when discussing Iraq. We modify the Quinn et al. approach because we include not only counts of single words (unigrams), but also counts of two-word (bigram) and three-word (trigram) ordered combinations. Since we do not count any unigrams or bigrams that are also observed as components of other bigrams or trigrams (see footnote 13), a reasonable approximation of the data-generating process is an independent draw from a multinomial distribution (since it is conditional on the number of terms observed for each component). For example, where speech  $i$  is from group  $k$ , we specify the trigram counts as:

$$y_{iT} \sim \text{Multinomial}(n_{iT}, \theta_{kT}),$$

where  $n_{iT}$  represents the number of coded trigrams observed in speech  $i$  and  $\theta_{kT}$  is a vector of multinomial probabilities representing the rhetorical profile of trigram usage for group  $k$  (where  $\theta_k = (\theta_{kU}, \theta_{kB}, \theta_{kT})$ ).

In our specification, we allow the probability that a Bush speech comes from group  $k$  to vary across the three debate eras (the Post-9/11, Fall Campaign, and End Game eras) as well as a baseline era (the period between Bush’s inauguration and September 11). The term  $\pi_{e(i)k}$  captures this probability, where the  $e(i)$  subscript identifies the era unique to the speech  $i$ .<sup>15</sup> Because the unigram, bigram, and trigram counts are independent draws from a multinomial distribution, the sampling density is:

$$p(\mathbf{Y}, \mathbf{Z} | \pi, \theta) \propto \prod_{i=1}^N \prod_{k=1}^K \left( \pi_{e(i)k} \prod_{u=1}^U \theta_{ku}^{y_{iu}} \prod_{b=1}^B \theta_{kb}^{y_{ib}} \prod_{t=1}^T \theta_{kt}^{y_{it}} \right)^{z_{ik}}.$$

Following conventional practice,  $z_{ik}$  represents a latent dummy variable drawn from a multinomial distribution such that its expectation represents the probability that speech  $i$  belongs

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<sup>15</sup>We specify flexible era-based weights to accommodate our theoretical interest in testing differences in Bush’s frame emphasis across our eras of interest. The following classification results also hold when estimating a less flexible model with constant cluster weights across eras.

to group  $k$ . To estimate this model we specify nearly flat Dirichlet priors for each of our multinomial distributions (each element is set equal to 1.01). We retrieve estimates of the posterior distribution of Bush’s use of each speech grouping ( $\boldsymbol{\pi}$ ), each speech’s group classification ( $\mathbf{Z}$ ), and each speech group’s rhetorical profile ( $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ ) by Markov Chain Monte Carlo simulations using the Gibbs sampler with an unconstrained random permutation routine (Frühwirth-Schnatter 2006). Further details of model specification and estimation procedures are discussed in the methodological appendix.

## Measuring Bush Rhetoric Replication across Media Outlets

We code frequency-of-use data for over 1200 Bush terms within front-section news and op-ed columnist rhetoric about Iraq. After estimating Bush’s latent rhetorical profiles from each group of Iraq speeches, we use this information along with Bayes theorem to evaluate the status of each profile in hard and soft media. We calculate a relative probability for each rhetorical profile, which measures the degree to which the observed count of Iraq terms within each news article or column is generated by a particular profile. Crucially, these relative probability calculations score the degree to which each news story or column can be classified as replicating each of Bush’s rhetorical profiles.

We calculate these relative probabilities in two steps. First we specify a baseline rhetorical profile that measures journalists’ and op-ed columnists’ usage of each Bush term prior to September 11. For front-section news coverage and each ideological category of columnists we tabulate how often a Bush term was used from January 21 to September 10, 2001 and, combined with a Dirichlet prior, generate a mean usage profile that represents the rate at which each of Bush’s term were used prior to September 11,  $\theta_b$ .<sup>16</sup>

Our classification score takes the mean of this baseline profile with the mean of each Bush group rhetorical profile and calculates the relative probability that each observed story or column is generated by our estimates of Bush’s rhetoric, using the multinomial probability

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<sup>16</sup>Exact details of the prior specification and posterior calculation are provided in the methodological appendix.



mass function in combination with Bayes theorem:

$$p(k_i | \mathbf{y}_i, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \frac{p(\mathbf{y}_i | \hat{\boldsymbol{\theta}}_k) \gamma_k}{\sum_{j=1}^K p(\mathbf{y}_i | \hat{\boldsymbol{\theta}}_j) \gamma_j},$$

where we specify a flat prior probability across each of our alternative profile groups ( $\gamma_k = \gamma, \forall k$ ). Finally, we average each article/column estimate by each debate era to produce *frame prominence scores*, which capture the extent of Bush’s group-specific rhetoric being replicated in news articles and conservative-, moderate-, and liberal-minded columns. The higher the scores, the more certain we are that (1) media emphasis of these terms differs from its patterns prior to September 11, and (2) the collection of news stories or columns in a given era emphasizes Iraq terms in a manner that is consistent with the measured patterns in Bush’s rhetoric.

## Results

The unsupervised classification of Bush’s rhetoric produces clear-cut and meaningful depictions of Bush’s Iraq statements. In presenting the results, we begin with the terms that are strongly associated with each group of Bush speeches. By examining the collection of prominent words within each group, focusing especially on the ideas and themes they connote, we can determine whether these groupings adequately approximate frames in communication.

### In What Ways Did Bush Discuss Iraq?

The first question for our Bayesian cluster analysis pertains to identifying the appropriate number of rhetorical groups. Bayes factor comparisons indicate that the model specification most likely to produce the data patterns in Bush’s Iraq speeches assumes four different groups ( $K = 4$ ). For each speech grouping, we can reference the rhetorical profile to identify its *prominent* and *distinctive* characteristics. To help summarize these findings, we calculate

key term scores (Quinn et al. 2010) that rank each term according to its prominence of use *within* a rhetorical profile and distinctiveness *relative* to the other rhetorical-profile groups.

Table 1 presents the top key terms for the unigrams, bigrams, and trigrams, and also reports each key term’s rate of use within a profile compared to the other three profiles.<sup>17</sup> A quick glance of Table 1 indicates that several terms within each group represent a common frame of reference. For reasons that will become clear, we label these four categories of speeches “International Action,” “U.N. Failure/Freedom,” “WMD/Threat,” and “Disarm or Else” frames. To provide an example of what the rate score reveals, consider that the 10.9 value for the `consult_friend_alli` trigram in column 1 indicates this term is about 10 times more likely to appear in the International Action category of speeches than its average use in the remaining three categories. Several extended examples of Bush’s use of these and other key terms appear in the appendix. We turn now to scrutinize some of the key terms that helps us interpret the groups.

#### TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

**International Action:** Key terms in the first group connect the Iraq issue with two ideas. The first centers on the international community and a need for action. Several terms connect Iraq and Saddam to consensual back-and-forth diplomacy, reflecting Bush’s willingness to pursue diplomatic channels as a “patient man” (`patient_man`) in “consulting his close friends and allies,” (`consult_friend_alli`). Bush’s language is deferential to the United Nations, too, as he calls for Saddam to “let the inspectors back in,” (`let_inspector_back`), claims he is “looking at all options,” (`look_option`) and has no “war plans on his desk” (`no_war_plan`). That these terms share a common theme is important – it is our first demonstration that a grouping of speeches can represent a coherent communication frame.

A second set of ideas in this rhetorical profile pertain to weapons of mass destruction; `desir_weapon_mass` and `develop_weapon_mass` are eight and twenty times more likely to

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<sup>17</sup>Each column lists the terms with the top scores within each term category (unigram, bigram, trigram) that also have over a 95% probability of being used more often compared to Bush’s average usage of a term across the other three groups.

appear in this cluster. But, Bush uses these terms to connect Saddam and Iraq to the *potential* development, possession, and use of such weapons as a rationale for diplomatic action. This perspective changes in other groupings, in which Bush's language centers on the *reality* of weapons in Iraq.

**U.N. Failure/Freedom:** The second rhetorical profile also contains terms that stress the need for U.S. action. In contrast to the terms prominent in the International Action rhetoric, however, this profile's featured terms stress the U.N.'s failures. Bush laments that the U.N. "will not act" in response to Saddam's defiance. In labeling the United Nations the "League of Nations," he attempts to sow doubt about the "international body" and convey why the United States must lead in forming a "coalition to disarm Hussein." In addition, Bush justifies the use of military action in terms of the good it will do, and links Iraq several times to ideals like freedom and peace. Tellingly, the bigram "sake of freedom" (`sake_freedom`) is over 16 times more likely to appear within this frame relative to the other three frames. Bush also stresses the need to act for the "sake of the world," "sake of peace," and the "sake of children." As before, Bush's terms here call on consensual values and ideals. This makes their larger character emblematic of a communication frame, because in connecting Iraq with peace and freedom, Bush references ideals that much of the public already supports.

**WMD/Threat:** In support of popular impressions of Bush's rhetoric, we also identify a group of speeches that centers on Iraq's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction and reasons to distrust Saddam. Unlike the International Action frame, this category details the concrete nature of Iraq's "weapons program." Other key terms refer to biological agents and stress the threat of Saddam Hussein. Bush calls Saddam Hussein a "brutal dictator" of an "outlaw regime" that "persecutes its civilian population," and has ties to or "supports terrorist" groups. In short, speeches within this grouping link Iraq to Saddam's cruelty and to his WMD operations, ostensibly to raise public concern about Iraq.

**Disarm or Else:** The fourth and final group of speeches warn Saddam Hussein to

disarm – or else. Although the terms in this group are not as clearly linked to the frames-in-communication concept as in the previous three groups, they still convey persuasive attempts. If Saddam does not disarm, Bush says, then the U.S. and a “coalition of the willing” are prepared for military action in Iraq. Bush also disputes the benefits of more inspections, arguing that the role of inspectors is to watch and verify that Saddam Hussein disarms, not play “hide and go seek.” He discusses the “costs” of faulty inspections and warns he must not be “fooled” and must “risk nothing” to “protect the American people.” He mentions NATO support in his preparations to “go to war,” noting that “lots of countries” are in an “alliance” with the United States, and conveys inflexibility by arguing “now is the time” to “deal with Hussein.”

Thus, we find prominent and distinctive terms within each rhetorical grouping. That these terms convey a similar strategic meaning suggests the measured rhetorical patterns are like frames in communication. With a sense of the overall content of Bush’s rhetoric, we now estimate the the across-time trends in Bush’s use of these categories of speeches to produce evidence on the evolution of Bush’s Iraq communication strategy.

### **Presidential Frames across Eras of Debate**

To begin, Table 2 reports Bush’s tendency to use each profile in the four temporal eras.<sup>18</sup> To estimate certainty about the era-to-era changes in the average usage score, we simulate a Bayesian differences-in-proportions test, which calculates the posterior probability that a frame’s prominence increases (with greater than a 95% or 90% probability) across contiguous periods – between post-9/11 and the fall 2002 campaign, and between fall 2002 and the pre-war period.

Following September 11 and until the fall campaign, Bush’s speeches primarily contain terms from the International Action frame – 86% of his speeches are likely to exhibit this rhetoric. But with the “Bush push” in September of 2002, Bush’s rhetorical emphasis changes

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<sup>18</sup>The exact date intervals are: Pre-9/11: 1/21/2001–9/11/2001; Post-9/11: 9/12/2001–8/31/2002; Fall campaign: 9/01/2002–11/12/2002; End Game: 11/13/2003–3/14/2003.

course. In Table 2's second column, it is clear that Bush used the U.N. Failure/Freedom frame far more frequently than WMD/Threat. In fact, 67% of his speeches during the fall campaign are estimated to make use of this perspective. There is a slight increase in WMD/Threat frame emphasis, but it is neither large nor certain. Finally, moving to Table 2's third column, we see that Bush's rhetoric again shifts. After Iraq agrees to U.N. inspections, Bush increases his use of Disarm or Else rhetoric and, to a lesser degree, WMD/Threat's.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The contrast between our evidence for a U.N. Failure/Freedom emphasis in fall 2002 and the popular sense that Bush pushed WMD/Threat is worthy of investigation. To get a finer-grained reading of Bush's rhetorical progression, we take advantage of the fact that we can classify most Bush speeches into a single rhetorical profile with over 90% probability. In concrete terms, we assign each Bush speech and public statement to its *most likely* Iraq frame. Figure 1 illustrates these speech classifications. Each dot represents a routine public statement, and each triangle represents a prominent presidential speech – for example, the State of the Union.<sup>19</sup> The four shaded regions cordon off the baseline (pre-9/11) era and the three defined eras of Iraq debate.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The pattern in Figure 1 is consistent with the era-specific percentages in Table 2: most speeches use International Action language in the post-9/11 period, U.N. Failure/Freedom during the Fall Campaign era, and Disarm or Else in the End Game era. Figure 1's breakdown of everyday versus prominent speeches also suggests an explanation for the discrepancy between our findings and popular accounts. The U.N. Failure/Freedom frame's usage during the fall of 2002 is substantial in everyday speeches (circles), and WMD/Threat terms

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<sup>19</sup>These speeches are the address to Congress following September 11, the 2002 State of the Union address, the September 2002 speech to the United Nations, the national prime-time address in October from Cincinnati, and the 2003 State of the Union address.

are far less common. However, Bush’s five *visible* speeches (triangles) are all classified as WMD/Threat. By distinguishing between the frequency and visibility of Bush’s speeches, then, we see that Bush advanced two coordinating viewpoints during the fall 2002 campaign. In a majority of Iraq statements he focused on U.N. shortcomings and defending freedom, but emphasized the WMD threat in his nationally-televised speeches.

It is possible that these differences in frame emphasis emerge because presidents have different audiences in mind when they make low- versus high-profile speeches. When giving less prominent speeches during reporter questioning or local appearances, presidents rely on the media to transmit to others their rhetoric. In these instances in the Iraq case, it is clear that Bush advanced consensual democratic ideals to build a case for military action. By contrast, when Bush spoke on national television – and was thus less dependent on the media to replicate his message – he presented ideas about threat and weapons programs in a relatively unfiltered state.

## **Did Bush Rhetoric Frame the Iraq Debate?**

Having gathered across-time evidence on Bush’s Iraq framing strategy, we can investigate whether his rhetoric changed media discourse. Because the conditional leadership hypothesis predicts that a president’s influence is a function of media authority, we first check Bush’s era-specific positions in the Iraq media index. We coded the number of Iraq-related sentences in the news articles data for the Fall Campaign and End Game eras for references to Bush, a Democratic opposition figure, or an international agency or official.<sup>20</sup> This check shows that the media index strongly favored Bush during the fall 2002 campaign, as the administration’s perspective was represented in 5.3% of the news sentences compared to only 3.2% for Democrats and 2.6% for the international agency figures. But, this advantage waned following the return of the U.N. inspectors to Iraq. Between November 13, 2002 and March

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<sup>20</sup>The opposition Democrats coded are Tom Daschle, Richard Gephardt, Robert Byrd, Ted Kennedy, Al Gore, Paul Wellstone, Russ Feingold, Carl Levin, and Nancy Pelosi. UN opposition keywords are Kofi Annan, Hans Blix, General Amin, Dr. El-Baradei, and any reference to the I.A.E.A., a “U.N. Official,” or the “U.N. Security Council.”

14, 2003, Bush sentences dropped to 3.6% of Iraq-related news articles and the proportion of sentences mentioning U.N. officials jumped to 4.1%.

It was during the Fall Campaign era Bush actively sought to communicate strategic messages to the public. And as Figure 1 shows, Bush’s speeches during this period advanced U.N. Failure/Freedom terms (in a large majority of speeches) and WMD/Threat (in a few national speeches). Having observed Bush’s dominance of the fall 2002 media index, we now analyze whether a favorable framing environment helped Bush increase the prominence of these coordinating frames in media coverage and debate. Table 3 reports the prominence scores for each frame across each era and media actor. Higher scores denote a greater probability that a media actor’s writings reflect one of Bush’s frames, and we again estimate certainty about the era-to-era changes in the prominence scores by simulating a Bayesian differences-in-proportions test.<sup>21</sup>

### TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

We begin with the news articles (saving examples of term use for columnists), whose prominence scores are in Table 3’s uppermost block. Across-era changes are relatively flat in the International Action, WMD/Threat, and Disarm or Else categories. In the Post-9/11 era, about 10% of news articles use language that reflect Bush’s International Action or WMD/Threat rhetoric, and about 3% use the U.N. Failure/Freedom and Disarm or Else terms. For each of the following two eras, these levels do not change in a way that credibly suggests Bush-driven rhetorical leadership.

News rhetoric does show a credible change, however, regarding U.N. Failure/Freedom terms during the Fall Campaign era, reflecting Bush’s increased use of this frame during

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<sup>21</sup>Our frame classification scores estimate the probability that an article or column was a product of the journalist or columnist using each frame. Difference in proportions tests were calculated by randomly drawing from the classification score of each news story and column, counting up the number of stories/columns attributed to each frame within each era, and then drawing from the posterior Dirichlet distribution (flat Dirichlet prior of 1), which calculates each frame’s probability of appearing within each era across all articles or columns. Alternative tests include weighing each article or column classification by the square root of how many Bush terms it used, such that columns or stories using Bush terms are given greater weight, or excluding low term count articles altogether. These tests provide essentially the same usage estimates and no clear difference in substantive conclusions.

this period. The lack of external events and visible opposition during the Fall Campaign era both suggest that the frame's jump in average prominence within news rhetoric – from .03 in the post-9/11 period to .09 – represents mainstream journalists' responsiveness to Bush.<sup>22</sup> As a change from 3% to 9% might seem small, we remind the reader that the change score captures more than Bush-media language similarity: it reflects changes in a frame's prominence relative to all other Bush frames *and* relative to journalists' own use of terms in this frame prior to 9/11. Presumably news outlets do not stray far from established reporting practices and rhetoric, which makes this baseline stringent. The advantage of stringency is that improves our confidence that observed increases in frame prominence – especially between the Post-9/11 and Fall Campaign eras – reflect media replication of Bush's strategic communications.

What about columnist responsiveness? If political columnists ever respond to a like-minded president's frames in communication, this should be evident in the writing of Bush's conservative allies. In three of four cases, however, conservative columnists only marginally *changed* their language to adapt to a changing White House line. The frame prominence scores for International Action and WMD/Threat show no certain changes across the three eras. There is a shallow increase in conservatives' use of the Disarm or Else frame, but this increase occurs prior to Bush's own increasing emphasis and with only 90% probability. To be sure, conservatives used language that comports with Bush's rhetorical frames. But considered alongside Bush's communication strategy dynamics, conservative columnists appear mostly unresponsive – a finding that comports with scholars' longstanding case for minimal rhetorical leadership.

However, with regard to the U.N. Failure/Freedom frame, the change in conservatives' language suggests these writers altered their language to follow Bush. This frame's prominence score jumps from .09 in the post-9/11 period to .21 in the fall campaign period, a

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<sup>22</sup>Further analysis indicates this finding is not a direct result of Bush getting more quotes in the news media at this time. Across all our eras, the news media's use of the Bush terms we coded consistently accounts for 27-28% of all its Iraq rhetoric. In other words, the placement and prominence of Bush's rhetoric remained consistent, but it was the content of such rhetoric which at times changed.



positive increase with over 95% probability. Like mainstream news journalists, conservative commentators replicated Bush's prominent Iraq frame during the fall 2002 debate. To provide a sense of how columnists adopted such rhetoric, we report selected examples of columns with a greater than 90% probability of belonging to the U.N. Failure/Freedom frame and italicize Bush's key terms (additional and lengthier examples are presented in the appendix). In one example, Dick Morris suggests that "the United States will act to enforce existing U.N. resolutions on its own" and "*must act* to defend itself."<sup>23</sup> Charles Krauthammer echoes Bush's concerns about the United Nations, asking "by what logic does the blessing of these countries bestow moral legitimacy on American action? *China's* leaders are the butchers of Tiananmen Square." He continues by noting that "[e]veryone in the *Senate* wants a new and tough inspection regime in Iraq," but that countries on the U.N. Security "are responsible for the hopelessly diluted and useless inspection regime that now exists."<sup>24</sup>

Evidence that Bush's U.N. Failure/Freedom frame shifted media discourse does not stop with Bush's ideological allies. Moderates like Thomas L. Friedman and Jim Hoagland are more than three times as likely to adopt U.N. Failure/Freedom terms during the fall 2002 campaign, credibly jumping in prominence from .06 to .17. For example, Friedman suggests the United States "*must act* vis-a-vis Iraq in a way that persuades people that this is an international imperative not an American preference."<sup>25</sup> Jim Hoagland references Bush's plan to "go to the U.N. Security Council to *ask* the world organization to live up to its long unfulfilled *obligations* to oversee the disarmament of Iraq."<sup>26</sup> In a third example, Hoagland suggests the Bush administration "is fashioning considered, *realistic* responses"<sup>27</sup> to the dangers posed by Iraq.

Finally, what about Bush's clearest opposition – liberal-minded columnists who would be expected to refute Bush's perspective on Iraq? Perhaps surprisingly, even among the

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<sup>23</sup>Dick Morris, "Anybody sense a trend?" *The Hill* October 23, 2002

<sup>24</sup>Charles Krauthammer, "The Myth of U.N. Support" *The Washington Post* October 4, 2002

<sup>25</sup>Thomas L. Friedman, "Going Our Way" *The New York Times* September 15, 2002

<sup>26</sup>Jim Hoagland, "Back and forth with Bush" *The Washington Post* September 12, 2002

<sup>27</sup>Jim Hoagland, "Nuclear Enabler" *The Washington Post* October 24, 2002

ideological opposition, Bush's U.N. Failure/Freedom terms credibly increase: from 9% in the post-9/11 period to 21% during the fall campaign. E.J. Dionne, Jr. claims that Bush was "rhetorically effective (at the U.N.) in trying to shame its members into standing up to the dictator who has repeatedly *defied the United Nations'* wishes."<sup>28</sup> In a second example, Stanley Crouch replicates Bush's claim that "if the UN does not back up its own sanctions, the U.S. will *act – and will not wait long to do it.*"<sup>29</sup>

To summarize, on Bush's most frequently-used frame, and in the most favorable media environment, Bush and media rhetoric about Iraq changed in concert with an emphasis on freedom and the U.N. There is no certain evidence, however, for influence in the End Game era. Bush's speeches within this period emphasize WMD/Threat and Disarm or Else frames, but the prominence of these frames in news articles and opinion columns does not credibly increase. Conservative, moderate, and liberal columnists all boost their references to WMD/Threat in the End Game era, but these increases represent returns to their Post-9/11 levels and are not statistically certain. Conservative and moderate columnists show a small increase in use of Disarm or Else rhetoric, but it occurs with less than 90% probability. In summary, there is some evidence that Bush succeeded in positioning his rhetoric across media outlets during his public relations push. That the dynamics in his rhetoric did not materialize in the more competitive End Game political environment indicates that Bush's framing success was short-lived.

## Words Like Weapons

In a broad sense, presidential communication strategies have the potential to link the perspectives and policy goals of public officials with the mass media and the mass public. To create strong linkages, presidents must penetrate an increasingly diverse, de-centralized, and increasingly oppositional news media. Motivated by the lack of empirical evidence on the

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<sup>28</sup>E.J. Dionne, Jr., "Getting Down to Coalition-Building" The *Washington Post* September 13, 2002

<sup>29</sup>Stanley Crouch, "A Time of Uncertainty" The *Daily News* September 16, 2002

status of these efforts in the context of communication frames, this study asks whether journalists and opinion columnists ever respond to a president's strategic language. In studying a case that has advantages for a president, we find that the media are conditionally responsive – they followed Bush's rhetorical lead, but only under limited-opposition conditions. In terms of this study's initial necessary condition, the president found some framing success.

It is rare that scholars have detailed knowledge about political actors' strategic communications, although exceptions exist (e.g., Sellers 2010). For this reason, we have developed a framework for studying rhetoric that does not require much foreknowledge. Its fundamental claim is that researchers can characterize and analyze political communication strategies by measuring and interpreting patterns of words in rhetoric. That this method can be broadly applied points to its potential for advancing understanding about elite rhetorical leadership. Our findings regarding Iraq suggest both the validity and the advantages of the language-based approach. Finding shared meaning among many of the terms in our estimated Bush-speech groups demonstrates how words and phrases can reasonably represent scholars' frames-in-communication concept. In particular, our evidence identifies groups that represent both commonly-perceived elements of Bush's rhetorical strategy (WMD/Threat), and shared elements that previous scholarly accounts have overlooked (especially U.N. Failure/Freedom).

The rise and fall of Bush's language patterns within various media imply that he found some success. But our affirmative result does not echo the wisdom that the media deferred to Bush. Bush's statements did not *change* the media's use of terms connected to WMD/threat rhetoric. Instead, Bush's frequent framing of Iraq in terms of the U.N. failures and defending freedom and security prompted news journalists, and conservative, moderate, and liberal columnists to increase their references to these ideas. In a general sense, a president's efforts to drive public conversation and public opinion are ever-present. We have seen evidence of partial success in the case of Bush's efforts in Iraq. Importantly, Iraq's foreign policy relevance coupled with the relatively low level of vocal opposition make this case favorable

to framing success. But we also find that, even in this favorable circumstance, Bush could not shift media debate to follow his Disarm or Else or WMD/Threat rhetoric during the final era before the Iraqi invasion.

What conclusions about framing and presidential leadership derive from these findings? First, the era-to-era changes support our claim that a president's capacity for shaping public conversation depends on the level of competition in the media environment. Competitive framing or descriptions from alternative authorities curb a president's opportunities to dominate the framing environment. Put differently, a president's ability to lead the public's thinking about issues is most likely when they opposition is limited or weak. A second implication arises from acknowledging pre-existing media perspectives about Saddam Hussein and Iraq. The American media and public had popularized an image of Iraq and Saddam before 9/11, which Bush sought to exploit. It is possible that a president's framing success could be greater at times when an issue first emerges and lines of political conflict are not drawn, for in this instance a president can help to shape the initial narrative.

We acknowledge the need for additional work before we have a robust understanding of presidential framing success, including extensions which consider a president's attempt to frame issues in the domestic sphere or when there is a strong opposition voice. Nevertheless, this study's statistical focus on language provides a systematic and replicable methodology with broad applicability to questions about the nature and consequences of elite actors' rhetorical leadership. The increased fragmentation of new media and people's reliance on elite sources of information suggests that the ability to influence news coverage and opinionated media will continue to be important. A fractured echo chamber makes it difficult for presidents to shape public debate. Nevertheless, our finding that they sometimes do suggests the need for more scholarly attention to communication frames as a pathway to presidential leadership.

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# A Measurement and Methods Details

## Text Processing and Standardization

Before counting terms, we pre-processed and standardized all of the Iraq-classified text for ease of comparison and analysis. Although a loss of information, these techniques were deemed necessary to accurately and efficiently compare rhetoric across these different forms of communication. We first used the `Lingua::EN::Sentence` module in Perl to parse each speech, column, or news article into an array of sentences. The parser uses an extensive and modifiable dictionary of acronyms and various rules of sentence formation to identify when periods represent the end of a sentence.

After identifying a sentence as about Iraq, we transformed a variety of terms that describe a single concept into a single standardized format (i.e., September 11, 9/11, Sept. 11; UN, U.N., United Nations). We then expanded all common contractions in Bush’s rhetoric to their appropriate two word form, since these are more likely to be observed within newspaper publications. All other forms of punctuation and capitalization were removed and we then stemmed all terms using the Snowball II stemming algorithm (Porter 1980), as implemented within the `Lingua::Stem::Snowball` module in Perl. For example, instead of “disarm” or “disarmament,” both these terms are transformed into the one-word stem “disarm.” Finally, we remove a selection of common words (articles, pronouns, prepositions; although we exclude some important common words like “not”) using the `Lingua::Stopwords` module in Perl; the elimination of common words simplifies our ability to compare bigrams and trigram usage since it turns various phrases like “war on terror” or “war against terror” to the standard “war terror.”

## Cluster Model Prior Specification and Estimation Details

*Bush model priors:* Our prior for each of Bush frame’s word profile component ( $\theta_{kU}, \theta_{kB}, \theta_{kT}$ ) follows a nearly flat Dirichlet distribution where, for example, all trigram profiles:

$$\theta_{kT} \sim \text{Dirichlet}(\lambda_{kT})$$

where each element in  $\lambda_{kT}$  corresponds to a term ( $\lambda_{kt}$ ) and is set equal to 1.01 for each unigram, bigram, and trigram profile. Meaning we assume *a priori* that each term’s relative emphasis within each cluster’s unigram, bigram, and trigram profile is equal. Since the latent  $z_{ik}$  represent a single draw from a multinomial distribution:

$$z_i \sim \text{Multinomial}(1, \pi_{e(i)})$$

we can also parameterize the prior for each of our four  $\pi_e$  using the conjugate Dirichlet distribution

$$\pi_e \sim \text{Dirichlet}(\omega)$$

where each of the prior parameters  $\omega_k$  are set to 1.01 for all  $k$ .

*Choosing K:* Although  $K$ , the number of clusters within Bush’s rhetoric, is assumed to



be known when estimating, we evaluate the relative validity of different choices for  $K$  by comparing each models relative fit to the data using Bayesian model comparisons. Model estimates were recorded for each estimate as the number of Bush frames varied from as low as 2 and up to 6. Estimates of the log of each model's marginal posterior were then calculated using the importance density formula specified within Frühwirth-Schnatter (2006); these strongly favored a four cluster solution. For comparison, the three cluster solution had a log marginal likelihood of -35130.8; the four cluster solution was estimated at -34916.1, and the five cluster solution was estimated at -34933.0.

*Bush Model Estimation Details:* The estimates for Bush are based on a combined sample of 60,000 draws from the posterior distribution across three chains after discarding the initial 30,000 iterations from each chain. Initial values were set by randomly assigning speeches into groups of relatively equal size. Era-based cluster weights were set to be constant for the first 10,000 iterations and then allowed to vary. Depending on initial values, convergence in classification was achieved for two very similar modes, where three Bush speeches with low word counts were classified into one of two groupings. Our results are based on the mode where these three speeches show stronger shared substantive meaning with the larger grouping, based on our own examination of these speeches and the rhetorical profile of these clusters. Visual analysis and Raftery-Lewis diagnostic estimates all indicate convergent and sufficiently-sized samples of the parameters' posterior distributions.

*News/Columnist Baseline Profile Estimation:* The baseline profile for news coverage was estimated by first counting how often all Bush terms used from January 2001 until September 10, 2001. These counts were combined with a slightly informative Dirichlet prior. For each group, counts of Bush term usage were calculated for the years 1999 and 2000. One was added to each term's count before calculating the prior percentage of term usage rates. The Dirichlet prior was comprised of these 1999-2000 term usage percentages multiplied by 100. In short, the prior essentially adds another 100 term article to the baseline count which represents term usage prior to 2001. The resulting baseline profile follows a posterior distribution where each term element has weight equal to the prior weight plus the number of times the term appeared from January to September 10, 2001.

Table A.1: Opinion Columnists in the Analysis of Columnist Rhetoric

Media Matters' Ideological Classification		
Conservative	Moderate	Liberal
Jay Ambrose	Anne Applebaum	Jay Bookman
Max Boot	David Broder	Marie Cocco
Pat Buchanan	Thomas L. Friedman	Richard Cohen
William F. Buckley	Fred Hiatt	Joe Conason
Mona Charen	Jim Hoagland	Stanley Crouch
Linda Chavez	David Ignatius	E.J. Dionne, Jr.
Suzanne Fields	Ann McFeatters	Maureen Dowd
Georgie Anne Geyer	Dale McFeatters	Ellen Goodman
Paul Greenberg	Robert Neuharth	Froma Harrop
Victor Davis Hanson	Andres Oppenheimer	Nat Hentoff
Betsy Hart	Chuck Raasch	Bob Herbert
Roger Hernandez	Cokie/Steve Roberts	Derrick Jackson
Morton Kondracke	Eugene Robinson	Paul Krugman
Charles Krauthammer	Trudy Rubin	Gene Lyons
Kathryn Jean Lopez	Maria Elena Salinas	Patt Morrison
Rich Lowry	Dan K. Thomasson	Clarence Page
Michelle Malkin		Richard Reeves
Dick Morris		Frank Rich
Deroy Murdock		Martin Schram
Robert Novak		Mark Shields
Kathleen Parker		Tom Teepen
James P. Pinkerton		Helen Thomas
William Rusher		Cynthia Tucker
Robert Samuelson		DeWayne Wickham
Debra Saunders		
Thomas Sowell		
Cal Thomas		
Diana West		
George Will		
Walter Williams		

## B Examples of Cluster Rhetoric: Bush

Example phrases from Bush speeches by category; cluster-associated terms ( $p \leq .10$ ) or similar terms emphasized.

International Action:

- “And I would, however, remind you that Saddam’s got a lot of *oil* money, and it would be helpful if he would apply it to helping his people. Having said that, to the extent that sanctions are hurting the Iraqi people, we’re going to analyze that. Colin is really going to *listen*. He’s going to solicit opinion from our friends and folks in the Middle East. And prior to the formulation of any policy, we will have *listened*, and then I will, of course, *consult with friends and allies* such as the Prime Minister here, as we develop a policy that we hope and know will be more realistic.” News Conference with Prime Minister Blair (23 February 2001)
- “If they *develop weapons of mass destruction* that will be used to terrorize nations, they will be held accountable. And as for Mr. Saddam Hussein he needs to *let inspectors back* in his country to show us that he is not *developing weapons of mass destruction*.” Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Humanitarian Aid Workers Rescued From Afghanistan and an Exchange With Reporters (26 November 2001)
- “I have no military *plans on my desk* that calls for that plots out a *military operation*. I’m *looking at all options*. And of course I’ll *consult closely* with our *allies and friends*.” Interview With Claus Kleber of ARD German Television (21 May 2002)
- “I think most *people understand* he is a danger. But as I’ve said in speech after speech, I’ve got a lot of *tools at my disposal*. And I’ve also said I am a *deliberate* person. And so I’m—we’re in the process of consulting not only with Congress, like I said I do the other day, but with our *friends and allies*. And the consultation process is a *positive* part of really allowing people to fully understand our deep concerns about this man, his regime, and his *desires to have weapons of mass destruction*.” Exchange With Reporters in Waco, Texas (10 August 2002)

U.N. Failure/Freedom:

- “We don’t want the United Nations to become the *League of Nations*. We want the United Nations to have backbone and to enforce-enforce the resolutions and doctrines and mandates. I also made it clear, for the *sake of peace*, for the *sake of freedom* for our country, if the *United Nations will not act*, the United States and our friends will. We owe it to our children; we owe it to our grandchildren to make sure that the dictator in Iraq never threatens our country or our children or our children’s children with the *world’s worst weapons*.” Remarks at the Republican Governors Association Fall Reception (19 Sep 2002)
- “Yet for 11 years, he’s defied *resolution after resolution after resolution*. It’s his choice to make. And the U.N. can show whether or not it’s the United Nations or the *League*

of Nations. They get that choice to make, too. It's their choice. But my message, and the message from the Congress, people of both political parties, will be, for the *sake of peace*—and I emphasize, for the *sake of peace*—if they won't deal with this man, the United States of America will *lead a coalition to disarm* him for the *sake of peace*.” Remarks to the Community in Alcoa, Tennessee (8 Oct 2002)

- “And *sixteen* times the United Nations, over and over and over again, has written *resolution after resolution*, saying, ‘Mr. Saddam Hussein, you must disarm.’ And he has defied an international body. So I gave a speech, and I said to the world, ‘For the *sake of peace*, for the *sake of peace at home*, for the *sake of peace* in the Middle East, for the sake of determining whether or not that international body is going to be the *League of Nations* or the United Nations, *Saddam Hussein must disarm*, and we expect you, the world, to disarm him.’ For the *sake of peace*, for the *sake of security* for our country. It's his *choice to make*. You said you would disarm, disarm. The United Nations has asked you to disarm. They need to work together to disarm. But my fellow Americans, if they *won't act*, and if Saddam Hussein *won't act*, for the *sake of peace*, for the sake of our security, we will *lead a coalition to disarm* that man.” Remarks in Downingtown, Pennsylvania (22 Oct 2002)
- “And if the U.N. does not pass a resolution which holds him to account and that has consequences, then as I have said in speech after speech after speech, if the *U.N. won't act*, if Saddam *Hussein won't disarm*, we *will lead a coalition to disarm him*.” Remarks Following Discussions With President Vicente Fox of Mexico (26 Oct 2002)

#### WMD/Threat:

- “If the Iraqi regime wishes peace, it will immediately *end all support for terrorism* and act to suppress it, as all states are required to do by *U.N. Security Council resolutions*. If the Iraqi regime wishes peace, it will *cease persecution of its civilian* population, including Shia, Sunnis, Kurds, Turkomans, and others, again as required by *Security Council resolutions*. If the Iraqi regime wishes peace it will release or account for all *gulf war personnel whose fate is still unknown*” Address to the United Nations General Assembly (12 September 2002)
- “Today, this regime likely maintains stockpiles of chemical and *biological agents* and is improving and expanding facilities capable of producing *chemical and biological weapons*. Today, Saddam Hussein has the *scientists* and infrastructure for a *nuclear weapons program* and has illicitly sought to purchase the equipment needed to *enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon*. Should his regime acquire *fissile material*, it would be able to *build a nuclear weapon* within a year.” The President's Radio Address (14 September 2002)
- “The danger to our country is growing. The Iraqi regime possesses *biological and chemical weapons*. The Iraqi regime is building the facilities necessary to make more *biological and chemical weapons*. And according to the British Government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes after the order were given. The regime has longstanding and continuing *ties to terrorist*

*organizations*, and there are Al Qaida terrorists inside Iraq. The regime is seeking a nuclear *bomb* and, with *fissile material*, could build one within a year. Iraq has already used *weapons of mass death* against-against other countries and against her own citizens.” Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders (26 Sep 2002)

- “The dangers we face will only worsen from month to month and year to year. To ignore these threats is to encourage them, and when they have fully materialized, it may be too late to protect ourselves and our allies. By then, the Iraqi dictator will have had the means to terrorize and dominate the region, and each passing *day* could be the one on which the Iraqi regime gives *anthrax* or *VX nerve gas* or, someday, a nuclear *weapon to a terrorist group*. We refuse to live in this future of *fear*.” The President’s Radio Address (28 Sep 2002)
- “It’s the obligation of Iraq. *Compliance* will begin with an accurate and full and complete accounting for all chemical, *biological*, and *nuclear weapons* materials, as well as missiles and other means of delivery anywhere in Iraq. Failure to make such an accounting would be a further indication of the regime’s *bad faith* and aggressive intent. Inspectors must have access to any *site* in Iraq at any time, without preclearance, *without delay*, without exceptions.” Remarks on Signing the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (16 Oct 2002)

Disarm or Else:

- “The world has spoken. A diverse group of nations in the Security Council spoke with one voice. The United States Congress spoke with one voice. And that is, in the *name of peace*, he must disarm. If he *chooses not to disarm*, we will disarm him. That should be clear to Saddam Hussein and everybody else. And if he *chooses not to disarm*, we will have a coalition of the willing with us.” Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters (13 Nov 2003)
- “ I know people would like to avoid armed conflict, and so would I. But the *risks of doing nothing* far outweigh the risks of whatever it takes to disarm Saddam Hussein. I’ve thought long and hard about this issue. My job is to *protect the American people* from further harm. I believe that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the American people. I also know he’s a threat to our friends and allies.” Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and an Exchange With Reporters (10 February 2003)
- “Well, the role of inspectors is to sit there and *verify whether or not* he’s disarmed, not to *play hide-and-peek* in a *country the size of California*.” Remarks Prior to the Swearing-In Ceremony for John Snow as Secretary of the Treasury (7 February 2003)
- “It is important for the country to realize that Saddam Hussein has *fooled* the world for 12 years, is used to *fooling* the world, is confident he can *fool* the world. He is - wants the world to think that *hide-and-peek* is a game that we should play. And it’s over. You see, our country *recognizes*, and a lot of other countries now *recognize*

as well, the role of the inspector is to show up and verify whether Saddam Hussein is disarming. That's the role of the inspector. The role of inspectors-there's 104 of them-the *role of the inspector is not* to go into a state the size of, a *country the size of California* and try to figure out where this guy has hid things over a 12-year period of time." Remarks at the "Congress of Tomorrow" Republican Retreat Reception (9 February 2003)

- "But for the *safety of the American people* and for peace in the world Saddam Hussein will be *disarmed one way or the other*. And this Nation does so for the sake of peace. The use of our military is the absolute last option. It is the last alternative for the President. But the *risk of doing nothing*, the risk of assuming that Saddam Hussein will change, the risk of thinking and hoping for the best for the American people, far outweighs the risk of *committing troops* if we have to." Remarks to the Latino Coalition (26 February 2003)

## C Examples of Cluster Rhetoric: Media Actors

Example phrases from media actors by category; Bush terms emphasized.

International Action:

- "In a joint news conference on Monday, Mr. Bush repeated that he wanted to keep 'all *options on the table*' with Iraq, one of the nations he has called part of his '*axis of evil*.' But he also said that he wanted 'to resolve all issues peacefully, whether it be Iraq, Iran or North Korea.'" (prob = .98) ("Bush Affirms U.S. Role in Asia in New Pacific Century" *New York Times* February 19, 2002)
- "Of course, calming tensions in the Middle East could ease pressure on Arab allies in the Persian Gulf to allow American troops to use their bases as staging areas for a war against Iraq, a subject Mr. Wolfowitz declined to *discuss*. 'We haven't *defined* yet what the answer is to that problem, the Iraqi problem,' he said. 'The president *defined* what the problem is. We are thinking through what solutions, what policies there can be.'" (prob = 1.00) ("The Busy Life of Being a Lightning Rod for Bush" *New York Times* April 22, 2002)
- "As tough as Bush's position was described in Friday morning's newspaper headlines, however, he took a half step back from an unconditional demand for *regime change* in Baghdad. Implicitly at least, the president pointed to ways that Saddam could avoid a military assault. While Cheney and Rumsfeld have expressed no interest in a return of UN inspectors to Baghdad, the president opened the door a crack.

Bush has thus moved from his dangerous posture a few weeks ago that threatened to open hostilities without approval from either Congress or the UN. Abandonment of that position means the onus now is on Saddam Hussein to obey UN edicts rather than on the United States to definitively prove that Iraq poses an international security risk." (prob = .82) (Robert Novak, "Powell's in the catbird seat" *The Chicago Sun-Times* September 16, 2002)

- In a closed-door meeting with big Republican contributors Tuesday night, President Bush stressed his goal of disarming Iraq without loss of American lives. (prob = .99) (Robert Novak, “Bush sheds his handlers” *The Chicago Sun-Times* October 13, 2002)
- “That leaves Colin Powell, supposedly the epicenter of internal opposition to the hard line on Iraq. Well, this is Powell last Sunday on national television: ‘It’s been the policy of this government to insist that Iraq be disarmed. . . . And we believe the best way to do that is with a *regime change*.’ Moreover, he added, we are prepared ‘to act unilaterally to defend ourselves.’ When Powell, the most committed multilateralist in the administration, deliberately invokes the incendiary U-word to describe the American position, we have ourselves a consensus.” (prob = 1.00) (Charles Krauthammer, “Fictional Rift” *The Washington Post* September 13, 2002)
- “The vice president, followed by the administration A Team and echoing the president, argues that we must remove from power an irrational dictator who has a history of aggression and mass murder, is driven by hatred of America and is *developing weapons of mass destruction* that could kill millions of Americans in a day. The Democrats respond with public skepticism, a raised eyebrow and the charge that the administration has yet to ‘make the case.’

Then, on Sept. 12, the president goes to the United Nations and argues that this same dictator must be brought to heel to vindicate some Security Council resolutions and thus rescue the United Nations from irrelevance. The Democrats swoon. ‘Great speech,’ they say. “Why didn’t you say that in the first place? Count us in.” (Charles Krauthammer, “Is This the Way To Decide on Iraq?” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2002)

- “Of course, the Germans have a right to opt out of any war against Iraq. It’s not as if they owe the United States any favors – even if the United States gave them money instead of their country after they tried to lay Europe to waste.

Schroeder also has a right to *attack* U.S. unilateralism, while engaging in the unilateral position of announcing he won’t send German troops to Iraq as part of a U.N. *mission*.” (prob. = .94) (Debra Saunders, “Achtung, anti-American” *The San Francisco Chronicle* September 24, 2002)

- “It’s good that President Bush now has agreed to consult with Congress and allies before taking action in Iraq. But at its most basic the debate can’t be settled by congressional testimony or speeches to the United Nations. The evidence that will matter most is how the administration behaves, and has behaved since 9/11, not what it will say or has said....

‘We have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment,’ President Bush said in his State of the Union speech. ‘We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the *war on terror*.’” (prob = .99) (Fred Hiatt, “Proving Ground for a Just War” *The Washington Post* September 9, 2002)

- “‘Some ask what has changed to warrant action now. Well, what has changed is our experience on Sept. 11,’ he [Rumsfeld] said.

Indeed, Rumsfeld referred repeatedly to Sept. 11 during his testimony, stating, at one point, ‘Do we believe it is our responsibility to wait for a *weapon of mass destruction* 9/11, or is it the responsibility of free people to do something, to take steps to deal with such a threat before such an *attack* occurs?’”

And, of course, Bush does the same. In a recent speech denouncing Iraq, Bush not only used Sept. 11 as a chorus, but he also attempted to link Saddam to al-Qaida.” (prob = .99) (Cynthia Tucker, “Bush offers disinformation about Saddam” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* October 27, 2002)

- “In general it’s a bad omen when advocates of a policy claim that it will solve problems unrelated to its original purpose. The shifting rationale for the Bush tax cut – it’s about giving back the surplus; no, it’s a demand stimulus; no, it’s a supply-side policy – should have warned us that this was an obsession in search of a justification.

The shifting rationale for war with Iraq – Saddam Hussein was behind Sept. 11 and the anthrax attacks; no, but he’s on the verge of *developing nuclear weapons*; no, but he’s a really evil man (which he is) – has a similar feel.” (prob = 1.00) (Paul Krugman, “Stocks and Bombs,” *The New York Times* September 13, 2002).

- “National security adviser Condoleezza Rice, also reading from the administration’s playbook, echoed Cheney on CNN. ‘I don’t think anyone wants to wait for the 100 percent surety that [Saddam Hussein] has a *weapon of mass destruction* that can reach the United States,’ she said. Once again: You bet. But again, what’s the proof (1) that Saddam has such a weapon, (2) that he has the means to deliver it, and (3) that suicide of this sort is his intention?

I have always thought there is a plausible case for going to war against Iraq. But the more I hear from the administration – the more it exaggerates its case and turns a potential threat against the region into an imminent one against Peoria, Ill. – the more I have to wonder if such a case exists. From everything I know, Cheney and Rice are taking a worst-case scenario further than the facts warrant.” (prob = 1.00) (Richard Cohen, “War Without Evidence” *The Washington Post* September 10, 2002).

U.N. Failure/Freedom:

- “President Bush used two campaign appearances today to turn up pressure on the United Nations just days ahead of its vote on Iraq, arguing that Saddam Hussein had made the organization look ‘foolish’ and questioning whether the Security Council has ‘the will or the courage’ to enforce its own resolutions.” . . . “Aboard Air Force One this morning, Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, said: ‘The United Nations has debated this now long enough.’ He added, ‘The time has come for people to raise their hands and cast their vote and either announce that they will return to the ways of the 90’s, with a weak, ineffective system of inspection, or recognize that Saddam Hussein has taken advantage of weakness and the world needs to do something different.’” (prob = 1.00) (“THREATS AND RESPONSES: THE WHITE HOUSE; Iraq Makes U.N. Seem ‘Foolish,’ Bush Asserts” *New York Times* October 29, 2002)



- “The real answer for Bush is, as it was in September, to recover his momentum on Iraq. The best way to do this would be to set a deadline for U.S. action - Jan. 1, 2003 - and challenge Saddam to disarm by then. Meanwhile, the United States should ship the troops it needs into the region. If the United Nations goes along by that date, great. If it doesn’t, the United States will act to enforce existing U.N. resolutions on its own. Russia will doubtless make a deal in the face of the overwhelming likelihood of U.S. victory (Vladimir Putin understands power as few other world leaders do). *China* will abstain as usual. France will realize that the ground has eroded under its position and will either succumb or risk the world’s ridicule by vetoing a resolution.

With or without the United Nations, the United States *must act* to defend itself. If the United Nations chooses to be paralyzed by a veto cast by an anachronistic power, that is the problem of the United Nations, not of the United States.” (prob = .99) (Dick Morris, “Anybody sense a trend?” *The Hill* October 23, 2002)

- “As I recently asked in this space, by what logic does the blessing of these countries bestow moral legitimacy on American action? *China*’s leaders are the butchers of Tiananmen Square. France and Russia will decide the Iraq question based on the coldest calculation of their own national interest, meaning money and oil.

Everyone in the *Senate* wants a new and tough inspection regime in Iraq: anytime, anywhere, unannounced. Yet these three countries, whose approval the Democrats crave, are responsible for the hopelessly diluted and useless inspection regime that now exists.” (prob = 1.0) (Charles Krauthammer, “The Myth of U.N. Support,” *The Washington Post*, October 4, 2002).

- “President Bush made a strong case at the U.N. for why the world community should not allow Iraq to go on flouting U.N. weapons inspections. But what struck me most about the scene was how intently the U.N. delegates were waiting for, and listening to, the president’s speech. We should listen to their listening – because it is telling us some important things about our world....We *must act* vis-a-vis Iraq in a way that persuades people that this is an international imperative not an American preference.” (prob = .83) (Thomas L. Friedman, “Going Our Way,” September 15, 2002, *The New York Times*)

- “Bush’s reentry into the debate, in emotion-laden speeches at home and the United Nations, was designed in part to underscore his full-steam-ahead determination to take on the political, diplomatic and military challenges of a strike on Iraq – quickly, in that order and on his timetable and battlegrounds.

He is likely to press Congress for a resolution of support before the House and Senate recess for electioneering next month. Bush then plans to go to the U.N. Security Council to *ask* the world organization to live up to its long unfulfilled *obligations* to oversee the disarmament of Iraq. Preliminary work on the wording of a U.S. draft resolution began this week. ” (prob = .95) (Jim Hoagland, “Back and forth with Bush”, *The Washington Post*, September 12, 2002).

- “The second Bush administration sees the dangers that “axis of evil” members Iraq and North Korea pose. It is fashioning considered, *realistic* responses to those dangers.” (prob = .86) (Jim Hoagland, “Nuclear Enabler,” *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2002).
- “Then there is the challenge President Bush laid down at the United Nations. He shook up many in our town because another war following the one in Afghanistan so quickly does not make for an easy feeling. Essentially, Bush said Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has not adhered to UN sanctions imposed 10 years ago and that if the UN does not back up its own sanctions, the U.S. will *act - and will not* wait long to do it. As for me, I think that unless the President has very reliable intelligence that says U.S. troops will be welcomed into Iraq like the Allies were into France after D-Day, he might be getting himself and his country into one whack of a big mess.” (prob = .99) (Stanley Crouch, “A Time of Uncertainty,” *The Daily News*, September 16, 2002).
- “Yes, the president did go to the United Nations. He was rhetorically effective in trying to shame its members into standing up to the dictator who has repeatedly *defied the United Nations’* wishes. Bush, often accused of unilateralism, cleverly turned the argument around. “We want the resolutions of the world’s most important multilateral body to be enforced,” he said.

But the thrust of Bush’s speech was that the United States would act with or without the United Nations. ‘The United States will make that stand,’ Bush said, ‘and, delegates of the United Nations, you have the power to make that stand as well.’ (prob = 1.0) (E.J. Dionne, Jr., “Getting Down to Coalition-Building,” *The Washington Post*, September 13, 2002)

- “The president’s decision yesterday to *ask* Congress for the broad authority to wage war on Saddam Hussein, with or without the United Nations, will only aggravate hard feelings in Democratic ranks – even though Bush is likely to get what he wants. Many Democrats have been arguing for a resolution supporting the demands Bush made at the United Nations and urging the very sort of tough U.N. action against Hussein the administration is seeking.” (prob = 1.0) (E.J. Dionne, Jr., “The Motivations for War,” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2002)

#### WMD/Threat:

- “Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld underscored today concerns that the United States could face increased dangers of terrorist attacks if President Bush orders military action against Iraq. In a radio interview with Infinity Broadcasting, Mr. Rumsfeld said that Iraq’s president, Saddam Hussein, might try to organize terrorist strikes against American targets if a United States-led coalition moves to disarm him by force. ‘I have no doubt that if he’s able, he would like to see that terrorist attacks occur in the event that military action was taken,’ Mr. Rumsfeld said.” (prob=.97) (“THREATS AND RESPONSES: ANTITERRORISM; Little Headway In Terror War, Democrats Say” *New York Times*, November 15, 2002)

- “To trick U.N. weapons inspectors, Iraqi authorities hauled away prohibited materials, bulldozed weapons sites and intimidated Iraqi weapons experts – in one case ordering a dozen *scientists* confined to a guesthouse, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell told the U.N. Security Council today in illustrating what he called ‘a policy of evasion and deception that goes back 12 years.’ Powell made a series of new allegations about Iraqi behavior, at times linking President Saddam Hussein to specific tactics intended to defy U.N. weapons inspectors. He said that in one case Hussein ordered a death certificate issued for a *scientist* who was then sent into hiding. In another, Hussein ordered a warning be sent to Iraqi *scientists* that cooperation with the inspectors would be punishable by death, Powell said. One of Powell’s most dramatic new charges was that the Iraqi military distributed rocket-launchers and warheads filled with biological agents in western Iraq, where they were hidden in palm groves. Citing ‘human sources,’ he said orders were given to move the weapons every one to four weeks to prevent discovery. The Iraqi government denies it has any biological or chemical weapons.” (prob = 1.00) (“Data on Efforts to Hide Arms Called ‘Strong Suit’ of Speech” *Washington Post*, February 6, 2003)

- “Most crucial of all, however, is the attempt to water down U.S. condition (c) on the nature of the inspections. The only way we’re going to find these weapons is if Iraqi *scientists* tell us where they are. Satellites are not going to find stuff that can be hidden in a basement. In the mid-1990s, inspectors missed Hussein’s huge stocks of *biological weapons* until we learned about them from defectors.

Now, if you interrogate the *scientists* in the presence of an Iraqi government minder, you’ll get nothing. They know that if they say anything, they – and their families – will be tortured and killed. Unless these *scientists* are taken to safe locations, we can write off in advance the entire inspection process as a farce.” (prob = .99) (Charles Krauthammer, “Don’t Go Wobbly,” *The Washington Post*, November 1, 2002).

- “Mr. Powell and Mr. Blair pushed Mr. Bush to go through the U.N. before invading Iraq. The hard-liners were angry about that because they fear the inspectors won’t find anything and then Iraq will be off the hook. Cool it. Saddam is as likely to fully *comply with the U.N.* as Mike Tyson is to embrace anger management, and by framing the issue in the U.N., Mr. Bush ensured much greater public support for any war.” (prob = .68) (Thomas L. Friedman, “Colin Powell’s Eyebrows,” *The New York Times*, November 10, 2002)

- “Finally, the term ‘*weapons of mass destruction*,’ while frightening, is an obfuscation. *Chemical weapons* are weapons of limited destruction – horrible but restricted in practicality. *Biological weapons* are scary beyond imagination, but much more potent in the movies than in real life. They are difficult to deliver – the explosion immolates the germs – and not all that effective.

Nuclear weapons are a different matter. They truly are *weapons of mass destruction* – certainly weapons of mass intimidation. Iraq is probably five years or so away from developing an atomic weapon, but why wait for that to happen? Recent history tells us that when this crisis passes, the world will lose its interest and Hussein’s weaponeers

will return to the labs. Sooner or later, this vampire is going to rise out of his coffin.” (prob = .91) (Richard Cohen, “Ready for war,” *The Washington Post*, October 10, 2002).

- “Before Americans bellow once more, it should be questioned whether the proposed war, like many a Super Bowl, has been hyped way beyond expectations. Now, as 11 years ago, the United States is back at making Saddam Hussein the worst man on Earth. In his speech, Bush called him a ‘murderous *tyrant*,’ a “homicidal dictator,” and a “student of Stalin.” In 1990, his father said: “We’re dealing with Hitler revisited, a totalitarianism and a brutality that is naked and unprecedented in modern times and that must not stand!”

As bad as Saddam is, everyone knows that he and his country would be wasted if it really unleashed a bioterrorist attack. Yet, this fact is lost in the hype. At the beginning of the 1991 Gulf War, we were told over and over how devastating this war could be to our armed forces. Defense Secretary (now Vice President) Dick Cheney said this was “an operation that is going to run a long time.” (prob = .99) (Derrick Jackson, “It’s Kickoff Time for Coach Bush”, *The Boston Globe*, October 9, 2002).

Disarm or Else:

- “U.N. officials said the discussions will play a significant role in shaping a crucial progress report Blix plans to give the council on Friday, and lack of agreement likely will be seized upon by the Bush administration to reinforce its case that the inspections are not working.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, asked about Blix’s statements, noted that the president has said: ‘Given the fact that Saddam Hussein is not disarming, time is *running* out.’ In remarks delivered to congressional Republicans before Blix spoke today, President Bush said Hussein “wants the world to think that hide-and-seek is a *game* that we should play.’ ‘It’s over,’ Bush said. ‘It’s a moment of truth for the United Nations. The United Nations gets to decide shortly whether or not it is going to be relevant in terms of keeping the peace, whether or not its words mean anything.” (prob=1.00) (“U.N. Inspectors Fail to Win Key Iraq Concessions; Baghdad Meetings Yield Little” *Washington Post* February 10, 2003).

- “Moreover, they argue, deterrence works. “I have seen no persuasive evidence,” said Kennedy, “that Saddam would not be deterred from *attacking* U.S. interests by America’s overwhelming military superiority.” So far, so good. But then these senior Democratic critics, having eviscerated the president’s premises, proceed to enthusiastically endorse his conclusion – that Saddam Hussein’s weapons facilities must be subjected to the most intrusive and far-reaching inspection, and that if he cheats and refuses to *cooperate*, we must go to war against him.

This is utterly incoherent. In principle, a search for genocidal weapons that can be hidden in a basement or even a closet cannot possibly succeed without the full *cooperation* of the host government. Not a serious person on the planet believes that Saddam Hussein will give it.

More important, why are these critics insisting on inspection and disarmament anyway? They have elucidated all the various *costs* of attempting to disarm Iraq forcibly, and told us that deterrence has worked just fine to keep Saddam Hussein from doing us any harm. If deterrence works, by what logic does Kennedy insist that Saddam Hussein ‘must be disarmed’?” (prob = .99) (Charles Krauthammer, “What Good is Delay?” *The Washington Post*, October 7, 2002).

- “Bush must now show a capability to run the two-front war on terror that al Qaeda and Iraq’s Saddam Hussein have forced on him while articulating an economic strategy to absorb and spread the *costs* of the conflict nationally and internationally.

The struggle against this international cancer will be long and difficult. And we have just been reminded again that it is not America’s war alone to wage.” (prob = .95) (Jim Hoagland, “War’s Global Casualties,” *The Washington Post*, October 17, 2002).

Table 1: Top Key Terms and Relative Rates of Usage by Frame

International Action		Freedom		WMD/Threat		Disarm or Else		
Term	Rate	Term	Rate	Term	Rate	Term	Rate	
Trigram	consult_friend_alli	10.9	will_not_act	14.1	chemic_biolog_weapon	12.2	choos_not_disarm	8.8
	desir_weapon_mass	7.8	un_will_not	12.6	biolog_chemic_weapon	10.4	coaltit_will_disarm	9.5
	use_tool_dispos	7.8	coaltit_disarm_hussein	10.4	will_not_permit	7.3	secur_council_said	6.8
	histori_call_usa	7.8	told_world_not	8.2	regim_must_allow	6.2	can_done_peac	6.7
	let_inspector_back	7.8	man_told_world	8.2	gulf_war_personnel	6.2	hope_can_done	6.6
	call_usa_action	7.8	not_act_hussein	7.4	persecut_civilian_popul	5.2	disarm_one_way	6.6
	not_develop_weapon	10.9	world_not_weapon	7.4	end_support_terror	5.2	mr_hussein_disarm	5.6
	develop_weapon_mass	20.5	act_hussein_will	7.4	illicit_trade_outsid	5.2	whether_not_hussein	5.5
	weapon_mass_destruct	2.7	nation_disarm_hussein	6.0	account_gulf_war	5.2	not_disarm_will	5.9
	no_war_plan	6.3	peac_name_freedom	5.2	produc_chemic_biolog	5.2	use_weapon_mass	2.3
	patient_man	9.8	sake_freedom	16.3	weapon_program	13.4	go_war	9.0
	man_will	8.9	leagu_nation	14.0	weapon_terrorist	8.6	serious_consequ	8.1
	look_option	6.9	freedom_sake	10.3	un_demand	8.9	lot_countri	6.6
	make_clear	4.8	sake_world	7.0	hussein_regim	9.7	go_disarm	6.5
	consult_close	6.9	keep_peac	9.6	live_freedom	9.0	will_see	3.5
	Unigram	aliv	6.8	home	6.2	site	8.6	nato
kind		6.5	realist	8.9	ensur	4.9	cost	10.4
posit		4.1	homeland	6.8	decad	7.4	fool	5.3
much		3.7	fulfil	5.4	intimid	7.9	liberti	7.7
affect	8.0	sixteen	5.6	document	5.8	run	3.1	

Terms presented rank highest in a trigram, bigram, or unigram's prominence within and association to frame using key term measure as defined by Quinn et al. (2010). Rates of usage represent the ratio of a term's usage within cluster relative to the average usage across the other three clusters. Terms presented are those estimated to have greater rate of usage with more than 95% probability.

Table 2: Probability of Bush's Frame Usage by Era

Cluster	Era			
	Pre-9/11	Post-9/11	Fall Campaign	End Game
International Action	.66	.86	.10*	.03
U.N. Failure/Freedom	.12	.03	.67*	.04
WMD/Threat	.15	.08	.17	.29†
Disarm or Else	.08	.04	.06	.64*

\* - 95% BCI of difference in proportion excludes zero.  $(\pi_e - \pi_{e-1})$

† - 90% BCI of difference in proportion excludes zero.  $(\pi_e - \pi_{e-1})$

Table 3: Frame Prominence Score by Media Actor and Iraq Debate Era

	Era		
	Post-9/11	Fall Campaign	End Game
News Articles			
International Action	.11	.08	.07
U.N. Failure/Freedom	.03	.10*	.04
WMD/Threat	.10	.10	.10
Disarm or Else	.03	.03	.04
Conservative Columnists			
International Action	.30	.30	.29
U.N. Failure/Freedom	.09	.21*	.13
WMD/Threat	.27	.23	.28
Disarm or Else	.05	.11 <sup>†</sup>	.13
Moderate Columnists			
International Action	.20	.23	.18
U.N. Failure/Freedom	.06	.17*	.09
WMD/Threat	.17	.15	.18
Disarm or Else	.09	.11	.15
Liberal Columnists			
International Action	.27	.25	.31
U.N. Failure/Freedom	.09	.21*	.13
WMD/Threat	.16	.12	.16
Disarm or Else	.08	.11	.10

\* - 95% BCI difference in proportion excludes zero.  $(\pi_e - \pi_{e-1})$

† - 90% BCI of difference in proportion excludes zero.  $(\pi_e - \pi_{e-1})$



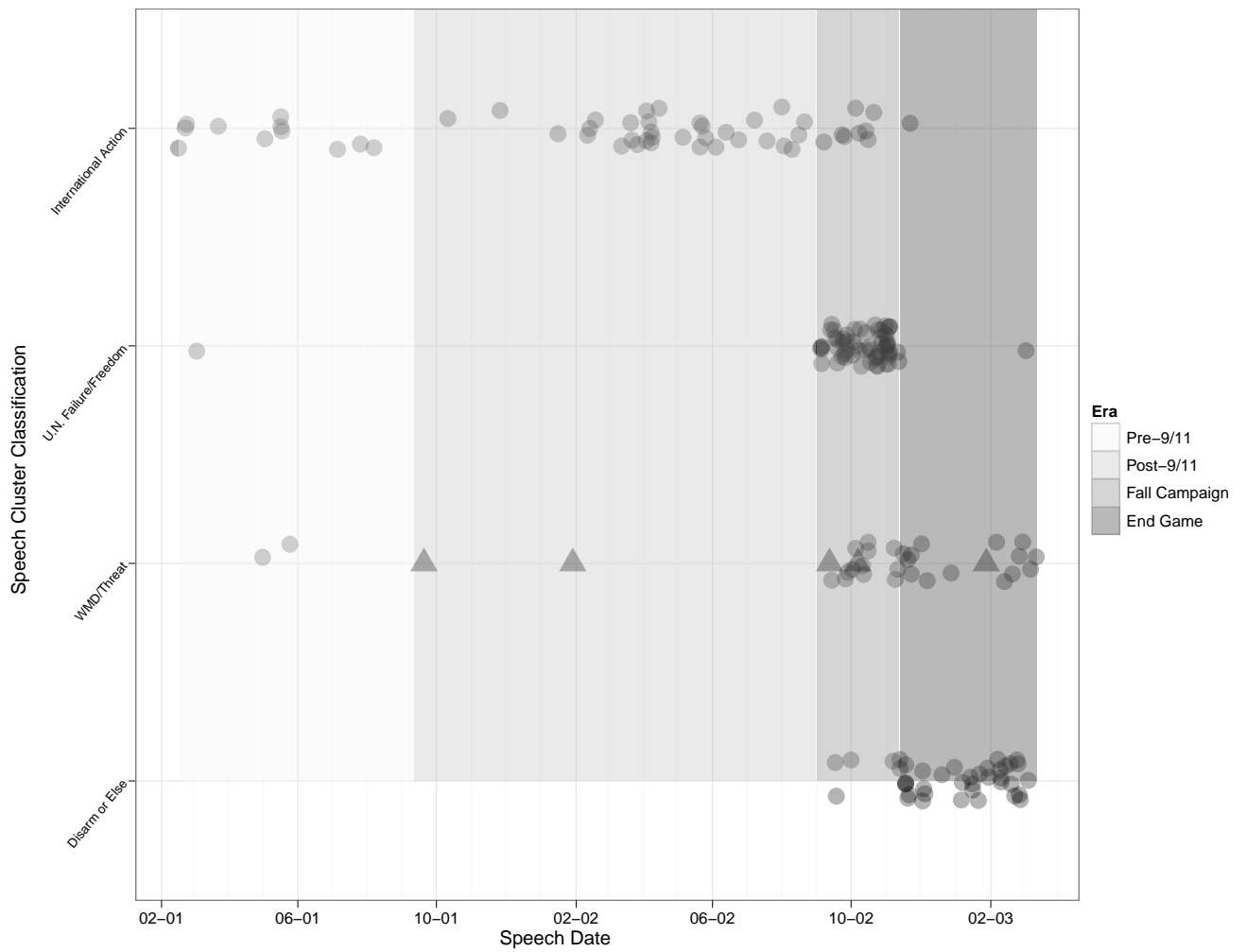


Figure 1: Frame classification of Bush speeches (triangles represent major policy speeches): January 21, 2001–March 13, 2003