War at Home:

Strategic Narratives of the War on Terrorism

by

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Preface

Writing a PhD is a demanding endeavour. I have found three considerable consolations. Firstly, it is supposed to be demanding. Many forget that experiencing PhD hardship is not a coincidence or bad fortune. It is natural, even right. Secondly, this project has given me the privilege of combining my three major academic interests: terrorism, strategic communication and American studies. Thirdly, and most importantly, you learn to appreciate the people who support you.

The first sincere thanks go to my parents. Not everyone is blessed with two ever-supportive parents. Moreover, no research is required to see that many relationships falter while PhDs are written. Luckily, my experience has been the opposite. I have been fortunate to have someone who has cheered me up and accepted – at times even encouraged – long office hours. This is rare. Thank you, Tone.

War Studies at King's College is an extraordinary place of unsurpassed expertise. Working with David Betz has been highly rewarding. I am very grateful for all the good advice and the encouragement. The same applies for my employer. Yet, the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (IFS) is much more than an employer. It is a community I have benefitted enormously from.

Four of my cherished colleagues played particular roles and must be mentioned. I am indebted to Svein Melby, who is the reason I started working at IFS. Secondly, Professor Magnus Petersson provided me with excellent comments. Ingrid Lundestad and Therese Klingstedt also provided crucial assistance during the very final stages of the project. That said, I bear full responsibility for all aspects of this manuscript, for all its faults and any merits.

Part of the PhD experience is to sometimes wonder whether you will ever complete the text, and submit a manuscript for PhD consideration. As I write these lines – the last to be written – it is still hard to comprehend that this demanding and riveting writing process is over. Yet, if you are reading this, it must be.

Abstract

War at Home: Strategic Narratives of the War on Terrorism

This study reconstructs the main strategic narratives of the war on terrorism, as they appeared in American editorials. The study analyses 1002 selected editorials from five major news outlets in America. The analysis is structured around six salient events in the war on terrorism: the 9/11 attacks, the Iraq invasion, President Bush's re-election, the Iraqi surge, Barack Obama replacing Bush, and Osama bin Laden's death.

The study also tests critical hypotheses from the literature on media, war and support. Are the media left to echo the rhetoric of the elites as wars break out? Or do media organizations develop independent news frames about wars as they progress? This study finds that the literature rightly favors the persuasive power of elite rhetoric early on in conflicts. Yet, important exceptions to this pattern are found.

The study challenges the notion of elite rhetoric dominating news coverage through the case of *The Wall Street Journal*'s editorializing of war with Iraq. *The Journal* supported war with Iraq before the Bush administration. They called for toppling Saddam Hussein right after the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, the Bush administration adopted the *Journal's* position, and not the other way around.

Additionally, the study argues that Obama ended the war on terrorism, and the study considers the killing of Osama bin Laden to demarcate the end of America's war on terrorism. The study also documents the emergence of a torture narrative that hijacked the war on terrorism, rendering it of limited use to Obama. The media were crucial in developing this narrative. This also challenges elite rhetoric domination.

The study concludes that the home front is of increased importance due to new media realities. The dissertation shows that right after 9/11, the news outlets were overwhelmingly unison in their support for the war on terrorism. They openly called on Americans to sacrifice and support the war. With the Iraq war, unity and public support was fractured along ideological lines, resulting in a *War at Home*.

1. War at Home

What is left of a war once it is over? When fighting desists the war does not vanish. The stories of the war live on long after the war – sometimes for millennia – such as the Peloponnesian war, or the battles of Carthage and Jericho. The remnants of war are more than demolished buildings, torn communities, maimed soldiers and overfilled memorial yards. The legacy of wars is rife with narratives, and *War Stories* (Baum & Groeling, 2010). These narratives encompass tales of heroism, malevolence, victory, transgressions and also vital decisions. They portray the conflict's outcome and actors. Narratives determine and make up wars' history and position them in time.

In order to understand wars in retrospect, a natural place to start is to analyse how wars were narrated as they were fought. This study aims to do just that: provide a rich description of the narratives of America's decade-long war on terrorism. The project will reconstruct the main strategic narratives and news frames of the war on terrorism as they occurred in American news media. This is done through a comparative analysis of editorials from five of America's leading news outlets.

Much research analyses whether elites have a profound impact in shaping media content and public opinion (Baum & Groeling, 2010; Berinsky, 2009; Entman, 2004; Zaller, 1992). This study of the war on terrorism also finds that media frames tend to be directed by strategic narratives from elites, most of the time. There are exceptions to this pattern deserving of further research to develop our understanding of wars. These exceptions form the basis of some of the study's key arguments. The Iraq war is a common denominator in three of these arguments.

Firstly, the *Wall Street Journal* advocated war with Iraq long before the Bush administration did so. They pointed out this fact themselves on February 2, 2003: 'We've been in favor of ousting Saddam Hussein for years, going back to the Gulf War and long before President Bush made it his policy.' WSJ's early advocacy for invading Iraq challenges theory suggesting that political elites shape public opinion on war through the mass media. The argument also provides nuance to the notion that the

Bush administration duped the media and the public into supporting the war in Iraq (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 57; Rampton & Stauber, 2003; Suskind, 2006, 2008).

Undoubtedly, misleading information played a role in generating support for the war in Iraq. Holsti notes that 'polls reveal that the public has come to believe that the war was a mistake, that it was deliberately misled about Iraq's' WMDs (Holsti, 2006, p. 358). But was it petty lies, or inadvertent inaccuracies, based on faulty intelligence? Twelve years after the war Judith Miller reminds us that it is too simple to point to the Bush administration's elite rhetoric and accuse them of deliberately misleading the nation (Miller, 2015, p. 323). This relates to an important concept from the literature: 'elasticity of reality, which explains the elites' capacity to frame events potentially different from the truth' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 37).

The second argument is that the war on terrorism was of little utility to Obama due to President George Walker Bush's decision to launch the war in Iraq as *the* central front of the war on terrorism. Such a linguistic move is called a 'transfer' in propaganda studies. Bush's decision transferred public opinion on Iraq onto the war on terrorism. This conflation proved useful in the short term, but it was a disadvantage in the long run because eventually the once popular war on terrorism suffered from the unpopularity of the Iraq war.

The third argument deals with misconduct by US forces in Iraq and elsewhere. This may be the most consequential argument, as it redefined the war on terrorism in negative terms. I argue that the war on terrorism ended after a decade, partly due to unfavorable attitudes towards the war. The emergence of a torture narrative in the media – highlighted by incidents of mistreatment in places like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo – rendered the 'war on terror' of limited use to President Obama.

America experienced what happens when a state's brutal conduct in war 'exceeds what a critical domestic constituency accepts' (Merom, 2003, p. 15). Obama conspicuously sought to discontinue the war on terrorism. The master narrative of a war on terrorism was no longer an effective vehicle for projecting American military power abroad. America's moral footing was slipping. As Emile Simpson points out, 'the moral high ground, once evacuated, is very hard to regain' (Simpson, 2013, p. 209). The failure to appreciate this insight cost America dearly in the war on terrorism.

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The 9/11 attacks and their military responses – particularly Iraq – will forever define the legacy of President George W. Bush. 'Iraq was very much Bush's war' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 75). In order to understand the narratives of the war on terrorism, it is useful to consider the legacy of President Bush, and revisit his most pivotal decisions. In his own words, Bush considers ordering the 2007 surge in Iraq as 'the toughest decision of the presidency' (Bush, 2010, pp. 340–341). Why is this so? The answer lays both in Iraq and on America's home front. Let us use the surge as an entry point to consider the political and military context of Bush's wars and decisions.

Half way through President Bush's second term, the likelihood of America winning the war in Iraq was looking increasingly bleak. The situation continued to spiral out of control with sectarian civil war looming, and 'public opinion seemed to have turned against the war' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 1). In an attempt to turn things around, President Bush authorized a surge of troops to Iraq. More resources and troops flowed into the war-torn country, and Bush dispatched his trusted military commander, General David Petraeus, to execute the administration's new strategy for Iraq.

Equally important was the battle being fought in America. The American public was weary of war, and receptive to alternative policies. Faced with mounting disaffection in the country, Bush sent his most trusted advisors to fight a fierce battle in Battlefield Washington. As Bush's last Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, notes in his memoirs, by now 'Washington itself had become a war zone' (Gates, 2014, p. 14).

Gates was important in establishing a new Iraq strategy. Yet, Bush's most trusted counsel on war and security policy was Condoleezza Rice (Kessler, 2007). Condi Rice was prepared by the Commander-in-Chief for the battle for hearts and minds at home. In her memoirs, Rice recounts the following exchange with the President: "I want everyone to stay home and fight the fight here", he said. "I need you and Bob Gates meeting with Congress, meeting with the press". Rice's response provides the title for this thesis: 'I cancelled all but essential travel for July and turned my attention to the war at home' (Rice, 2011, p. 590).

The surge was in some ways a dismissal of the leadership of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Yet, he offers an interesting insight in his memoirs into the effect of it. 'The true genius of the surge was the political effect it had in the United

States, where the conflict's true centre of gravity had migrated' (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 716). Let us proceed keeping this view of the war on terrorism and Iraq in mind.

1.1 Media and war support: past and present

Developments in media ecology and information infrastructure impact how nations engage in war (Castells, 2009; Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, & Roselle, 2013; Simpson, 2013). This is true both abroad and in more partisan struggles at home. War inherently has a media dimension, and 'the media landscape in which America's partisan battles are fought continues to evolve' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 296). In short, 'new types of media have bolstered the weaker side's chances of turning the virtual dimension of war into the decisive arena' (Graaf, Dimitriu, & Ringsmose, 2015, pp. 6–7)

This characteristic of contemporary conflict is also highlighted by Sir General Rupert Smith. In modern conflict, he writes, 'We fight in every living room in the world.' (Smith, 2007, pp. 280, 286). The way modern media war unfolds is new, but the development has strong historical moorings. This is because it is the character of war – not its nature – that constantly changes (Strachan, 2007a, pp. 9–10). Let us briefly consider some historical perspectives on public support for war.

The notion of public support as an important component of wars has been dealt with by philosophers like Edmund Burke and military thinkers like Carl von Clausewitz (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 596). In his 1795 *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, Burke argued that 'no war can be long carried on against the will of the people' (Burke, 1999, p. 104). The question of a national will brings us to the very essence of war as defined by Clausewitz: 'War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will' (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 75).

Clausewitz' trinity of an emotional people, a rational political leadership and a military exposed to good and bad fortune in battle remains relevant today (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 89). What we experience today is that the 'relationships between the trinity of government, military and publics' are more immediate and unpredictable (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010, p. 6). This is a result of the development of media as an actor and as the central stage where political leaders present their wars to the public. This study is

founded on the premise that governments 'seek to harness mass media in wartime to persuade citizens of a war's justness and the enemy's implacability' (Carruthers, 2000, p. 5; See also Graaf et al., 2015, p. 8). This mechanism is natural and unavoidable.

World War I is often considered 'the first public relations war' (Holsti, 2006, p. 56). Hew Strachan explains that 'the democratization of societies meant that popular opinion had become an agent in the struggle' (Strachan, 2007a, p. 21). Another milestone was reached with the opposition to the Vietnam War. General, and later Secretary of State, Colin Powell was 'alarmed by the gulf that had opened between it [the military] and the society it served' (Strachan, 2007b, p. 2).

Vietnam - often described as a quagmire – is ever-present whenever America's overseas military engagements are drawn out. This also happened with the war on terrorism (Hodges, 2011, pp. 133–152). Michael J. Arlen famously referred to Vietnam as a Living Room War (Arlen, 1969). Vietnam represented a sea change in the war and media relationship, not least due to the speed of communications (Page, 1996, p. 2). The elites lost control over the masses, who exercised freedom of speech to protest against the war. Vietnam illustrates that 'war cannot be understood unless one carefully accounts for the role of media in it' (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010, p. 4).

This does not mean that 'The collapse of America's will to fight in Vietnam' can be blamed solely on negative media coverage (Hallin, 1986, p. 213). Far from it. It only means that you have to understand the role media played to understand America's Vietnam misfortune. Before blaming media coverage for any failures, a pertinent question to ask is whether the negative media coverage occurred deservedly. President Bush was aware of media's role in shaping the war he was leading. Bush criticised the media for fomenting Vietnam-like repercussions on Iraq. 'The debate about the so-called quagmire continued on the editorial pages and cable TV', he wrote (Bush, 2010, p. 200).

Bush's sentiment fits the scope of this analysis, which uses opinion journalism of American editorials and cable news TV as the primary source of data for analysing the war on terrorism. Editorials were chosen for the data set because of their significance in staking out newspapers' own opinions, in a clear form. One example of this is from the research of Bennett et al. They have shown that editorials were more

likely than other news coverage to dare label what happened at Abu Ghraib prison torture, as the horrible images surfaced (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2006, p. 474). This would not last as the media eventually would develop a torture narrative.

What seems clear is that Bush could not afford to ignore the media dimension of the war on terrorism. In the words of Entman: 'The media are now indeed forces presidents must reckon with, even in foreign policy, even when proposing military operations like Afghanistan and Iraq' (Entman, 2004, p. 3). Instant coverage affects 'everyone and everything, including world leaders and their tactics and strategy' (Hess & Kalb, 2003, p. 63; See also Kilcullen, 2006, p. 123; Simpson, 2013, p. 7).

According to Henry Kissinger, taking public opinion into consideration is not optional, as a policy's ability to obtain domestic support amounts to an acid test (George, 1980, p. 233). This view is reinforced by Yankelovich. He notes that 'Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance have testified that it is not possible to conduct successful foreign policy without the support of American public opinion' (Yankelovich, 2005, p. 12). The Bush administration's members were aware of this. After all, public support is an integral part of what is known as the Powell doctrine (Powell, 2012, p. 203).

The Powell Doctrine, with its sensitivity to public opinion and communications, defined the Gulf war, the last major U.S. invasion prior to the Bush presidency. The Gulf War represents an important chapter in the relationship between the military and the media in the USA. It is generally held that the military's strategic communications overwhelmed the media (Carruthers, 2000, pp. 4–6). As Bennett and Paletz' book title suggests, the media and the public were *Taken by Storm* (Bennett & Paletz, 1994).

Hess and Kalb contend about the first Gulf War that 'the military clearly set out to dominate the news, and it had the equipment to succeed' (Hess & Kalb, 2003, p. 7). A feeling among the media of not having been sufficiently critical in 1990 provides background to the war on terrorism and particularly the 2003 war in Iraq. 'When America goes to war, so too does the press, wrapped in the flag' (Kalb, 1994, p. 3). If the description of Kalb is accurate, it may be in the interest for the political leadership, and particularly in the interest of the military. But does this serve the people well?

Kenneth Waltz points to an inherent and enduring conflict between state and people. 'The constant interest of the people,' he argues, 'is in peace; no government of

the people will fight unless set upon' (Waltz, 2001, p. 8). It is often governments that lead nations – and the often reluctant people – into wars. Popular apprehension of war is a crucial factor to be reckoned with by any democratic decision-makers. The question emerges of 'how long can a democratic government keep the supportive interest of its people' (Page, 1996, p. 2).

Caroline Page's question – posed about Vietnam – also applies to the war on terrorism, and to Iraq. According to Condi Rice, 'the president clearly understood' the need for the 2006 Iraq Study Group 'to stabilize support for continuing the war in Iraq' (Rice, 2011, p. 538). A bipartisan review of the Iraq strategy was initiated in order to ensure continued participation and ownership to the Iraq war for the nation as a whole. America needed a new and more positive narrative about Iraq, because both 'state leaders and publics experience international affairs through narratives' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 23). And Iraq in 2006 was not a pleasant experience.

So far we have seen that contemporary military campaigns inherently possess a media dimension, and are fought 'before the jury of public opinion' (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2006, p. 318). Furthermore, that public opinion as an agent in the struggle is not new, and that public opinion may be shaped by both media and elites through strategic narratives. One of this study's contributions lays in thoroughly describing the strategic narratives of the war on terrorism. This brings us to the research questions.

1.2 Research questions

One ambition of this study is to investigate a crucial question from the study of war and media, namely 'whether political leaders follow journalists or vice versa' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 21). Do media organizations echo the rhetoric of the elites? Or are media organizations capable of developing independent news frames in its content about wars? This study analyses this through a reconstruction of strategic narratives and media frames found in editorials in the war on terrorism.

This study has two research questions. The first necessitates a reconstruction of the media frames and strategic narratives found in American editorials. It also addresses the role of editorial writing concerning public support for the war on

terrorism. The study takes a highly textual approach and also investigates how public opinion and war support was editorialized. The second question deals with the relationship between elite rhetoric and opinion journalism, in the shape of editorials. The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. How was the war on terrorism portrayed in American editorials, and how did editorials attempt to influence public support for the war on terrorism?

2. Did American editorial pages develop their own media frames about the war on terrorism, or did they adopt strategic narratives from the elite rhetoric?

The answers to these questions will be based on a close reading of selected texts from five American news outlets. The primary data come from selected editorials in America's arguably four most influential newspapers. They are *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post* and *USA Today.* Additionally, the Talking Points Memo (TPM) of *The O'Reilly Factor on Fox News* will be analysed. The TPM functions as an opening editorial for the most-watched programme in the American cable news segment.

The news outlets are systematically studied in five different time periods of around two months each during the Bush presidency. A shorter period of one month was also included around the time of bin Laden's death in 2011. The news media analysis yields thirty separate empirical observations for comparison, as it consists of five news outlets over six time periods. This diachronic comparative research design is intended to highlight variation in coverage between the newspapers and also among different time periods.

The word 'attempted' represents a caveat of the first research question. The ambition of the study is to describe news outlets' attempts to influence war support, through text analysis. It is *not* to measure the exact effect of those efforts. Such direct effects on the audience are demanding to document causally (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 12). Yet the study does argue that the language applied by the editorial boards was designed to influence attitudes to war. It is therefore likely that news coverage in

general had an effect 'at least as an intervening variable' (Hallin, 1986, pp. 10–11). Polling suggests as much, and there is correlation between critical news coverage editorializing, and falls in public support for the Bush administration's wars.

This argument rests on two pillars. The first is the premise that the public acquires its beliefs on foreign policy to a large extent from the media. As McQuail points out, 'our minds are full of media-derived information and impressions' (McQuail, 2005, p. 456). The second pillar is the study's findings of very intense and harshly worded editorials both for and against the war. This leads to the conclusion that editorials were designed to influence public opinion about the war, and sometimes overtly called for war support.

Let me provide a few examples of editorializing that may have affected public support for the war on terrorism. On December 7 2008, *The New York Times* (NYT) wrote that one thing Bush would 'really miss when he leaves office is no longer going to see the families of slain soldiers, because they make him feel better about the war' (NYT: 2008-12-07).[1] This is an incredibly harsh interpretation of why President Bush chose to visit bereaved families. Furthermore, as the surge was about to be launched *The New York Times* commented as follows, on President Bush's speech.

> *President Bush told Americans last night that failure in Iraq would be a disaster. The disaster is Mr. Bush's war, and he has already failed […] There is nothing ahead but even greater disaster in Iraq (NYT: 2007-01-11)*

It is interesting to observe how NYT refer to 'Mr. Bush's war'. This was in their view Bush's – not America's – war, and they also chose to use 'Mr.', instead of Bush's powerful title: 'President'. Such editorializing is likely to have a negative effect on war support. The contrast, to a NYT statement from two days after 9/11, is baffling. NYT then openly praised Bush in calls for support: 'Americans are more than ready to rise up and give him [Bush] their support' (NYT: 2001-09-13). With Iraq as with Vietnam, 'there seems little doubt that news coverage did indeed contribute to the public war-weariness' (Hallin, 1986, p. 7).

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[1]All references to the primary data set, from the 5 news sources look like this. The formula is (News source: yyyy-mm-dd). This format resembles, yet distinguishes, primary data set references from the APA-format of all other references.

The result in both Iraq and Vietnam was that 'eventually public opinion did become a powerful constraint on U.S. policy' (Hallin, 1986, p. 212). This is highlighted by the election of President Obama, who stuck to his anti-war campaign pledge to end the then unpopular war in Iraq. 'Elections, of course, are the primary mechanism of accountability in a democracy' (Bennett, Lawrence, & Livingston, 2007, p. 130). The people elected an anti-war president, and as chapter seven will show, the parting shots with Bush, and his legacy of a war was characterised by harsh words from many editorial boards.

On war support in editorials, the trend documented in this study is as follows. Editorializing started with explicit calls for war support after 9/11. As time passed, however, some of the newspapers began implicitly or explicitly to undermine public support. The conservative news outlets remained predominantly pro-war in their editorial line throughout the decade of the war on terrorism. In fact, *Wall Street Journal* and *Fox News* were at times more pro-war than the administration itself, especially – but not exclusively – on going to war with Iraq in 2003.

Other findings are that the elite rhetoric was very effective, as regards Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Yet, on links between Iraq and al Qaeda the studied editorials adopted less of Bush's narrative. Additionally, this study finds that over time the media war grew fiercer, and was increasingly fought between different American media outlets and politicians, rather than between America and its foreign enemies. This constitutes a war at home and is documented herein.

Summing up the reconstruction of narratives is not an easy task. There was considerable variation in the topics dominating the editorials in the different periods. Yet, what was written much about and defined the editorializing can be summarized by two concepts for each time period. The list below thus provides a very broad answer to the first research question, which is answered elaborately in the conclusion.

2001,   Period 1: Osama Bin laden and the war on terrorism
2003,   Period 2: Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
2004–5,   Period 3: Appointments and detainee mistreatment
2006–7,   Period 4: Surge in Iraq and regional diplomacy

2008–9,   Period 5: Changing Presidents and torture

2011,   Period 6: Bin Laden and torture

This list highlights the personnel cast and important issues of the dominant narratives of the war on terrorism. The war on terrorism started and ended with bin Laden. In the years in between, Iraq occupied centre stage, with a focus on WMD, diplomacy and the surge. During President Bush's second term the leadership in Washington was increasingly the focus of editorials.

A large part of the editorials were negative, directed at Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld in particular. But some were also positive, with David Petraeus, Robert Gates, and later on Barack Obama, most often singled out for praise. As the war on terrorism lingered on, its image was irreparably and fatally tarnished by an emerging torture narrative. The master narrative of the war on terrorism was hi-jacked by the torture narrative, leading to the master narrative's removal from presidential rhetoric. After drone strikes killing American citizens in April 2015, Peter Baker wrote of 'a drone war that has come to define the nation's battle with Al Qaeda' (Baker, 2015).

1.3 Strategic narratives and media frames

Before proceeding, an explanation of a few key concepts is needed. Definitions of strategic narratives and news frames will be discussed. But the first term to be discussed will be the war on terrorism. It is here analysed as a master narrative, as described in the literature (Hodges, 2011, p. 154; Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 102). Some also apply the expression metanarrative (Betz, 2015), or a big 'N' Narrative (Hodges, 2011, p. 4). The master is the narrative to which all other narratives of the war on terrorism are subordinate. In a sense, all other narratives of the war emanate from this master narrative. How did the war on terrorism start and when did it end?

The war on terrorism had the Bush administration and al Qaeda as its original adversaries. Yet the conflict arguably started as a one-sided affair, since Al Qaeda's leader declared war on America as early as 1996 and reiterated this call to violent jihad against America in 1998. (Bin Laden, 2005, p. 23; Kepel & Milelli, 2008, p. 55). It

was only after 9/11, 2001 that America would acknowledge being at war. The war on terrorism as declared by Bush began after the 9/11 strikes on American soil.

America's response included two long military operations in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Over time, Iraq evolved into the most important theatre of the war on terrorism, especially seen from Washington DC. Invading Iraq in 2003 was Bush's choice. Keeping Iraq out of the war on terrorism was an option. Bush simply chose otherwise. This decision was pivotal to the trajectory of the war on terrorism. It ended up defining President Bush's legacy and America's image and position in the world.

This study argues that the war on terrorism ended in 2011 when Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki were killed. Drone wars, or a global terrorist manhunt, are better ways of describing what came after the Bush administration's war on terrorism. The war on terrorism was started and declared by the President of the United States, it was therefore in the power of the subsequent President to terminate the war. This took time, but was achieved mainly by removing referrals to it from official communication from the US Government. The claim that the war on terrorism is over rests on the premise that 'A narrative disappears when actors no longer interpret the world in the terms of that narrative' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 103). Without a master narrative, the war itself could not continue to exist indefinitely.

Two days into his presidency, Obama declared that Afghanistan and Pakistan were 'the central front in our enduring struggle against terrorism and extremism' (Bergen, 2011, p. 309). While Obama continued quite a few practices from the Bush administration, he avoided referring to 'the war on terrorism' altogether (Baker, 2010; Feldman, 2010). Adam Hodges' research has documented that any talk of a 'global "war on terror" – is simply absent in Obama's discourse' (Hodges, 2011, p. 157).

Let us juxtapose this to the rhetoric of America's enemies. Al Qaeda always referred to the conflict in diametrically different terms. In its official communications, the group routinely denounced their enemies as the Zionist-crusader alliance (Hegghammer, 2005, pp. 50, 54, 63, 83). Bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al Zawahiri, described the conflict in religious terms in September 2006. He denounced Bush's 'war against Islam which you call the war on terror' (Zawahiri, 2008, p. 168). Bin Laden also made similar statements (Bin Laden, 2005, p. 188; Miskimmon et al.,

2013, p. 42). We note that the 'war against Islam' and the 'war on terror' are competing master narratives.

This leads us to ask: what is a strategic narrative? And what makes a narrative strategic? Steve Tatham argues that 'narratives are the foundation of all strategy' (Tatham, 2008, p. 9). Similarly, Emile Simpson holds that 'strategic narrative is simply strategy expressed in narrative form'(Simpson, 2013, p. 184). There has to be a story line that leads up to a decision to engage in battle, a precursor that can be presented abroad and domestically as a *casus belli*, be it legitimate or not. Tatham defines a narrative as 'a thematic and sequenced account that conveys meaning from authors to participants about specific events' (Tatham, 2008, p. 9).

Narratives explain why nations go to war. They also provide an account of how nations fare during wars. By definition, they establish a war's position in history. In addition, they point out that 'narratives contain events, plot and setting' (Miskimmon et al., 2013). These are integral defining constituents of strategic narratives. Miskimmon et al underline the 'temporal dimension and sense of movement' of narratives (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 7; See also Simpson, 2013, p. 179). This criterion distinguishes narratives from news frames. They do not require such a temporal dimension.

War historian Sir Lawrence Freedman understands narratives to be 'compelling story lines which can explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn' (Freedman, 2006, p. 22). Both Tatham and Freedman's definitions address essential aspects of what a narrative is. The temporal aspect offered by Simpson and Miskimmon et al also should also be included in a definition. Therefore, rather than choose between the definitions, a combination of them will be utilized here. In this study narratives are defined as *an actor's compelling story lines that convey meaning, and a temporal dimension, about specific events to an audience*.

The media have a capacity to frame their own stories. Any media story will have to be framed, one way or another, regardless of whether this is an arbitrary or deliberate process. Entman defines framing as 'selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution' (Entman, 2004, p. 5). Along the same lines,

Pippa Norris et al argue that frames bind news together and 'simplify, prioritize, and structure the narrative flow of events' (Norris, Kern, & Just, 2003, p. 10).

Entman argues that the process of framing includes: to define problems, identify causes, convey moral judgment and endorse remedies. The defining of problems is often the most important element because it may predetermine the identifying of causes and moral judgment laying out the premises for a policy remedy (Entman, 2004, pp. 5–6).

Let me provide an example of how framing can work from this study. When Saddam Hussein is defined as an illegally armed, aggressive tyrant in a news frame, other parts of the frame will flow naturally from that definition. A remedy of a military kind may be considered appropriate for such a dictator. As Doris Graber concludes, 'There are countless ways in which news presentations can predetermine the conclusions that people are likely to draw' (Graber, 2002, p. 11).

1.4 Outline

I have so far spelled out some overarching themes of this analysis of media war in the war on terrorism in America. Following this introduction, chapter 2 spells out the theoretical framework and delimitations of the dissertation. Methodological perspectives will be addressed here, and the structure of the analysis will be explained. Core assumptions and hypotheses from the literature will also be discussed in greater detail there. The aim is to provide a transparent account of the analytical framework, and also to explain its scientific foundations.

Empirical sources and the collection of data will be given particular attention in chapter 2. The approach of this study will primarily be to present the narratives through quotes and then analyse them. Letting the newspapers themselves figure in telling their narratives was preferred to retelling every narrative before proceeding to document it with quotes from the data set. The primary data set consists of 1002 editorials. The number 1002 is in itself not important. It is a coincidence that it is so close to 1000. The primary criterion that guided the selection of editorials was their

relevance to the war on terrorism. The final number of editorials could just as well have been around 800 or 1200.

All titles of editorials are listed chronologically by news source and date in appendix I. This gives the reader an opportunity to consult and reference specific texts. Browsing through the editorial titles in the appendix might be worth it, as some titles are very telling. The trends of topics moving in and out of focus are showcased there. These examples of good journalism communicate the essence of the war on terrorism.

The second most important empirical data are the full canon of memoirs from the Bush administration. The final memoir from a principal participant in the Bush administration was from Robert Gates, released in January 2014. This makes the thesis among the first in-depth analyses that can be conducted in reference to a complete set of memoirs from the Bush administration.

The analysis of the war on terrorism will consist of six chapters, and will be structured around a chronological timeline giving six periods of the war on terrorism particular attention. Chapter 3 analyses the two months right after 9/11, whereas chapter 4 looks at the build-up to the war in Iraq. This two time periods yielded voluminous and passionate editorializing on the war on terrorism.

Things were a bit calmer following Bush's re-election in 2004, which is documented in chapter 5. Criticism increased, but the war on terrorism as a topic decreased on the editorial pages. This was a calm before the storm that erupted in 2006–2007 as the Iraq Study Group completed its work, and Bush launched the surge. The result is that chapter 6 evolved into the longest of this study.

Leadership, and personalities were a hot topic as Obama was about to replace President Bush. Chapter 7 reconstructs the narratives of editorials highly critical to the war on terrorism. Editorial boards were pointing a finger at a leadership fatigued by war and politics, presiding over a war-weary public and its war-weary military. Chapter 8 is shorter than chapters 3 to 7. It covers a shorter time span right after the death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011. The exact time spans studied by each chapter is specified in chapter 2.1.

The chapters of analysis each consist of six subsections and a concluding subchapter. The subchapters bear some similarities but are not identical for each of the

five periods. The project started out with identical subchapters for all analytical chapters. This approach was abandoned simply because different themes were at the forefront at different times of the war on terrorism. I therefore chose to highlight what is empirically important for each individual time period, rather than to force the empirical accounts into a pre-designed schema. This approach favours readability over a rigid structure.

Chapters 3 to 7 all have subchapters towards the end on each time period's intermittent media frames. The best way to think about the intermittent media frames is to see it as a waiting room. Some frames would never really make it out of the waiting room, but many of them did. One example is the narratives about the need for, and role of, diplomacy, which went in and out of focus during different periods of the war on terrorism.

An example of something that grew big out of the intermittent section is the 'Torture Narrative'. This was a secondary theme right after 9/11. Later, the torture narrative would dominate some newspapers' writings on the war on terrorism. Yet it started as a scarcely written about intermittent media frame. Several topics covered mainly in the intermittent subchapters would have deserved a more thorough investigation. This may be a task for future research projects.

Finally, a main task of this study is to consider whether the content of opinion journalism can be traced back to the strategic narratives of the Bush administration and al Qaeda. Direct quotations from combatants' strategic narratives are the clearest examples of the retelling of elite rhetoric on the editorial pages. Similarly, it is interesting to see whether the combatants sometimes adopt language from news frames established by the media. The use of direct quote is a strong indication that elites' narratives determine the content of editorials. The approach chosen here is therefore quite quote heavy. This is done to be as close to the text of the editorials as possible.

2. Narrative reconstruction through comparison

This study encompasses a reconstruction of strategic narratives using a comparative research design, analysing five significant news outlets' editorials. This chapter will discuss some of the dissertation's key concepts and relate them to the established literature in the field. The analytical framework will be explained in more detail and some of its benefits – and limitations – commented upon. Data and case selection will also be explained shortly. We will, however, start by looking at two fundamental starting assumptions that link people, state and media together during wartime.

The first assumption is that combatants at war seek to influence public opinion and media frames by utilizing strategic narrative. Variants of this assumption are commonly held in the literature (Carruthers, 2000, p. 5; Graaf et al., 2015, p. 8; Hodges, 2011, p. 87; Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 21). A government at war must address the enemy, but also the home audience. Steve Tatham argues 'Strategic Communication is as important to internal audiences as it is to external ones' (Tatham, 2008, p. 4). Al Qaeda shares this concern for its perceived constituency, and the media front. Gilles Kepel argues that it is hard 'to distract the militants from their primary task: waging a war for the hearts and minds of Muslims' (Kepel, 2004, p. 2).

The second assumption is that 'Citizens learn virtually everything they know about foreign policy from the mass media' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 2). This assertion may seem stark, but it is nevertheless true for most citizens. 'Citizens use information from the mass media to form political preferences' (Zaller, 1992, p. 4). Whoever collects their own information first hand abroad is likely to be either a journalist, or part of a foreign policy elite. Consequently, the media remains 'the primary link between leaders and the public' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 50).

While there are limits to the influence the media asserts much of the literature ascribes a significant ability for the media to influence policy and the public. (Baum & Groeling, 2010; Baum & Potter, 2008; Kilcullen, 2006; McQuail, 2005; Smith, 2007; Tatham, 2008). Others may acknowledge this but still maintain that public opinion

stems more from partisan leanings (Berinsky, 2009; Johnson & Tierney, 2006) or elite rhetoric (Bennett et al., 2006; Entman, 2004; Hallin, 1986).

Zaller states unequivocally 'Of course the public responds to elite-supplied information and leadership cues' (Zaller, 1992, p. 311). And Doris Graber goes so far as to claim that it is totally unrealistic to deny media's ability to influence the public (Graber, 2002, p. 18). There are simply not many alternatives to media-derived information, which in turn implies that 'the media shape public opinion about foreign policy' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 40).

There are some counterarguments to the proposition that the public learns about foreign policy through the media. One is the degree to which the public is susceptible to elite cues. It is increasingly true today that 'Americans are confronted by a seemingly unmanageable flood tide of information' (Graber, 1993, p. 1). As a result 'people pay attention to only a small amount of the available information' (Graber, 1993, p. 2). It is a legitimate question to ask what influence it is possible to have over those citizens who feel overwhelmed by this flood tide of information.

Another variant of this counterargument reflects that politics does not interest everyone. The public may therefore be 'rationally ignorant about politics', indeed, 'many Americans are quite ignorant of foreign affairs' (Zaller, 1992, pp. 17,24). Other counterarguments are that predispositions and partisanship may determine attitudes to war more than current media coverage and current elite rhetoric (Berinsky, 2009; Zaller, 1992). This is a disputed idea as some question whether 'elite dissensus' is in fact 'integral in the shaping of foreign policy news' (Cohen, 1994, p. 10).

Regardless of the audience's attention span, a gate-keeping function of the media remains. There is little doubt that this function has been diminished by the Internet, but 'gatekeeping still exists and steers where narratives go' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 185). Moreover, Entman underlines the enduring influence of media executives. 'Arguably a few top editors, correspondents and editorialists exercise more sway over the spread of ideas than all but the most powerful public officials' (Entman, 2004, p. 11). This study will investigate the editorialists influence through a close reading of these opinion leaders' texts.

The tectonic plates of the media world are in motion. This has yielded more research on information infrastructure and the new media ecology (Castells, 2009, pp. 54–136; Miskimmon et al., 2013, pp. 148–175). One implication of the new media reality is that 'Achieving legitimacy for war or security policy has become more complex,' (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010, p. 168). We are witnessing the emergence of a global network society; 'a society whose social structure is made around networks activated by microelectronics-based, digitally processed information and communication technologies' (Castells, 2009, p. 24).

Conflict in this network-based reality increasingly encompasses an online dimension, with one-to-many communication gradually being replaced by many-to-many communication (Betz, 2008). The result is that 'horizontal networks of communication' facilitating interactivity (Castells, 2009, p. 67), have replaced more traditional one-way, push-down mass communication (Peterson, 2002, p. 81) . Important network nodes are often called centres, and these are targeted in the study's selection of empirical material. American newspapers, with their corresponding popular websites, are examples of such centres.

The war on terrorism started in 2001, and at that point the impact of web-based media was significantly lower than a decade later. This is why leading newspapers were selected for the data set, as opposed to websites. Major newspapers, and more traditional media sources, 'still matter to how strategic narratives are projected, received and interpreted' in the new media landscape (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 157). Such media are better referred to as renewed, rather than traditional media (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007, p. 7; 2010, pp. 10–11).

This chapter will now continue by presenting the analytical framework in more detail, starting with some aspects of the comparative method (2.1). Chapter 2.1 also includes the case selection, meaning the five newspapers to be analysed. The process of selecting editorials, the primary data for the study, will also be explained there. Secondary data from the Bush administration's memoirs will also be discussed.

The work of Baum & Groeling will be important in section 2.2 on *War Stories* and power projection, especially their hypotheses. This section is followed by a section (2.3) on how to work with strategic narratives. Miskimmon et al, Emile Simpson and

Tatham's work is utilized there. The section concerns the current research status on media warfare and strategic narratives. Finally (2.4), public opinion and polling's significance for war support – and editorials on war support – will be discussed.

2.1 Comparison, data, and case selection

Comparison lies at the heart of the scientific method. Frendreis relying on 'consideration and comparison of systematic observations' (Frendreis, 1983, p. 256). This statement goes to the core of this dissertation's research design and scientific foundation. This study collects 30 observations of editorials; it systematizes these diachronic data and reconstructs strategic narratives and media frames from the war on terrorism on that basis.

A central figure in the development of the comparative method last century was Arend Lijphart. The method's philosophical underpinnings stem from Charles Darwin and also John Stuart Mill's work *A system of Logic* (Mill, 1973). Lijphart writes that Mill made 'the first systematic formulation of the modern comparative method' (Lijphart, 1971, p. 688). Among the method's benefits is that a comparative design moves beyond a single case, and thus yields less idiosyncratic findings. It therefore lends itself more to generalization and theory contributions than do single-case studies.

But how much more basis for generalization does the comparative researcher actually have? One – if not the – major methodological challenge with comparative research is the small N problem (Frendreis, 1983, p. 265; Lijphart, 1971, p. 685). How many cases are needed to provide insight on the entire universe of cases? Applying the methods of large N statistical studies to limited comparative studies may prove a treacherous path.

This problem can be addressed by stringent delimitations, focused research questions and by not relying too much on quantitative methods. Additionally, it is always crucial to carefully select the cases to be studied. If the right preparatory work is put in 'intensive analysis of a few cases may be more rewarding than a more superficial analysis of many cases' (George, 1979, p. 50). George's approach is adhered to here, and constitutes one reason why this study has a comparative small N

design. If the conditions of a representative sample of editorials are met, a sufficient basis for drawing conclusions about them is achieved.

Let us turn to the selection of cases for comparison. Each newspapers analysed represents a case in this comparative research design. The American newspapers that will figure in the analysis are arguably the largest and most influential in the United States. This was the case when the war on terrorism started in 2001, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (Graber, 2002, p. 45).

The same newspapers dominated as the war on terrorism ended (Lulofs, 2013). The table below shows approximate daily sales numbers from different years, over a 12-year period. The study's four selected newspapers include the three most circulated on paper in the United States in every year of the war on terrorism.[2]

Table 2.1 Selected circulation numbers from 2001 to 2013

	Oct. 2001	Apr. 2005	Oct. 2009	Apr. 2013
1 *USA Today* (USAT)	2242000	2281831	2293310	1674306
2 *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ)	1781000	2070498	2011999	2378827
3 *New York Times* (NYT)	1109000	1121623	1000665	1865318
4 *Los Angeles Times* (LAT)	973000	907997	739147	653868
5 *Washington Post* (WP)	760000	740947	622714	474767

WSJ and NYT are also respectively thought to represent the left and right perimeters of American politics. The numbers derived for 2013 were provided by the Audit Bureau of Circulation's successor, the Alliance for Audited media (Lulofs, 2013). The numbers from 2013 include web subscriptions, which is why NYT and WSJ surpassed USAT in the rankings for that year. Circulation – on paper and online – is undoubtedly the most important selection criterion for newspapers.

The 4th largest newspaper, *Los Angeles Times*, is not part of the data set.[3] *The Washington Post* was preferred because it is considered more important politically.

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[2] Washington Post started out with the 5th most circulation in 2001 and 2005, but fell to seventh place in 2009 and 2013.

The capital's newspaper of record belongs naturally in any analysis of war and foreign policy. All major newspapers in America belong to a city, apart from *USA Today*. USAT often flank their editorials with an 'Opposing view'-column originating from outside the USAT organisation. This provides a balanced *pro et contra* feel to USAT's editorial page. While USAT may be the only truly national newspaper in the US, it is misleading to think of NYT and WSJ as local newspapers. They both have a national – indeed a global – outlook to their news operation.

In America, society and television blend naturally together, and TV coverage was of course very important in the media war inside America. The fifth-source in the data set is Fox News' Talking Points Memo (TPM).[4] It is sometimes analysed in a subchapter of its own. One reason is that the material found from Fox is more limited in quantity. Editorials are by and large more elaborate than television segments. Another reason is that comparing five news outlets at a time can be very demanding.

The TPM on Fox is part of the most watched programme in America's cable news segment, *The O'Reilly Factor*. The programme held this position from 9/11 and the entire following decade. The TPM is always delivered by host Bill O'Reilly as an editorial style monologue at the very beginning of the programme. It therefore works much like an editorial. It also tends to have a title, sketching out the topic of each memo. The TPM is therefore well suited for comparison with newspapers' editorials.

It should be noted that Fox News and its web site 'provides a decidedly pro-Republican perspective on world events' (Hodges, 2011, p. 99). Their value as a source is not diminished by their 'clear partisan proclivities' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 42). On the contrary, their inclusion in the data set ensures a wider grasp of the full scope of American media content on the war on terrorism. Fox News, and particularly The O'Reilly Factor, is loaded with opinion and therefore a fitting news organization for studying opinion journalism. On the other side of the spectrum we find the *New York Times* which is 'a liberal prestige paper' (Hallin, 1986, p. 11).

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[3] Texts from *LA Times* have been collected, and read briefly. The initial idea was to include them, but LAT was left out due to space limitations. In very broad terms, *LA Times'* coverage is on the liberal side, and frequently located between the approaches of NYT and USAT. Texts from *Chicago Tribune* and *Houston Chronicle* were also collected but not included.
[4] The entities TPM, Fox News and The O'Reilly Factor are used somewhat interchangeably throughout study.

Editorials were chosen as the media content to analyse because it is an established format that most newspapers utilize. Editorials are better suited than regular op-ed columnists because the latter are often highly personal in style, and do not always reflect the newspaper's official position. It has been of great value to this research project that the format of the primary data texts is so similar. This similarity in both style and content in editorials makes comparison easier. Around the year 2000, the web sites of news organizations practically had a monopoly on news online. A decade later this picture was a lot more diverse, with blogs and web-based news operations in the mix. Still, the web sites of newspapers remain very high on lists that track the world's most visited web sites such as www.alexa.com. From 2010 to 2014 the web sites of the news outlets analysed here ranked high among the world's most visited news sites. This suggests that an analysis of web-based opinion journalism and editorials would probably rely on similar data.

Table 2.2 The world's largest news sites in 2010, 2012 and 2014

2010

1 Yahoo News
2 BBC Online
3 CNN Interactive
4 The New York Times   (2012: #5)   (2014: #5)
5 BBC News
7 The Weather Channel
8 Google News
9 The Huffington Post
10 NBC News and MSNBC News
11 Reddit
12 The Guardian
13 Fox News Channel   (2012: #9)   (2014: #9)
14 Wall Street Journal   (2012: #14)   (2014: #14)
15 The Times of India
16 Reuters Group PLC
17 Washington Post   (2012: #17)   (2014: #17)
18 Los Angeles Times
19 CNN/Money
20 Drudge Report
21 USA Today   (2012: #19)   (2014: #16)

It should be stressed that this list includes news sites the world over, not only in the domestic US sphere. The numbers from 2012 and 2014 in parenthesis show that the five news outlets have kept a stable position on this list, with USAT as an exception. They rose on the list from 21 to 19 and 16 over the four years. The considerable presence on the web of the five news outlets demonstrate their ability to influence both American and global audiences.

The five news outlets were read within the exact same time span, to enhance comparability between newspapers and facilitate diachronic analysis. The first four periods are two months. Period 5 is ten days longer to include both the ten first days of the Obama presidency and Bush's two last months in office. Additionally, period 6 is a half period of only one month. This was done because the war on terrorism was ebbing out in 2011, and did not receive much editorial attention apart from the weeks right after bin Laden's death. Here are the exact time spans analysed in the six periods:

Period 1	11 September, 2001 to 11 November, 2001	9/11 attacks
Period 2	25 January, 2003 to 25 March, 2003	Invasion of Iraq
Period 3	1 December, 2004 to 1 February, 2005	Re-election of Bush
Period 4	1 December, 2006 to 1 February, 2007	Launch of ISG and Surge
Period 5	21 November, 2008 to 1 February, 2009	Obama replacing Bush
Period 6	25 April, 2011 to 25 May, 2011	Osama Bin Laden's death

These periods distribute the observations of the media analysis fairly evenly – though not strictly periodically – over the decade the analysis draws material from. The studied periods are separated by 1.5 to 2.5 years. There are texts in the data set from all the years between 2001 and 2011 with 2010 and 2002 as the two exceptions. Additionally, the selected time periods respectively encompass politically important and salient events. Johnson & Tierney stress that salient events can be of great importance by shaping perceptions of wars and conflicts, increasing the prospects of success (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, pp. 62–67).

The newspapers were not read in random order. It is better with a rotating reading order to achieve the highest level of equal treatment of each news source. The rotating order they were read was also an attempt to alternate between left, right and centre politically in the data set. The reading order is shown below.

Table 2.3 Reading order for the five selected news outlets

Period 1:	WP	WSJ	NYT	USAT	FOX
Period 2:	WSJ	NYT	USAT	FOX	WP
Period 3:	NYT	USAT	FOX	WP	WSJ
Period 4:	USAT	FOX	WP	WSJ	NYT
Period 5:	FOX	WP	WSJ	NYT	USAT
Period 6:	WP	WSJ	NYT	USAT	FOX

Reading order should not affect each newspapers inclusion in the analysis. What may have impacted the time devoted to each newspaper more is the number of editorials they have published about the war on terrorism. Here the numbers vary significantly between the newspapers. Below is the breaking down of the data set of 1002 editorials into news sources and time periods.

Table 2.4 Editorials from each newspaper in each time period

1002 Editorials	*Washington Post*	*Wall Street Journal*	*New York Times*	*USA Today*	*Fox News*	Total
Period 1	109	40	130	61	31	371
Period 2	47	40	53	28	23	191
Period 3	27	21	35	23	27	133
Period 4	30	29	38	27	24	148
Period 5	28	30	35	15	14	122
Period 6	8	5	11	6	7	37
Total	249	165	302	160	126	1002

The most "political" newspapers, NYT and WP, produced almost twice as much as WSJ and USAT. Furthermore, in every time period NYT has published more editorials than all other news outlets. Generally the number of editorials relevant to the war on terrorism decreased over time. The exception is around the surge in period 4, when the total number of editorials increased from 133 to 148. It is worth noting that despite period 5 being 10 days longer than periods 1 to 4, there are still fewer (122) editorials found in period 5, than in earlier periods. Finally, the urgency of the 9/11 attacks yielded close to a doubled editorial production (371), even compared with the second most productive period, which is period 2 with 191 editorials published.

The selection of editorials was done through finding every single editorial from the five news sources in the selected time period, through Lexis Nexis. Each was assessed for its relevance to the war on terrorism. This reading made sure no editorial was left out due to imperfect search criteria. Search criteria problems are common and one example concerns the 9/11 attacks. Adam Hodges found that 'sometimes this date is mentioned explicitly, as in excerpt 1. Other times it is referenced deictically' (Hodges, 2011, p. 45). I found that sometimes, a phrase like 'since that horrible day' would refer to 9/11. Such a phrase would not easily be captured by any search criteria.

This meticulous collection process was instrumental in discovering some of the less intuitive news frames, with the one on 'Securitization' (chapter 3.3) being among the most clear cut examples. It was up to the researcher, not Lexis Nexis, to determine what topics were relevant to the war on terrorism. This opens for good qualitative judgement, but may not yield high reliability, as the selection process is hard to repeat with identical results for other researchers.

It was demanding to determine what topics to include in the analysis, and what to leave out. Let me explain the process briefly. Any editorial that mentioned al Qaeda, bin Laden, Iraq, Saddam Hussein, 9/11, torture or public war support naturally belonged in the data set. These were all relevant to the war on terrorism. Assessments of the Bush administration's war leadership were also included. The initial browsing of material found many foreign policy editorials on topics like North Korea, European

terrorism, transatlantic relations, China, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the Middle East peace process. These were kept out, due to a lack of relevance to the war on terrorism.

However, some nations were weaved into narratives on the war on terrorism as time passed. Iran ended up playing a role as a proxy fighter in Iraq, and Pakistan's porous border to Afghanistan dragged that nation into the war. Somalia also emerged as a potential theatre of the war on terrorism in the editorials. Such nations have been analysed mainly on occasions when the editorials established a clear connection to the war on terrorism, with its phases in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Let me conclude the discussion of primary data with example of how texts were coded, into the primary data set. WP published four editorials on November 11, 2001. They were respectively about Iran, Saudi Arabia, veterans and Bush's war leadership respectively. In theory only the last of these texts could have been included in the data set, as it goes directly to the topics analysed here. Yet, the texts on Iran, Saudi Arabia and veterans all made reference to 9/11 and/or the war on terror. Hence they were all included, as listed in appendix I.

A few thousand editorials from the five news outlets were briefly read and considered not to be relevant to the war on terrorism. An illustrative example of a borderline text comes from the NYT's editorial page. NYT published three editorials on foreign policy on December 1, 2004. Only two of them are included in the data set. They were titled 'Abu Ghraib, Caribbean Style' and 'Mr. Ridge's Red Alert Day', and dealt with the torture narrative and homeland security respectively. The third editorial was titled 'One More Round On Iran's Nukes'.

This editorial was predominantly about Iran, focusing on technicalities such as centrifuges and the nuclear arms control regime, based on sanctions through the U.N. Security Council. It briefly mentions the Axis of Evil, but this editorial still represents the sort of text that would fall just short of being deemed relevant to the war on terrorism. It was therefore not included in the data set. The editorial is included in its entirety as an example text in appendix III, to demarcate the boundaries of texts included, and those who fell just short.

Turning to elites, the Bush administration's memoirs are the second most important empirical source for this analysis. The media frames will be compared to

insiders' accounts and books on the inner life of the Bush administration. The six most prolific and influential members of the Bush administration have all written memoirs documenting their perspective on the war on terrorism, from inside of government (Bush, 2010; Cheney, 2011; Gates, 2014; Powell, 2012; Rice, 2011; Rumsfeld, 2011).

Alone these memoirs represent partial and often partisan descriptions of events. Read together, and juxtaposed to other material, they shed light on crucial aspects of the war on terrorism. Historian Melvyn P. Leffler points out that 'memoirs are usually self-serving […] They suggest how policy makers want to be remembered' (Leffler, 2013, p. 191). This is a crucial point, but only requires a methodologically prudent and conscious approach to them. 'A careful examination' of these memoirs 'can lead to more lucid and careful assessments of decision-making within the Bush administration' he concludes (Leffler, 2013, pp. 191–192). This study applies the memoirs in this fashion, bearing in mind Leffler's caveats.

Among the most important insights gained from the memoirs, are the descriptions of how the principals of the Bush administration sought to garner war support, and how they interacted with the media. Additionally, the memoirs document the importance of Senate hearings in what can be labelled Battlefield Washington (Gates, 2014, pp. 49, 238). Confirmation hearings in the senate are a dominant theme throughout Gates' memoirs. Hearings will be given particular attention insofar as the personnel dimension became a major narrative of the war on terrorism in Bush's second term.

There is a second tier of insider accounts and autobiographies, which include those by John Ashcroft, Douglas Feith, Richard Clarke, George Tenet, David Frum and Scott McClellan (Ashcroft, 2006; Clarke, 2004a; Feith, 2008; McClellan, 2008; Tenet, 2007). These are consulted less frequently than the first tier of memoirs. In Leffler's analysis of the Bush administration's memoirs Ashcroft's memoir is considered in the first tier (Leffler, 2013, p. 190). His memoirs are important, but were published before the surge, and before time period 4 of the analysis. They were therefore of less value to this study than the aforementioned tier 1 memoirs from principals at the Pentagon, State Department and The White House.

The inclusion of Clarke is worth elaborating on. He is not a politician, but a civil servant. His impact on, and knowledge of, American counter-terrorism is considerable. Being around for an entire career can result in such civil servants 'acquiring a more detailed understanding [...] than any of the elected officials who are around for only a few years' (Naftali, 2005, p. 235).

While the insights of the authors of these insider books are significant, they must still be handled with caution as they are peculiar sources. The writers themselves have a bias and an agenda of which the researcher must be aware. They themselves are providers of narratives, and these narratives are at times at odds with one another. Still, they offer a genuine glimpse into the strategic environment in which decision-making took place. They also document extensive turf wars (Leffler, 2013, p. 216).

Finally, two journalistic sources for understanding the Bush administration's inner life are Peter Baker's *Days of Fire* (Baker, 2013), and Bob Woodward's four books on the war on terrorism (Woodward, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008). They are examples of extensive – though not academic – accounts of the war. Their excellent sources, among key players in Washington D.C., make them useful for research purposes. As the saying goes in Washington, eventually, 'someone is bound to leak to Bob Woodward' (Naftali, 2005, pp. xi, See also 175).

2.2 War stories and power projection

This section presents propositions, hypotheses and theory on the relationship between people, media and government. The historical inspirations of this study (such as Burke and Clausewitz) were alluded to in the Introduction. This section deals with the literature from which the framework of this study is drawn. Entman's work and Baum & Groeling's book will be utilized extensively throughout this analysis.

To what extent do news organisations challenge the narratives of government during crises and wars? Media indexing theory (Bennett et al., 2006; Hallin, 1986; Zaller, 1992) assigns great importance to elite rhetoric in shaping the public's views. Media indexing theory describes an information asymmetry favouring government over the news media. Government has more information early on in conflicts, and the

media are in many instances left with little verifiable information to challenge it (Baum & Groeling, 2010). The resulting situation can be described as 'the foreign policy information gap' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 42).

If elite rhetoric rules the media space, media may be considered 'largely passive and nonstrategic, like a conveyor belt faithfully transmitting' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 4). This leaves much space for government to influence and sway both the media, and its larger audience. Adam Berinsky argues that the public takes it cues on policy issues, domestic and foreign, from elites (Berinsky, 2009). This is what is referred to as the Elite cue theory (Zaller, 1992). With this perspective, the media input citizens are exposed to tends to originally derive from cues from the elites.

This corresponds with what Entman describes as a government's hegemonic dominance of the media space (Entman, 2004, p. 4). However, simplistic variants of this view 'tends to overlook the fact that journalists are not solely reporters; they are also interpreters' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 5). Indeed, they are operative actors engaged in opinion shaping. The media have agendas of their own and may shape public opinion in competition with elites. Therefore this study is equally interested in the support of editorial boards, as it is manifested and openly discussed in editorials.

Baum & Groeling explain the leverage of elite rhetoric through the concept of *elasticity of reality* (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 35). This study adopts some crucial segments of that framework. It deals with philosophically intricate concepts like facts and truth. Facts are not indisputable and decoupled from interpretation. A socially constructed institutional reality is one way of approaching this topic. Searle argues that 'In institutional reality we use language not only to describe but partly to create the very facts described' (Searle, 1998, p. 133). One must recognize that 'Perceptions are not unreal simply because they are manufactured' (Blumenthal, 1980, p. 5).

Another analytical building block in this study is Entman's work on framing and cascading. Entman argues that frames are generated by elites and then cascade downwards through the media and from there on out to the general public. A main question is how news frames are formed, and he analyses the circumstances in which elite positions are questioned and challenged (Entman, 2004, p. 2). His model consists

of five entities; they are used as focal points in this study. A slightly simplified version of his cascading model is presented here (Entman, 2004, p. 10).

Figure 2.2 Entman's cascading model modified

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Administration      │
│ The White House     │
│ State, Defense      │
└─────────────────────┘
           ┌──────────┐
           │ Other    │
           │ elites   │
           └──────────┘
                  ┌──────────────┐
                  │ Media        │
                  │ Journalists  │
                  │ News orgs.   │
                  └──────────────┘
                         ┌────────────┐
                         │ News       │
                         │ frames     │
                         └────────────┘
                                ┌──────────┐
                                │ Public   │
                                │ Polls    │
                                └──────────┘
```
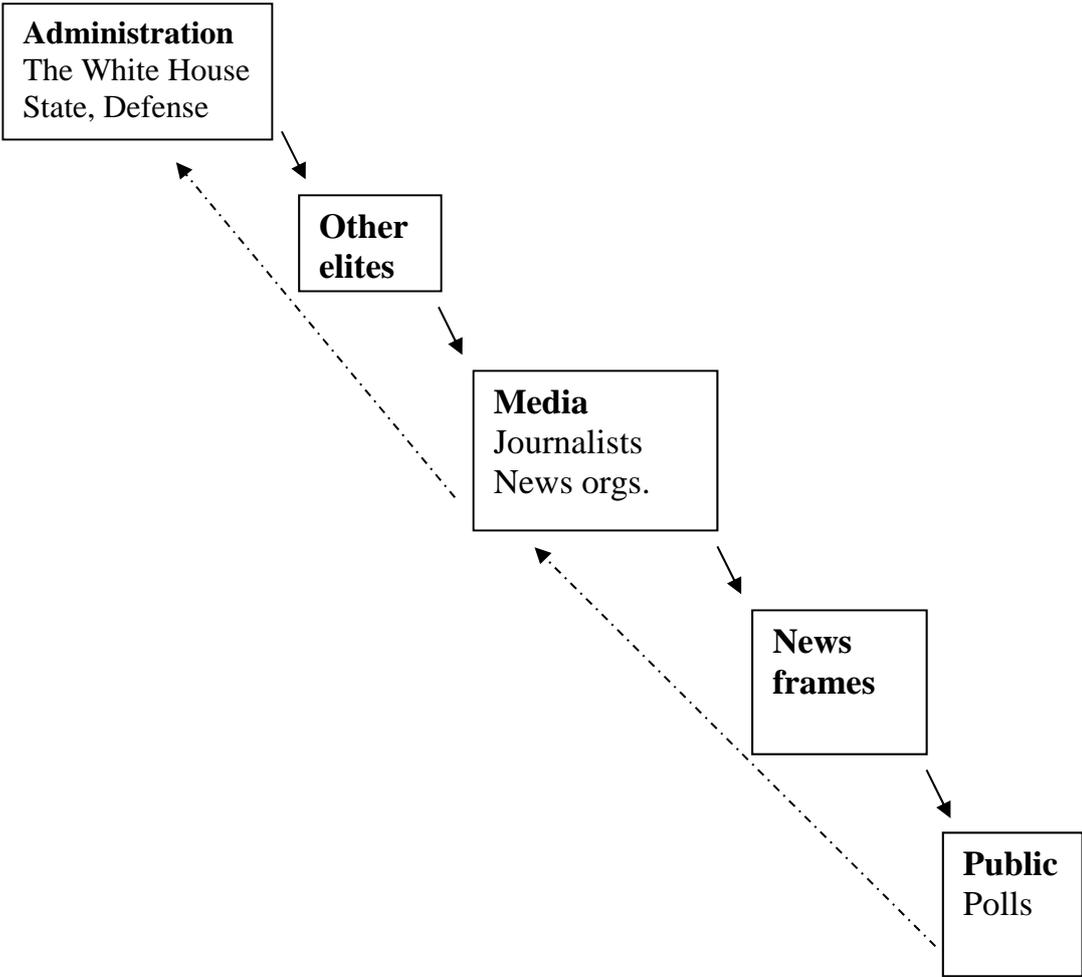
Entman's cascading network illustrates how The White House narrative defined by the administration will cascade down from the leadership at the top to the public at the bottom. Certain actors (elites and the media) may influence this process on the way down. Their influence will also occasionally work backwards, up through the model. These reflective effects represent the agency and actor potential of the media and the public and are indicated by the stippled lines in the model.

The main point of entry for my analysis is at 'news frames'. These will be reconstructed and then related upwards in the cascades to elite rhetoric at the top, and downwards towards the public and their war support as measured in scientific opinion polls. The strategic narratives are based on my earlier work (Romarheim, 2005a), and Adam Hodges' 'construction of the Narrative by the President' (Hodges, 2011, p. 11). In addition, many, if not most, of the Bush administration's most important strategic narratives appear in the editorials, and they will be analysed as they appear there.

Entman's work spans considerably more than just a model. It amounts to a theory. Theory can be understood as 'an interrelated set of constructs (or variables) formed into propositions, or hypotheses, that specify the relationship between variables' (Creswell, 2009, p. 51). Entman's book is structured around five main propositions explaining the relationship between elites, media and the public (Entman, 2004, pp. 17–22). What follows is a reading of Entman's three first propositions, emphasizing the elements of his work that are of particular relevance to this project. The two last propositions primarily explain the Cold War dynamic and are not included. Suffice it only to restate that after the Cold War 'the public's response to foreign affairs is less predictable' (Entman, 2004, p. 21).

Entman's first proposition is that the White House tends to establish control over news frames on foreign policy if news frames are either widely accepted as culturally congruent or incongruent. It is stories that are framed in between these categories that result in heated disputes. If an incident epitomizes values America stands for – such as freedom, equal rights or democracy – there is little debate or dissent. Habitual news coverage is common for such culturally congruent stories. It is business as usual with the bulk of news outlets providing similar frames to the story.

There is also little debate if an incident is seen across the board to be in conflict with American values. There will tend to be little disagreement in the media and little to debate in such situations since 'everyone' agrees that the incident in question is incongruent with American culture and values. Such situations 'may discourage thinking altogether' (Entman, 2004, p. 14).

The variation in coverage of the war on terrorism documented in this analysis, suggests that the war on terrorism was not culturally congruent, at its later stages. Far

from it, the torture narrative was directly opposed to American ideals of freedom and individual human rights. Torture and detainee treatment divided Americans and made them ask fundamental questions such as; who are we? and who do we want to be? This highlights one of Berinsky's main arguments, which is that elite polarization along party lines impacts war support greatly (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 217–220).

When there are two sides within America openly disagreeing about the fundamentals of a story, then the media will undoubtedly enter the playing field and bolster and sharpen the two sides' arguments. This leads directly over to the next hypothesis which is that journalists and the media are inherently eager 'to include oppositional readings of foreign policy' (Entman, 2004, p. 18).

The media often aim to be critical and counterbalance those in power (Bennett et al., 2007, pp. 129–130). This is one dimension of the media's watch-dog function (Baum & Potter, 2008, pp. 51, 54; See also Hallin, 1986, pp. 5–8). One effect of this function is that sometimes the news media will criticize foreign policy without resonance in oppositional elites or the public at large. When this happens the population rejects the mainstream media's content on issues they are not really concerned about.

Entman's third proposition is that elites outside the current administration are very sensitive to the public mood in their criticism of the administration. They have little to gain, as regards political survival and future power in spearheading unpopular issues. This differs somewhat from the situation of the elected administration as they cannot cherry-pick their fights to the same extent. For those with responsibility, a fair number of unpopular issues inevitably wind up on their table.

This implies that foreign policy criticism of the oppositional elite is closely linked to the views of the greater public. It is, after all, their votes who might get the opposition party into the positions of power. In practice, this means that if the polls indicate that the public is tired of a war – as happened with Iraq – then the opposition politicians are more eager to jump on the public's bandwagon and go after the government on that issue. If the war has great support, then the opposition will typically select other issues for challenging those in position.

Among the issues Baum & Groeling address are bias and the effect of party politics and context as variables impacting the credibility of communication. Among the central questions to consider is *who is speaking to whom using what channel.* A discussion of credibility leads directly to the fundamentals of communication. 'Credibility is, after all, the most important thing a communicator has' (Severin & Tankard, 2001, p. 139). Moreover, Baum & Groeling argue that the public finds it more interesting and credible when Democrats criticise Democrats in right-leaning media channels, and vice versa. The public – and also the media – is less interested when Democrats criticise Republicans in left-leaning media outlets. Such criticism is expected – at times almost ritualized – and can be interpreted as bickering or cheap talk without any real cost for the speaker (Baum & Groeling, 2010, pp. 27–28).

Baum & Groeling's findings underline the importance of selecting data from across the political spectrum. For this thesis, it will be interesting to observe to what extent variation in news coverage is a reflection of the political and ideological positioning of the media organization. Baum & Potter label this 'Media partisanship' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 27). Baum & Groeling's contribution to theory development takes the shape of 18 hypotheses, not all of which are relevant here. They deal with the relationship between rhetoric and reality. Four hypotheses and one model from Baum & Groeling will be given particular attention. In Baum & Groeling's work the four hypotheses are numbered 13, 14, 15 and 18.

Hypothesis 13 is called 'Elasticity of reality'. This is defined 'as the range within which events can be spun, or framed, without inducing a significant backlash from the public' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 56). A slightly shortened version of the hypothesis reads as follows. 'Over time, the tenor of media coverage of a conflict will increasingly parallel objective indicators of reality' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 35).

A parallel to this is found in Dominic Johnson & Dominic Tierney's two approaches for measuring success in modern conflict. Often subjective 'match-fixing' occurs which deals with accurate or inaccurate perceptions. But at times objective 'score-keeping' directs perceptions of conflict. This is based on a more objective metric of success in the conflict (Johnson & Tierney, 2006). We note that elite narratives typically dominate early on in war coverage. As more information on the

conflict is generated, more objective facts will increasingly influence media coverage, and in turn public opinion. The factual fundamentals of a conflict will slowly emerge and make reality less elastic. An adjustment of media coverage will occur if early narratives and frames have not been very accurate.

While the first hypothesis suggests that coverage will eventually correspond more with objective reality, hypothesis 14 suggests that the movement of media coverage towards reality proceeds slowly. This is because it is hard to dislodge well-established frames and replace them with new ones (Entman, 2004, p. 7). Similarly, Adam Hodges notes that it is particularly hard to overturn macro-level discourse such as the notion of a war on terrorism (Hodges, 2011, p. 105). Hypothesis 14 is labelled 'Framing stickiness over time', and it is quoted in its entirety along with the model from which all of the four hypotheses presented here are drawn.

> *Over time, as the prevailing media framing of a conflict grows increasingly entrenched, the marginal change in objective indicators of reality required to induce a given change in media framing will increase (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 35)*

Figure 2.1 Baum & Groeling's Elasticity of Reality model
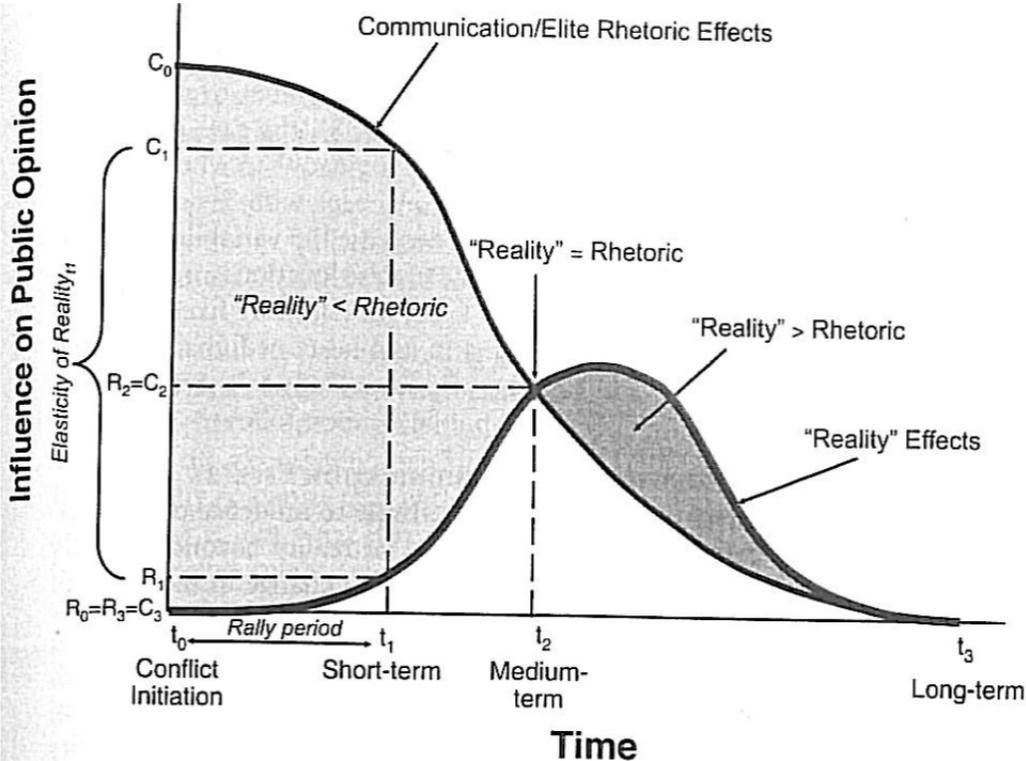
FIGURE 2.1. Elasticity of Reality for a Given State of Events

The model encapsulates the essence of Baum & Groeling's first two hypotheses (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 39). This study's findings will be compared to this model to provide additional empirical testing and contribute to the falsification or confirmation of these hypotheses. The curves illustrate how asymmetry favours elite rhetoric in the opening stages, the rally period (t_0 - t_1), right after an international conflict is initiated. At that time, the influence of rhetoric is much greater than reality on shaping public opinion and perception.

Gradually, as time passes (along the X-axis), the room for elite narratives to dominate diminishes. Baum & Groeling describe a medium term point (t_2) when realities equal narratives and frames in importance. Beyond that point (t_2 - t_3), reality trumps rhetoric until they gradually become more congruent, and reconvene at t_3. The closer a conflict moves to t_3 in time, the more one may expect 'score-keeping' to replace 'match-fixing'.

Hypotheses 15 and 18 are closely linked to the first two hypotheses; Baum & Groeling label them 'Longer-term communication effects' and 'Rhetoric versus reality'. Hypothesis 15 is somewhat shortened and simplified, whereas number 18 is quoted below exactly as presented in *War Stories* (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 40).

Elite rhetoric will continue to influence public attitudes independent of objective indicators of reality, yet the marginal effects will recede over time

Over time, the marginal influence of elite rhetoric will decline more than the marginal influence of objective indicators of a war's progress

Both hypotheses explain the relationship between the curves indicating influence on public opinion in the model. As their earlier hypotheses established, elite rhetoric is influential early on but it gradually loses its power to define news frames, and the media become more independent. In short, the last two hypotheses point out that the prevalence and applicability of the media indexing hypothesis will decline over time as a description of how the media report crises. To round of this sub-section a reminder of the importance of partisanship may suffice: 'In the battle between facts and partisanship, partisanship always wins' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 124).

2.3 Working with strategic narratives

Mass media has impacted wars at least back to the Crimean War of the 1850s (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010, pp. 3–4), and Napoleon once stated, 'Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets' (Graber, 2002, p. 18). Hostile media coverage is less of a problem when it does not translate into negative sentiments in the broader public, which brings public opinion and the home audience into the equation.

Today, every war has its narrative created in real time. In the words of Sir Lawrence Freedman, 'Military operations have come to be understood in terms of the stories they tell as much as their direct impact on the enemy's physical capacity' (Freedman, 2006, p. 74). Freedman also notes that 'a successful strategic narrative will be told with consistency and clarity, and that again requires avoiding complexity' (Freedman, 2015, p. 33). Today's leaders neglect media wars at their peril. They must craft a simple comprehensible message. Ultimately, 'it would be foolhardy for political leaders *not* to try to use narratives to influence others' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 21).

For statesmen responsible for war fighting in the twenty-first century, 'One might cynically recommend that leaders should exert greater effort in winning over the minds of observers than in winning the war itself' (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 13). This sentiment recognizes that in contemporary war it is unhelpful to impose a strict distinction between war as physical operations involving force, and war as it appears in the minds of observers. Emile Simpson offers an explanation as to how strategic narratives of wars relate to the wars themselves.

> *War has an underlying physical reality (the events), and the interpretation of that reality (the version). Strategic narrative is essentially an aspirational version of events which associates the two (Simpson, 2013, p. 61)*

Along the same lines Steve Tatham argues that 'narratives couple strategic communication and physical operations together; neither should be entertained without consideration of the other' (Tatham, 2008, p. 10). Approaching the matter from a different angle, Rupert Smith writes about contemporary conflict that 'Information, not firepower is the currency upon which it is run' (Smith, 2007, p. 377).

What is made clear by the insights presented above is that modern combatants must routinely devote efforts to garner support, and explain the *casus belli*. This is mainly done by projecting strategic narratives in the media to shape audiences' perceptions. Consequently, War studies must exceed the confines of battlefield studies, because war is much more than killing. (Merom, 2003, p. 9). Today, 'to fight a war is to fight to construct and fill in fields of perception' (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2007, p. 6; See also Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 182). There really are few viable alternatives in order to 'forge bonds between the home front and the fighting front – increasing civilian commitment to the war' (Carruthers, 2000, p. 5).

The non-kinetic dimension of the war on terrorism has been assigned different labels. For Bacevich, it resembles a living room war taking place in the homes of ordinary citizens, bringing up connotations to Vietnam (Bacevich, 2005). Others see non-kinetic conflict as mainly a war of ideas (Amr & Singer, 2007; Echevarria II, 2008; Phares, 2007). And yet others find the label 'information warfare' to be the more precise phrase (Bruno, 2009; Libicki, 2007; Snow, 2003). These concepts cover some of the same ground, yet highlight different aspects of non-kinetic warfare.

This study applies the label media war. It studies media war as contestation involving a 'battle of narratives' and news frames (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 102). Such situations are characterised by 'actors seeking to achieve as great a degree of consensus around their narrative as possible' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 109). The goal is usually to dominate your opponent's narrative.

Additionally, elites may dominate domestic media and subsequently public opinion. Zaller defines 'elite domination as a situation in which elites induce citizens to hold opinions that they would not hold if aware of the best available information and analysis' (Zaller, 1992, p. 313). Berinsky also recognizes that elites may mislead the public in matters of war (Berinsky, 2009, p. 214).

Perceptions about Iraq's possession of WMD is an example of elite domination. Imposing such inaccurate perceptions and opinions – wittingly or not – on the public constitutes an exercise of power. Power can be defined in many ways, but in its simplest form relational power implies that 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do' (Dahl, 1957, pp. 202–203).

Another example of elite domination of the media from the literature deals with the torture narrative. Initially the media were reluctant to categorize transgressions like Abu Ghraib as torture (Bennett et al., 2006). The longer the war on terrorism lingered on, the stronger the torture narrative became. My analysis will show that by late 2004 editorials would make use of the term torture quite frequently. By 2006, torture would indeed become a focal point of editorials about the war on terrorism. WSJ were particularly reluctant to categorize any actions taken in the war on terrorism as torture. Consequently, a full-fledged narrative battle erupted over torture.

Oftentimes, military adversaries have fundamentally opposite accounts of their common past, the reasons for conflict, and the story of the conflict itself. In a context of contestation, combatants project differing accounts of the conflict to the media hoping to garner support or discourage the enemy. This is one reason why strategic narratives come into existence, and such narratives are indeed strategic 'because they do not arise spontaneously but are deliberately constructed' (Freedman, 2006, p. 22).

Additionally, Miskimmon et al argue that narratives 'are strategic because they help realize a goal' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 23). It is clear that strategic narrative is a means to an end, applied with instrumentality. It is part of the political tool box. 'Strategic narratives are an instrument of power in the traditional Weberian or behavioral sense' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 17). Below is Miskimmon et al's definition of strategic narratives.

> *Strategic narratives are a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international relations in order to shape opinions and behavior of actors at home and overseas (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 176).*

This definition highlights strategic narratives' political significance in establishing shared meanings, both at home and abroad. The definition is also very clear on the temporal aspect of narratives. Narratives construct the past, present and future of wars and other major incidents in international relations (IR). This is not a defining trait of media frames. 'It is that temporal dimension and sense of movement that distinguishes narrative from discourse and frames' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 7).

Miskimmon et al also demonstrates the flexibility of strategic narrative as an analytical tool in IR. Narratives play a role in contestation in IR, and can be studied using a spectrum of persuasion ranging from very thin to very thick (Miskimmon et al., 2013, pp. 105–108). The thick and very thick variants respond to reflexive and poststructuralist approaches respectively. They focus on identity, discourse and practices, whereas the thin and very thin end of the spectrum of persuasion correspond with rationalist and communicative action. The latter two are most relevant to this study.

The thin approach, relates to the Habermasian *Theory of communicative action* (Habermas, 1984). Deliberation and fair reasoning between equals, establishing a consensus, is integral to this understanding of rhetoric and public debate. Habermas' ideal is that the unforced force of the better argument prevails (Habermas, 2003). Creating a well-crafted strategic narrative is important to actors on the world stage because 'winning arguments can create new consensus and reshape how others see the world' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 106). This holds true in both peace and war.

There is little consensus and deliberation between America and its enemies, which is more characterized by rationalist strategic interaction. Subduing the adversary's narratives is usually the goal. Such narrative battle relates to Miskimmon et al's very thin approach to persuasion. As alluded to in the introduction, America and al Qaeda do not even agree on the master narrative of the conflict which al Qaeda sees as a war against Islam, or a Zionist Crusade (Hegghammer, 2005; Zawahiri, 2008, p. 168). Unsurprisingly the Bush administration's master narrative dominated and completely eclipsed al Qaeda's war against Islam, in America.

However, in some cases, the combatants' narratives may be very similar. The clearest example in this study is analysed in chapter 3.4 and labelled 'The Beirut to 9/11 narrative'. Al Qaeda and the Bush administration agree that the bombing of the U.S. Marines in Beirut in 1983 was a victory for Islamists resulting in the immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Lebanon. Following that, a narrative of retraction, emboldening militant Islamists in challenging America, is accounted for by both al Qaeda, the Bush administration and some of the editorial boards analysed here.

We shall now discuss some issues from another current work on strategic narrative, relating it specifically to the study of war. Emile Simpson's *War from the ground* up describes strategic narrative as a 'tool which seeks to achieve cognitive coherence between an operational approach and its political context' (Simpson, 2013, p. 178). Just like Miskimmon et al, Simpson also emphasizes the temporal dimension of strategic narratives. Strategic narrative offers 'the explanation for participation in, or initiation of, the conflict; strategic narrative also operates as the explanation of actions during and after conflict' (Simpson, 2013, p. 179). One implication of this argument is that the reasons for entering a war, the casus belli, always takes the shape of a narrative.

Two other dimensions of Simpson's work relevant to this project deal with audiences and the ideas of Clausewitz. To Clausewitz 'The strategic audiences of war were contained within the 'state' of either side. They won or lost the war with their state' (Simpson, 2013, p. 62). This neat divide of polity, military and people within two states fighting one another is more complex in contemporary warfare. However, the interaction of these entities are still of major importance. In today's conflicts, we see the 'proliferation of audiences […] These audiences always potentially existed, but were not audiences until the information revolution connected them' (Simpson, 2013, p. 203).

Simpson's comments, on the proliferation of audiences, lead us to the final topic to be discussed before the analysis: war support, public opinion and polls. What we have seen in this section is that narratives bind together people and leadership during wars. Strategic narratives position wars in time, and adversaries will contest one another's narratives.

The nature of contemporary media war is one reason why 'The boundary between military and political activity is blurred, One result is that 'the boundaries between war and peace become confused' (Simpson, 2013, pp. 4,9). In light of this one must not disregard that what non-kinetic warfare is still war. Wars of ideas 'are, indeed, genuine wars, even though the physical violence might be minimal' (Echevarria II, 2008, p. y).

2.4 War support, polls and public opinion

These final pages before the empirical analysis will be spent on public opinion and polling. The work of Adam Berinsky may be the most important work on public opinion in this study, flanked by John R. Zaller. Their work and assessments are utilized throughout the manuscript. But let us start with Andrew Kohut. He is himself a pollster. From the influential Pew Research Center, which he founded.

Kohut argues that 'Modern leaders cannot avoid public opinion as measured in the polls' (Kohut, 2008, p. 204). In contrast, President Bush and Vice President Cheney repeatedly stated that polling results did not concern them much (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 1, 207). The leaders Bush admired 'based decisions on principle, not some snapshot of public opinion' (Bush, 2010, p. 121). As Bush was leaving office he emphasized this stating that 'I think a president who tries to be popular is a president who could fail the country' (Bush, 2008). Presidents may seem weak if they seem to be directed by what is found in polls.

Politicians therefore have an incentive to dismiss polls, especially bad ones. Such talking down of polls 'is, of course, the right thing to say, but it rarely reflects the political reality of everyday life at the White House,' argue Hess and Kalb (Hess & Kalb, 2003, p. 250; See also Hodges, 2011, p. 88). Polls emerge and their political potential is enlarged by how newspapers treat them as objective facts. They reinforce their own support for war, by pointing to public support as found in political polls. Simply put, public officials do not possess many viable alternatives to polls, if they wish to take public opinion into account for their decision-making (Entman, 2004, p. 156), and this they must in contemporary warfare (Graaf et al., 2015).

The emergence of 'scientific public opinion polling' occurred after World War II (Holsti, 2006, p. 57). For as long as they have been in existence, researchers have questioned the usefulness of polls for measuring opinion and the effects of strategic and persuasive communications (Ellul, 1973, p. 25). Holsti labels the dismissive pre-Vietnam position towards polls and public opinion 'The Almond-Lippman consensus' (Holsti, 2006, p. 55). This dismissive stance on the role of polls and public opinion is now obsolete, and is not adhered to in this study.

Tatham observes that 'whilst polling is undeniably useful it should not be considered perfect', (Tatham, 2008, p. 17). When practical and parsimonious concerns enter the equation, even some of the critics of opinion polls concede that the 'method can be employed frequently and yields reasonably sure, fast results' (Ellul, 1973, p. 268). Opinion polls make for one good indicator of how people perceive wars, and whether they support or oppose them.

It is important to keep in mind that polls provide statistical evidence, not incontrovertible evidence. The polling institutions themselves acknowledge this and work actively to safeguard against errors. The polling agency Pew reminds readers that 'In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias' (Pew Research Center, 2004, p. 40).

These caveats are not news to newspapers, including those studied here. USA Today underlines that 'Polls are fleeting measures, of course' (USAT: 2001-10-11). Nevertheless, USAT choose to use polls and write about them on their editorial page, thus demonstrating their value and usefulness to their editorial process. WP, Fox and WSJ also wrote a fair amount about polls. NYT, however, chose a differently, which is a finding we shall soon get to.

The USAT quote on polls as fleeting measures illustrates an important caveat. This study is particularly interested in the role polls play in the editorializing of war support. What are polls to newspapers? How are they utilized, and what function do they have? The object is not to document to what degree polls are precise measurements of public opinion. Polls remain important in defining what is politically significant and may create inter-subjectivity and shared perceptions also in instances when they present erroneous accounts of the public's views.

Moving from polls and over to public opinion, this study subscribes to the view that 'the impact of public opinion has increased over the last decades' (Holsti, 2006, p. 75) . As mentioned in the introduction public opinion and a national will are not new inventions. Changes in the media ecology have contributed to the changes in how wars are fought.

Along these lines, David Kilcullen argues that 'Modern communications compress the operational level of war, […] rendering statistical trends less important as an operational driver than the 'single narrative' of public perception' (Kilcullen, 2006, p. 117). Simpson seconds this opinion, arguing that the information revolution 'expands the information dimension of modern conflict right down to the tactical level' (Simpson, 2013, p. 7).

Just like Johnson & Tierney, Berinsky challenges the notion that success on the battlefield necessarily translates into public support for war (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 61–63, 124; Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 298). He argues that 'The nature of the debate among political elites concerning the salience and meaning of wartime events determines if the public will rally to war', This holds true 'at both the elite and mass levels' (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 86–87). Rallying events are here understood to include 'major uses of force during foreign policy crises' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 48).

How do events in wartime become salient? They often become so through strategic narratives in the media, provided by elites or by the media themselves. The paths to determine public perceptions and opinion on war are multiple. It is crucial to keep in mind that people's judgement of international crises is influenced by 'prior biases, the drama of events, and manipulation of the media and elites' (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 38).

An important caveat to arguments of a public prone to input – and potentially manipulation – by the media and elites concerns predispositions, and prior biases. One must not simplistically assume that the forging of public opinion is easily accomplished. Simpson reminds us that 'People are not a clean slate on which a strategic narrative can be imposed' (Simpson, 2013, p. 219), and Zaller points out that 'every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition' (Zaller, 1992, p. 6).

In Zaller's work, predispositions are referred to as considerations. A consideration is 'defined as any reason that might induce an individual to decide a political issue one way or another' (Zaller, 1992, p. 40). A consideration resembles the psychological concept of a schema, which some works on the effect of media on the public applies (Entman, 2004, pp. 6–7; Graber, 1993). Considerations will be of particular value when analysing the editorializing of the lead-up to war with Iraq.

Public opinion to the war on terrorism was to a considerable extent conflated with public opinion to Iraq. This was a natural consequence of Bush's transfer move of making Iraq the central front in the war on terrorism, analysed closely in chapter 4.3. Polling material on Iraq may therefore be equally well suited as an indicator of public support for the Bush administration's wars.

This study relies on assessments from the literature on public opinion such as *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq* (Berinsky, 2009). Berinsky's assessments are very useful when analysing the editorializing of public opinion. I utilize polling numbers on Afghanistan to a lesser degree. However, the impact of strategic narratives on public opinion in the case of Afghanistan is analysed by Graaf et al in an edited volume (Graaf et al., 2015).

The overall pattern of public support for Bush's wars show a gradual decline. It started with an astounding support level right after 9/11. This is documented by different polling agencies, such as Pew Research Center and PIPA with only limited variation. In a thorough analysis, utilizing a large number of polls, Everts and Isernia conclude that 'In the United States, the war against Afghanistan and terrorism in general was not only immensely popular in the fall of 2001 but remained so for a long time' (Everts & Isernia, 2015, p. 166).

The decline in war support was quicker for Iraq than for Afghanistan. Larson & Savych's research concludes that 'the war in Afghanistan enjoyed some of the highest public support measured since the 1991 Gulf War' (Larson & Savych, 2007, p. 138). Afghanistan was always the less controversial war with a more direct link to the 9/11 attacks. The result was that 'unlike in the case of Iraq, for a long time majorities in the US continued to support the mission' (Everts & Isernia, 2015, p. 170). The findings of Everts & Isernia illustrate how the war in Iraq eclipsed the war in Afghanistan, and even the greater campaign of a war on terrorism.

Since Iraq was more controversial, polling numbers are more systematically assembled for the Iraq war than for Afghanistan or the war on terrorism itself. As noted, the debates around the surge turned Washington into a battlefield. The examples of polling numbers in this study will therefore focus more on Iraq than on Afghanistan. Table 2.5 includes statistical indicators of war support as documented in polls.

Table 2.5 Polling numbers from Iraq and Afghanistan

Do you favor or oppose the U.S. war in Iraq?

		Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
Period 2	Mar 22–23, 2003	72%	25%	3%
Period 2	Mar 29–30, 2003	70%	27%	3%
Period 2	Apr 5–6, 2003	70%	27%	3%
Period 2	Apr 10, 2003	72%	22%	6%
Period 3	Nov 19–21, 2004	48%	46%	6%
Period 3	Mar 18–20, 2005	47%	47%	6%
Period 4	December 15–17, 2006	31%	67%	2%
Period 4	January 11, 2007	31%	67%	2%
Period 5	Dec. 1–2, 2008	36%	63%	1%
Period 5	Feb. 18–19, 2009	31%	67%	2%
Period 6	January 21–23, 2011	33%	66%	1%
Period 6	November 18–20, 2011	29%	68%	3%

Do you approve or disapprove of U.S. military action in Afghanistan?

		Approve	Disapprove	No opinion %
Period 1	2001 Oct 19–21	88%	10%	2%
Period 1	2001 Nov 2–4	86%	11%	3%
Period 1	2001 Nov 26–27	92%	6%	2%
Period 1	2002 Jan 25–27	89%	9%	2%
Period 2	2002 Sep 2–4	83%	13%	4%
Period 2[5]	2003 Dec 5–7	71%	25%	4%
Period 4	2006 Sept 22–24	50%	48%	2%
Period 4	2007 Jan 19–21	44%	52%	4%
Period 5	2008 Dec 1–2	52%	46%	2%
Period 5	2009 Feb 18–19	47%	51%	2%
Period 6	2011 May 2	42%	52%	5%
Period 6	2011 June 3–7	36%	62%	2%

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[5] Period 1 and 2 are numbers from Gallup.com whereas period 4-6 are from CNN/ORC. CNN/ORC complete numbers are found in Appendix I. Gallup polls numbers are retrievable from http://www.gallup.com/poll/5257/war-terrorism.aspx 25/26 I.

These are diachronic polling data from CNN and ORC (Opinion Research Corporation) on support for the Iraq war and for the Afghanistan war. Twelve measurements are included for each war. Period 1 does not apply to the Iraq war, as it only started in 2003, whereas period 3 numbers are not included for the war in Afghanistan. The reason for this is that it is hard to find historical data around 2004 to 2005. This is in itself interesting, and an indication of how Iraq eclipsed Afghanistan at the time, also in the questioning of professional polling agencies.

Iraq data are much easier to assemble, and the entire time series of polling data on Iraq is included in Appendix II. It consists of 62 separate measurements of support for the war in Iraq using consistent and similar methodology and questioning. Here twelve measurements for each war are included. They are either during or close in time to the six time periods for analysis. 18 of the 24 measurements are from CNN/ORC. The remaining six are from Gallup poll. These six are the measurements of Afghanistan in period 1 and 2. The wording of the questions was identical. The support levels in table 5.2 correspond fairly well with research on public opinion in the wars of the Bush presidency (Berinsky, 2009; Everts & Isernia, 2015; Larson & Savych, 2007; Mueller, 2005; Stephens, 2012; Yankelovich, 2005).

The numbers show a significant – if not dramatic – change in support for the war on terrorism's two main military campaigns. The war in Afghanistan started in the eighties and remained there for its first year. By 2007, the starting level of 88% approving of the war was cut in half to 44%. A decade after its initiation, only 36% answered that they approved of this longest war in the history of the United States.

This is a favourable development compared to the war in Iraq. Yet, the net fall in percentages supporting the war is greater for Afghanistan. This is because Iraq started much lower, reflecting domestic opposition to war. The Iraq war started with 72% of responders supporting the war. In 2004–2005 Iraq saw support percentages just below 50%, before plummeting to the thirties.

An interesting observation is that a war-weary public gained confidence in the wars in December 2008, right after voting Obama into office. Minor spikes in war support occurred compared with January 2007, which was when the surge was launched. Afghanistan rose from 44% to 52% and Iraq from 31% to 36%. A renewed

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faith in the mission after the surge, and a confidence in Obama's leadership are possible reasons for why the otherwise steady decline temporarily stopped.

A caveat for this study is that it is not designed to explain causally why changes happened, but instead asks what the editorial boards wrote that may have influenced public support for war, and how they editorialized war support and polling results. The analysis chapters will therefore give particular attention to how the five studied news outlets treated polling results focusing on attempts to sway the public's support for war.

This study finds several examples of editorializing that encourages war support explicitly. One example is when Bill O'Reilly 'urges all Americans to put aside self-interests and personal fear and unselfishly help out the country, support the war on terrorism, work hard' (Fox: 2001-09-21). 'Support the war on terrorism', a simple normative imperative, combined with encouragement to selfless acts to help the country.

The arguments made on public opinion rest on the assumption that the media has the ability to impact public opinion on war. This involves making assumptions about the intentionality of the editorial boards, based on what they write. 'Methodologically, it is very difficult to access the actual thoughts of leaders' (Miskimmon et al., 2013). This includes the leaders of editorial boards too. Throughout the research project interviews with editorial writers was sought, in order to shed light on the driving forces behind their writing.

The requests for interviews were declined. It is interesting in itself, that journalists – whose profession depends on getting people to provide insight through interviews – would be reluctant to provide interviews themselves. However, the editorial process is in some ways the "sausage factory" where newspapers may be least eager to reveal the internal dynamics. Additionally, the anonymous nature of editorials make it hard for anyone journalist or editor to speak about any specific editorial. My concern is with how polls and public opinion was dealt with in editorials, and the arguments on this topic are made relying on the textual evidence presented here.

This section has discussed the use of polls and public opinion. The ensuing analysis will devote a substantial amount of time to dissecting how polls were utilized

in editorials about public support for war. We have established that building support on the home front is crucial. For the case of Vietnam, 'one could say that public opinion was indeed decisive' (Hallin, 1986, p. 213). The role public opinion played in driving the political climate around Iraq and war support is arguably not smaller.

In this chapter we have also seen that media reality has changed significantly, and that it impacts wars in new ways. Describing how this happens should be a main subject of war studies research. This study will therefore now reconstruct the news frames and strategic narratives of the war on terrorism in American opinion journalism, and explore the dynamic between elite rhetoric, the newspapers' official editorial positions and public support for the war on terrorism.

3. 9/11: A Truly United States

The impact of 9/11 on America can hardly be overestimated. 'It is breath-taking how quickly and completely the priorities of US foreign policy have changed', noted Ulrich Beck (Beck, 2002, p. 115). The security sector was transformed at home and new strategic partnerships were forged abroad. The George W. Bush presidency was overnight turned into the 9/11 presidency. 'None of our lives would ever be the same', wrote historian John Lewis Gaddis rightly predicted (Gaddis, 2004, p. 4).

Bush was a fresh President coming somewhat weakened out of the most disputed presidential elections in modern times. He rose to the occasion, seized the moment, showed leadership, and built a rapport with the American people. This chapter deals with what will be remembered as President George W. Bush's most dramatic – yet also finest – hour: his effective immediate response to 9/11. The PIPA project described the 'near pitch-perfect leadership that President Bush showed in its immediate wake' (Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2005, p. 13).

Bin Laden declared war on the United States as much as five years before 9/11 (Bin Laden, 2005, pp. 23–30). Up until then, the war was largely a one-sided al Qaeda affair with attacks in places like Dar-es-salaam, Nairobi and Aden. As the war on terrorism started, so did the media dimension and coverage of it. The opening period of the war on terrorism predictably witnessed a strong rallying around the American flag, with editorials reflecting the best polling numbers on presidential approval in history. The objective of building public support for the war was achieved. America was a united nation, and the media, including editorials, largely reflected this.

As noted, it is early on in a conflict that elites have the most fertile ground for projecting its narrative onto the general public. 'First impressions may be difficult to dislodge (Entman, 2004, p. 7). But did the media roll over and develop news frames in accordance with the Bush administration's initial strategic narrative? To what extent did the newspapers directly quote and re-tell the Bush administration's narrative? There was a high degree of similarity and congruence in the editorials and opinion

journalism, but a closer reading of the data material reveals differences in style, working routines, and level of support from the different media outlets.

Reading the data set, it is striking to see how the urgency of 9/11 was injected into a whole range of different issues. Practically any topic in American politics in need of attention was linked to 9/11. A wide range of functions in society ostensibly had a higher purpose. USAT noted that 'Terrorist attacks jolted the nation into a new era, and little in America seems untouched by the events' (USAT: 2001-10-11).

This observation relates to the constructivist idea of securitization, which mainly involves imposing the logic of security matters onto political areas where it does not necessarily belong. The upheaval of an ordinary state of affairs in America also fits a classical realist analysis where the state's security concerns are superior, and all other national efforts are subordinate. Due to security's pre-eminence, other concerns dramatically increase in importance if given a national security dimension.

This chapter will show that, in contrast to Baum & Groeling's elasticity of reality hypothesis, the news frames sometimes prepared the ground for the strategic narratives of the Bush administration. It remains an open question to what extent particular media frames impacted Bush's strategic narrative. Yet on Iraq, the influence cannot have gone the other way because WSJ's media frame predates the strategic narrative crafted by the Bush administration.

The unity observed in the editorials may be explained by a common understanding of the events on 9/11 and its immediate aftermath. Americans – from the government and news media to ordinary citizens – all understood the urgency of the moment and reacted similarly based on a shared common cultural makeup. Adam Hodges explains that a 'generic script of a nation at war provides a ready-made cultural framework' (Hodges, 2011, p. 20). The 9/11 incident and its media stories are highly culturally congruent, as described in Entman's work (Entman, 2004, p. 15).

In a sense, there was also a genuinely American way to respond to such a national disaster. This is in line with the thinking of Gaddis on American responses to surprise attacks (Gaddis, 2004). The need for elites, the media and the American people to tell one another how to react was really very limited. The response appeared holistic and unison without much coordination needed.

3.1 Public and media support

As regards public support for war, the editorials not only described the situation after 9/11, they actively sought to direct the behaviour of Americans. It was done by preparing the people for sacrifice and encouraging support. The NYT wrote 'The American people and their leaders must mobilize' (NYT: 2001-09-12). They followed up the next day stating that 'Americans are more than ready to rise up and give him [Bush] their support' (NYT: 2001-09-13). WP echoed the same sentiment in the days right after 9/11. 'Americans will have to make sacrifices that a state of war requires' (WP: 2001-09-12).

These quotes document the agency at work in the media. There are normative calls for sacrificing and mobilizing. The newspapers entered the equation of Clausewitz' war definition arguing that to win one must 'compel our enemy to do our will' (Clausewitz, 1984, p. 96). Showing determination is important in such circumstances. The newspapers describe the existence of a unified national will. Mass media is the natural place to forge the national will (Carruthers, 2000, p. 5).

WP and USAT also wrote about the national will and described the situation in these terms: 'Sept. 11 has created the willpower among Americans to accept sacrifices and defeats and persevere until victory is achieved' (WP: 2001-10-07). USAT relates it to patriotic sentiments that 'sprouted spontaneously within hours of the attacks, a symbol of determination rising from the debris' (USAT: 2001-09-14). This is a vivid depiction applying figurative language underlining how prevalent and unison the support was. Patriotism and determination are presented by USAT as natural responses to the attacks.

An urgent call to war – and for sacrifice and support – is seen across the board of the data set. However, some variation exists and the WSJ stood for a more confrontational line. They argued that 'words of anger and resolve this week will mean nothing if they aren't followed by actions that show a national determination to fight this terrorist war all the way to victory' (WSJ: 2001-09-13).

In particular, their editorial 'Battle Hymn' goes further in calling for a more extensive war. In it, the editors describe a 'hardening of national resolve, the call not

merely to mourn but to fight. This goes beyond simple patriotism to suggest a determined national will' (WSJ: 2001-09-17). The Battle hymn of the republic, WSJ points out, is a song that has earlier been 'criticized by some as inappropriately militaristic' (WSJ: 2001-09-17). WSJ's tone is quite confrontational and somewhat more aggressive than in the other newspapers.

As the kinetic side of the war got going in Afghanistan, another wave of supportive editorials emerged. As the troops were about to be sent out, the focus of the editorials again returned to the topic of support. The phrases 'overwhelming' and 'unprecedented' support for the President, were used widely. Here are examples from all four newspapers describing and encouraging support:

> *The nation has responded by giving him [Bush] overwhelming support for the fight both at home and abroad. (NYT: 2001-11-09)*
>
> *You see this in the unprecedented support for President Bush as he promises a long and difficult war against terrorism. (WP: 2001-10-17)*
>
> *The public surely is inspired. Polls show overwhelming support for Bush and the war in Afghanistan. (USAT: 2001-11-09)*
>
> *The bloody attacks have created a unique political moment when Americans of all stars and stripes are uniting behind their President. (WSJ: 2001-09-19)*

This study argues that by stating that Bush has overwhelming support, the newspapers further enhanced that support. If they meant the support was in any way undeserved or unwarranted, they may very likely have written these passages differently. Another option for the editorial boards would be to not focus on the issue of support at all, and simply sidestep the issue.

The media entered the equation relating to national support for the war, contributing to its rise. They appear as a part of the mobilization effort. It will be important to juxtapose this observation with the later stages of the war, when some newspapers were opposed to some aspects of the war on terrorism. For period one, we note that all four newspapers come across as equally ardent supporters of the war on terrorism as the inspired democratic citizenry they describe. At this stage, media support and public support were two sides of the same coin.

Most news organizations adhere to a code of transparency in society (Hallin, 1986, pp. 5–8), and both USAT and NYT argued that one condition for continued war support is an open and informative government. After all, journalism was established and 'flowed from the public's need for news that was credible and useful' (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014, p. x). These statements are somewhat self-serving insofar as the media rely on information from the government for their reporting.

> *Americans overwhelmingly support the war on terrorism. […] If Americans are to continue supporting the war, it will be crucial for them to know their enemy and know of their government's successes and failures. (USAT: 2001-10-16)*

> *In a democracy, building and sustaining a consensus to wage war requires an informed citizenry. As the nation learned in Vietnam, the military cannot successfully conduct foreign wars in the absence of public support. (NYT: 2001-10-11)*

The quotes allude to the ideas of Rupert Smith, Edmund Burke and David Kilcullen and Susan Carruthers, stressing the necessity of public support as a foundation for waging wars in democracies. Democracies at war are especially vulnerable to an erosion of popular support at home, and America's experience with this reflects a painful past. The NYT again summoned the ghosts of Vietnam a month later when they wrote that during the Vietnam era 'a key to winning the war at home was lying about what was actually going on' (NYT: 2001-11-11). The NYT warned explicitly of the perils of losing the *war at home*, and the necessity of sustaining a rapport with the people based on openness.

The NYT brought up the concept of traditional propaganda wars based on deception and spreading of misleading information. T serves as a reminder not to overstretch the elasticity of reality. The NYT and USAT both argued that openness is an effective tool to avoid a gulf between citizenry and the military and political leadership during wars. Openness, they write, builds trust between leadership and people, which again leads to war support.

Regarding what is needed to maintain both security and popular support, WSJ presented a different argument which may stem from its strong links with the business world. It conveyed a traditional form of realist thinking, emphasizing that economic

power translates into military power. In the editorial 'A War Economy', they advise Bush to counter early signs of recession, otherwise, 'Mr. Bush could find himself without the strong economy that a war effort requires, not to mention eroding public support' (WSJ: 2001-09-26). President Bush's economic performance is vital, WSJ argue, not only to provide welfare and armaments, but to sustain the war effort and keep citizens happy, thus maintaining public support for the war.

In the editorials, polling results have at least two functions. They represent legitimate news about the sentiments of the people. Additionally, they are utilized to enforce the editorials' own calls for support for the war. *USA Today* reported of 'strong support for war in public opinion polls' already two days after 9/11 (USAT: 2001-09-13) and WP wrote that 'Americans are enraged, and polls show that high majorities support military action soon' (WP: 2001-09-18). On some occasions specific polls were mentioned:

> *According to a USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll, 84% say, for example, that they support action against terrorists even if it means their taxes are increased. (USAT: 2001-09-17)*

> *A new Pew Research Center poll finds that Americans favor military action to deter terrorism, not to avenge the recent attacks. (WSJ: 2001-09-28)*

Polling is undeniably important in American politics, yet writing about it in this manner reinforces its importance. There is little critical writing about the polling numbers. The numbers reflected what the newspapers have argued themselves. The nation is under attack and the people must mobilize and support Bush's leadership. One feasible form of critical opinion journalism would be to argue that the appetite for war was too high in the population. The editorials report the numbers and second the polls as an accurate reflection of the legitimate sentiments of the American people.

Polling numbers were indeed overwhelming; Bush was 'riding the strongest approval ratings in the history of the presidency' (USAT: 2001-10-11). Up to 90% approved Bush's handling of his job. However, there is one conspicuous exception when it comes to the use of polls in editorials. NYT's editorial page never referred to any specific polling in the period 1 texts, which consists of 130 articles. It is hard to

believe this is a coincidence. It seems very likely that it was an editorial decision not to mention opinion results in editorials. It also reflects part of their op-ed opinion journalism on the issue where New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman advised people: "don't believe the polls" (See also Friedman, 2002; Stephens, 2012, p. 230).

One final narrative served as a fundament of the national unity and will to fight that emerged. America had a shared experience of being hit as a nation. In an exercise of consolation and trying simply to cope after the shock, the newspapers documented the suffering and mourning as America experienced 'a moment of supreme national horror' (NYT: 2001-09-15). A month later, NYT wrote that Bush 'reflected on the sorrow, compassion and determination that have swept the country […] he seemed to be a leader whom the nation could follow in these difficult times' (NYT: 2001-10-12). Thus, NYT tied together sorrow, determination and the need for astute leadership by Bush, ensuring the support of the public in these times of war. This would not last.

The NYT and USAT articulated a mourning narrative more than WSJ and WP. The latter two had a somewhat more pragmatic and matter-of-fact tone to their editorials. WP wrote, 'The horror is indelible, but life has to continue' (WP: 2001-09-13). And the WSJ mixed inconvenience in with the gravest of losses accounting for an 'Uncounted number of innocent civilians killed, grief for many American families, anxiety for even more and almost universal inconvenience (WSJ: 2001-09-12).

The impression is that the USAT and NYT had a more solemn tone, separating sorrow and suffering more clearly from other topics. To conclude this subsection, here is an emotionally loaded passage printed the day after 9/11 which encapsulates America's mood. USAT also pondered life in a post 9/11 America, and were correct in predicting the 9/11 response would redefine America in many ways.

> *Shock and tears dominated TV screens as the scale of the horror unfolded -- a picture of an America mourning for countrymen slaughtered by zealots of unknown stripe. When the mourning ends, the tears will turn swiftly to anger, and how that anger is managed may define the way America lives for years to come. (USAT: 2001-09-12)*

3.2 The Bush administration

How was the Bush administration portrayed during the initial weeks of the war on terrorism? They enjoyed very favourable commentary for their response to 9/11. 'Bush's handling of the crisis has been exceptional', concluded *USA Today* one month after the attack (USAT: 2001-10-11). The WP shared the sentiment and wrote about 'the intelligent way the Bush administration has so far conducted' the war on terrorism (WP: 2001-10-07). The editorials were full of praise. Bush was 'exceptional' and 'intelligent. WSJ's view was that the Bush and his administration had 'shown mastery over their military and diplomatic portfolios since September 11, and the American public is rewarding him with record approval ratings' (WSJ: 2001-09-26).

The NYT were also positive to the President's initial handling of the 9/11 response. Bush 'succeeded in bonding with New York', which meant in their opinion that 'Mr. Bush has won the first battle of the war' (NYT: 2001-09-17). NYT would naturally focus on New York City. It makes sense to argue that a controversially elected Republican President has to win over the liberal city of New York. It also goes to show the great importance NYT puts on the home front in America, including New York.

A landmark in the newspapers' evaluation of Bush's response was the President's speech on September 20. The speech he gave nine days after the attacks resulted in extraordinary praise from many quarters the following day. Here are four examples:

> *Urging the American people to be both brave and patient, the president rallied Congress, the nation and its allies abroad […] Mr. Bush accomplished everything he needed to do last night. (NYT: 2001-09-21)*

> *Mr. Bush's speech was clear and confident. The struggle to which he called the country last night is a just one. (WP: 2001-09-21)*

> *The President has many hard calls ahead. But on the evidence of last night and the past 10 days, he's more than up to the task. (WSJ: 2001-09-21)*

> *Bush and his aides have mounted an admirably patient response to the crisis. On one hand, they've steadily tried to steel the public for a long war that will indefinitely alter the way we live. On the other -- and less successfully -- they've tried to soothe jittery nerves so people will begin to behave more normally. (USAT: 2001-09-21)*

This speech marks a – if not *the* – high point of Bush's handling of the war on terrorism. Criticism was scant and often just tucked in alongside elaborate praise, as demonstrated by the USAT quote above. It is as if the newspapers ritually added a few slightly critical remarks just to maintain an impression of critical editorializing in line with the media's vocational code of openness and of speaking truth to power (Hallin, 1986, pp. 5–8). This leads us to the extent to which newspapers quote the Bush administration narratives verbatim.

As mentioned earlier, one way of measuring the impact of the Bush administration's strategic narratives is to look at the extent to which the articles quote verbatim or retell the official statements of the Bush administration. Such writing is on occasion neutral, but is more often than not accompanied by an assessment in opinion journalism. Much of the time it is an indicator of effective strategic communication when the newspapers use space on their own opinion pages to simply retell and quote combatants' narratives.

Such narratives were widely retold in the time right after 9/11. The words of George W. Bush resonated with the American audience – indeed the world – and set the agenda. Key points of his speeches were quoted verbatim at great length in the data set. These are some of President Bush's most famous and wide-reaching statements. They instantly defined his presidency. Among them were these passages quoted below:

> *Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists (WSJ: 2001-09-21)*
>
> *We will direct every resource at our command . . . to the disruption and defeat of the global terror network (WSJ: 2001-09-21;NYT: 2001-09-22)*
>
> *We will make no distinction between terrorists and states that harbor them. (USAT: 2001-09-21)*

There are distinct differences in the way the four newspapers use quotes from the Bush administration in their editorials. This study finds that USAT never quoted Bush directly in the 61 USAT editorials analysed in period 1. They did, however,

finish with a Rumsfeld quote at the end of the text on a couple of occasions, but never whole statements verbatim by Bush.

When USAT refers to specific statements by President Bush – which they often do – they consistently retell them in their own words. This may be a deliberate policy to maintain independence, perhaps an attempt not to run the White House's errand in getting its talking points across. Another possible explanation could be that other sections of the newspaper covered major speeches and included direct quotes.

WP was the antithesis of USAT in this regard and quoted the Bush administration very frequently in their editorials. This was especially prevalent during the first two weeks of reporting after 9/11. The WP editorial page quoted Bush directly on September 13, 14, 16, 21, 24, 25 and 26. In all of these instances, the writing accompanying the quotes is of a favourable kind. The strategic narrative thus cascaded from the White House and onto WP's editorials much in the manner suggested by Entman's cascading theory.

The reasons why WP stands out as the most quote-willing newspaper are hard to determine. The general outlook of the newspaper can be one explanatory factor. As the newspaper from Washington, the political epicentre of the USA, WP is a more politics oriented newspaper than the national USAT, or a business daily such as WSJ. Perhaps the proximity to politics and polity itself may lead to a tighter relationship to the actual words of politicians, and thus result in a more frequent use of direct quotes.

3.3 America's adversaries

It is hard to receive fair or favourable treatment in the newspapers of a country with which one is at war. However, the levels of criticism and negative coverage will vary. Harsh condemnation of al Qaeda would probably be the desired coverage from the Bush administration's point of view. Some would also consider explaining the arguments and reasoning of the enemy an important task for the mass media. According to this line of reasoning, they should provide the public with facts and information to understand why their elected leaders have decided to declare war on someone. They must explain the *casus belli*.

The counterargument would be that the media should play a constructive role in mobilizing the nation for war. If the nation is at war, then so too are its newspapers 'When America goes to war, so too does the press, wrapped in the flag' (Kalb, 1994, p. 3) . This is what they ended up doing in the war on terrorism as they called for support for the war in 2001. Whether supportive writing is normatively right or wrong is a highly interesting question that will not be discussed in depth here. What is of importance is that al Qaeda would benefit from having their narratives to be retold in the US media, in order to either generate support, or spread fear in the American population.

This argument implies that the term 'unfavourable coverage' sits rather uneasily with respect to terrorists' communications. This has to do with the goals of terrorists. Among their goals are to generate (media) attention and to spread fear. Thus, negative news coverage can actually help the terrorists fulfil some of their goals.

Reports of killings and ruthless attacks may understandably create fear in the minds of the people the terrorist group is vowing to attack again. Still, newspapers should be cautious about sparing their readers from information that may discomfort them. Even when reality is hard to stomach, people still may be better off knowing it. Terrorists exploit the mechanisms of free media, and the media often have little choice but dutifully to report the threat the terrorists represent.

It did not take long before Osama bin Laden's name figured in editorials. He was mentioned for the first time in NYT and WSJ on September 13. However, USAT and WP were the first to mention him by name. They referred to 'one leading suspect in yesterday's attacks, Osama bin Laden' (WP: 2001-09-12). NYT times followed suit and also labelled him a prime suspect on September 14. Most of the editorials, with WSJ as the exception, were cautious in the very first days and emphasized the suspect status of Osama bin Laden. However, just being mentioned by name on an editorial page is significant. It is perhaps the page where newspapers are most eager to avoid factual errors.

Bin Laden and al Qaeda were at times referred to without any normative adjectives or negative terms connected with their names. The most common was to label Osama bin Laden an international terrorist. Terrorist is a word with negative

connotations, but it ranks nonetheless above outright denigrating and demonizing terms. Every now and then phrases like 'bin Laden and his henchmen' (NYT: 2001-09-17) and even 'the Evil One' (USAT: 2001-10-26) occurred.

WP also employed similar language when they wrote about 'an international plague, the al Qaeda terrorist network of Osama bin Laden' (WP: 2001-10-08). Nevertheless, the editorials for the most part remained fairly neutral in their language – given the circumstances – and did not give bin Laden too much of a jingoistic or denigrating treatment.

On some occasions words that have a positive ring to them were also used. USAT called bin Laden 'charismatic' (USAT: 2001-10-26). Whereas WP stated that 'Osama bin Laden is a formidable opponent' (WP: 2001-10-09). Both are descriptions that could contribute to the image being built of Osama bin Laden. At the same time, they are arguably both factually acceptable assessments.

Much of the literature on Osama bin Laden issued in years after 9/11 describe him as possessing charisma and other leadership qualities (Bergen, 2006; Coll, 2008; Kepel & Milelli, 2008; Scheuer, 2004). The more recent works on bin Laden uphold and reinforce this image of a pious and inspirational figure (Bergen, 2011; Bowden, 2012; Scheuer, 2011). His image and legacy remains much the same after his death.

Let us turn to the other main adversary in the war on terrorism. WSJ's coverage differs from the three others when it comes to Iraq and Saddam Hussein. Again, WSJ represents a blunter, more confrontational stance. The day after 9/11 they wrote: 'We are entitled to assume that this is the work of the usual suspects -- Saddam Hussein, the Taliban, the Iranian mullahs and other dictators' (WSJ: 2001-09-12).

Here we see a willingness to speculate and more clearly suggest who might have committed the atrocities on 9/11. The day after they narrowed the set of suspects down further: 'We would not be surprised if this week's atrocity was the work of either Saddam or bin Laden or both' (WSJ: 2001-09-13). Editorials establishing this linkage would increase in the build-up to the invasion of Iraq.

In retrospect, one may argue, this early eagerness to apportion blame was a double-edged sword. The WSJ quickly realized the Taliban would be playing some part in the war on terror. Furthermore, Saddam Hussein was also mentioned. Both

proved to be adversaries in the war later. But Saddam Hussein's connection to 9/11 was none (Hodges, 2011, p. 64). That assertion is therefore somewhat suspect. Bringing up Iran was arguably a miss, since Iran never was a direct military adversary in the war on terrorism. Iran was singled out for particular attention, when the country was included in the 'Axis of evil' in 2002.

A couple of caveats are needed as regards The Axis of Evil and Taliban. If one more salient event should have been included, the Axis of Evil speech, and the breaking of the Abu Ghraib scandal are the two best candidates. When it comes to the editorializing of the Taliban, Taliban typically launched a spring offensive in Afghanistan every year. The time periods studied here were largely around salient events in the winter. The result is that the Taliban is editorialized less in the selected time periods than they were during the spring.

The WSJ editorial page wrote extensively on Iraq and Saddam Hussein during this period, unlike the other newspapers. Saddam Hussein is mentioned by name very frequently. This includes editorials on September 12, 13, 14, 19, 20 and 21. WSJ is only published on weekdays, meaning the paper was not published on the 15[th] and 16[th]. This means that Saddam Hussein was mentioned in six out of the first eight WSJ editorials after 9/11, an extraordinary number. Iraq and Saddam Hussein were undoubtedly a major recurring theme in WSJ, and the paper argued in favour of taking the war to Iraq.

> *We recognize that taking the war to Iraq won't be easy. Deposing Saddam has to be considered as another war aim (WSJ: 2001-09-20)*

> *Our own view is that the terrorist threat won't vanish until Saddam does (WSJ: 2001-09-21)*

> *It is impossible to imagine the United States "winning" this war in any meaningful sense while Saddam Hussein remains in power in Iraq (WP: 2001-09-15)*

As the final quote demonstrates, WP also initially argued for war against Iraq. However, they abandoned the idea entirely for some time arguing that 'Getting help for phase one has meant putting many other potential targets -- most notably Iraq -- on hold' (WP: 2001-10-07). This change in writing and policy recommendations is very

interesting. WP, much like Bush, put Iraq aside for pragmatic realpolitik reasons, and a consideration of what was sellable domestically and abroad in 2001. This stance is closest to what the Bush administration eventually ended up doing, postponing Iraq after an intense internal debate (Baker, 2013, pp. 144–146; Woodward, 2002, pp. 83–87).

The NYT opposed attacking Iraq, describing it as 'a step that the nation is not yet prepared to take' (NYT: 2001-10-12). While they did not rule out action in Iraq in the long run, leaving Iraq out of the mix would be 'the wiser policy, for now' (NYT: 2001-09-22). USAT did not venture far into the topic of Iraq. One of their few statements on the matter advocated deterrence as a fruitful option towards Iraq. 'A clear lesson from the Gulf War was that while Saddam Hussein may be evil, he isn't crazy' (USAT: 2001-10-24).

The debate on whether to attack Iraq or not was a natural one for the editorial pages to engage with. It was also a huge debate inside the administration, where Colin Powell was at times an isolated reluctant warrior. Glenn Kessler writes about Rumsfeld and Cheney that 'both men had tormented Powell in the first Bush term' (Kessler, 2007, p. 8). Woodward also documents the rifts inside the administration, and writes that Cheney 'was beyond hell-bent for action against Saddam' (Woodward, 2004, p. 175). Cheney himself does not remember Powell ever voicing concerns, and claims Powell sniped at the administration through the media (Cheney, 2011, p. 425).

WSJ called Powell out on the Iraq issue. In a sense, WSJ partook in the Bush administration's turf wars. They sided with those in favour of attacking Iraq sooner rather than later. 'Secretary of State Colin Powell, for example, is arguing internally not to strike Iraq in any anti-terror campaign', they wrote (WSJ: 2001-09-21). They also used phrases like 'Saddam apologists' (WSJ: 2001-10-18), which left little doubt about their sentiments regarding war with Saddam Hussein and Iraq.

An interesting finding is that the WSJ was arguing for war against Iraq before the Bush administration. Here, the news frame came before the Bush administration's call to war. One way of interpreting this is that Entman's cascade is "flowing" upwards. WSJ was instrumental in bringing Iraq to the forefront of the agenda. However, it should also be noted that senior members of the Bush administration had

been advocating war with Iraq since the first Gulf war (Ryan, 2010). There was plenty elite rhetoric about invading Iraq during the Clinton years.

A significant finding here is that WSJ placed Iraq under the heading of the war on terrorism even before the Bush administration did so. This goes against theories holding that elites shape media content, or that the opening of wars encompasses a cascading of narratives from The White House and into the media. Furthermore, the narrative battle between bin Laden and the Bush administration took place on the editorial pages. Bin Laden was mentioned very early on and in denigrating ways. Yet, given the circumstances, he received about the coverage one would expect.

3.4 The war on terrorism and securitization

The emergence of a war on terrorism was in some ways a given. The communication bringing the war on terrorism into existence is here labelled a master narrative, in line with the terminology Miskimmon et al utilize (Miskimmon et al., 2013). The war on terrorism is the only master narrative in this study, and its use will be meticulously analysed in every chapter. The master narrative established a state of war in America, and all other narratives of the war on terrorism have their origin from it.

Bruce Hoffman defines 'Terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change' (Hoffman, 2006, p. 40) Terrorism hovers unsteadily on either side of the borderline between war and peace. Few other conflicts have epitomized this divide better than the war on terrorism. On institutional reality, Searle reminds us that 'Saying in the right context, "War is declared" is declaring war' (Searle, 1998, p. 133). In certain contexts 'Saying is doing'(Miskimmon et al., 2013). Austin was crucial in developing the concept of speech acts (Austin, 1975).

None of the terrorist attacks on America prior to 9/11 ever resulted in any comparable national effort and war, even though the phrase 'war on terrorism' had been mentioned earlier. Reagan used it following the lethal attacks on the US Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983. Also critics of the Bush administration would readily concede that war had to be declared. Richard Clarke argues, 'Any leader whom one

can imagine as President on September 11 would have declared a war on terrorism' (Clarke, 2004a, p. 244). Bush applied the phrase 'war against terrorism' for the first time in a prime time speech on the evening of 9/11 (Hodges, 2011, p. 25).

The record shows that a war on terrorism was rapidly declared, but there was some confusion and hesitation in the very early hours. In the afternoon of 9/11 Secretary Rumsfeld said, 'What words the lawyers will use to characterize it is for them'. Later the same evening Bush put this discussion to rest with the statement: 'We stand together to win the war against terrorism'. As seen earlier in this chapter, the word 'war' was also used in the media and in editorials, at an early stage. The media quickly adopted the Bush administration's strategic narrative of a war on terrorism.

The aforementioned Beirut bombing shows that earlier terrorist attacks against America, which did not unleash a significant military response, shaped the historical background of the war on terrorism. The editorials also cite insufficient responses to terrorism in the decades before 9/11 as an inviting sign of weakness, leading up to the 9/11 attacks. Bin Laden specifically mentioned the brazen attack. Militants sent 'a truck full of explosives into the center of the U.S. forces (Marines) in Beirut' (Kepel & Milelli, 2008, p. 61).

Bush is explicit about this weak posture, and in his memoirs he writes, 'it was clear the terrorists had interpreted our lack of a serious response as a sign of weakness and an invitation to attempt more brazen attacks' (Bush, 2010, p. 191; See also Johnson & Tierney, 2006, pp. 17–18). Playing down previous responses to terror attacks may be an instance of a process Johnson & Tierney label 'Exaggerate past failure' (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 293). It may be convenient to blame preceding leaders in order to create a low bar for comparison with one's own achievements.

Bush drew the historical lines of terror strikes against America from Beirut, to Somalia, East Africa and Yemen. This narrative – from Beirut to 9/11 – was alluded to by USAT the day after 9/11 and WSJ the day after, in an editorial titled 'Getting Serious' (WSJ: 2001-09-13). Adam Hodges documents a similar narrative. The Bush administration wanted to fight al Qaeda 'from Pakistan, to the Philippines, to the Horn of Africa, to Iraq' (Hodges, 2011, pp. 53–55).

Other newspapers also pursued this 'from Beirut to 9/11 narrative', and none more elaborately than the WP. One of its columnists tied together the history, present and future of the conflict in the days after the attacks. He argued that the conflict 'began even before 241 American Marines were killed in Lebanon in 1983 and it will not stop when Osama bin Laden himself is stopped' (Cohen, 2001). The WP editorial page struck a similar chord in providing a historical context and calling for a forceful response.

> *In the past the United States has shied away from squarely confronting regimes that were linked to terrorist attacks against Americans -- such as Iran in the case of the 1996 Khobar towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, or Afghanistan in the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania by Osama bin Laden's network. It can no longer afford to do so. (WP: 2001-09-12)*

By knitting together different previous attacks, we observe the formation and projection of a strategic narrative. Keeping in mind the definition presented earlier, they are *an actor's compelling story lines that convey meaning, and a temporal dimension, about specific events to an audience.* The historical significance of the 9/11 attacks is here conveyed to the American audience, with a clear focus on the temporal dimension and actors. The readers and the people are given a reality and a worldview aiding the processing of the complicated and devastating news of 9/11.

An important aspect here is that both combatants and newspapers wrote in a similar way about the Beirut to 9/11 narrative. Bin Laden alluded to some of the same attacks on Americans abroad. He argues, just like the editorial pages, that there is a pattern of retreat and weakness at work here. Bin Laden said: 'It was a pleasure for the heart of every Muslim and a remedy to the "chests" of believing nations to see you defeated in the three Islamic cities of Beirut, Aden and Mogadishu' (Hegghammer, 2003, p. 135). We note that there is a triple effect at work of the newspapers, al Qaeda and the Bush administration all agreeing on significant parts of the narrative. They all described the conflict between Islamist extremists and the USA prior to 9/11 as one where the US had failed to act, or retracted, following terrorist strikes.

The process of **securitization** occurred in America post 9/11, and was debated on editorial pages. It injects a security logic into other political realms. 'Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization' (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998, p. 23). It is a process of moving issues to the top of the political agenda, through a securitizing move. Such securitizing moves are only successful if the audience accepts them (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). Securitization occurs because 'the special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 21). This constructivist concept has its origin within the Copenhagen school of security studies (Hansen, 2000).

The newspapers relate securitization to the politicking of Washington D.C. driven by pet projects, earmarks and special interests. As regards the master narrative of a war on terrorism, 'much of the political usefulness of the narrative lies in its ability to subsume a variety of foreign policy objectives under the rubric of the war on terror' (Hodges, 2011, p. 41). A broad national effort requires many initiatives and programs, but that does not mean that they are all strictly speaking national security measures. They may also be wholly domestic concerns. Here are some examples of writing warning against securitization from all four newspapers:

> *Such [national] unity requires, among much else, that neither party use the tragedy as a means of advancing unrelated policies. (WP: 2001-09-19)*

> *Others are using the national crisis to push old special-interest agendas. (USAT: 2001-10-01)*

> *Mr. Bush and the Democrats are promising to lay aside their partisan squabbling. They cannot do that if either side tries to exploit the current atmosphere to push Congress into supporting an agenda from an earlier period. (NYT: 2001-09-20)*

> *Any bill with the word "security" in it should get double the public scrutiny. […] The bill [Farm Security Act] attempts the astonishing feat of turning peanut subsidies into an essential feature of the war on terror. (WSJ: 2001-10-03)*

As these quotes suggest, the newspapers engaged in countering securitization, with the WSJ being very direct in pointing out misuse of the word 'security'. It is hard to fathom a more explicit anti-securitization sentiment than is apparent in WSJ's well-titled editorial 'Nuts to you'. In their editorial they continue by quoting the national

security savvy Senator Richard Lugar: 'To imply somehow we need a farm bill in order to feed our troops, to defend our nation, is ridiculous' (WSJ: 2001-10-03).

What seems clear is that securitizing moves were attempted, and the media were aware of it. Securitization was considered a means of exploiting the crisis and the sense of unity. The cautionary editorializing can also be interpreted as protecting the 'war on terrorism' from attempts to get it watered down by irrelevant political propositions. In doing so, the master narrative of a war on terrorism is preserved.

Pointing the finger at those making illegitimate securitizing moves indicates that the war on terrorism was of great importance, too great to be fuddled with. Congress was the clearest recipient of these warnings against exploiting the post 9/11 mentality for irrelevant purposes, but also President Bush was warned not to 'try to take advantage of the war and push through an energy package' (NYT: 2001-10-13).

WSJ were less concerned about Bush attempting to securitize matters. They believed he should utilize his ratings. 'This gives him an historic opportunity to assert his leadership, not just on security and foreign policy but across the board', they wrote (WSJ: 2001-09-19), adding six weeks later, 'Advisers tell President Bush he doesn't dare use his 90% approval rating on anything except the war effort' (WSJ: 2001-10-29).

3.5 Intermittent media frames

The range of topics covered in the editorials with a bearing on the war on terrorism exceeds what has been discussed so far. With securitization going on, there is a lot to cover. The news frames and narratives discussed in this subchapter are intermittent, and therefore not necessarily significant in all five periods of this study. Some of them evolved into bigger, more important issues in subsequent periods, whereas others faded away. The topics receiving attention in the first period are air security, The Anthrax scare, diplomacy and coalitions and detainee treatment and civil liberties.

As Berinsky points out, 'the trade-off between security and civil liberties is always difficult to navigate in a democratic society' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 155). Yet, these were minor concerns in the beginning of the war on terrorism. This would not

last, as subsequent chapters of this study will document. It is therefore interesting to find early indicators of this media frame. It is a frame in which the media displayed agency. The Bush administration would naturally contend that in all their conduct they attended to the rights of American citizens, and also treated detainees respectfully and lawfully. The rights and liberties concern was accentuated most clearly by NYT.

The very day after the 9/11 attacks, NYT warned the country against 'sacrificing its liberties' by writing 'draconian new laws'. In the same editorial they cautioned not 'to undermine civil liberties', in particular of 'Americans of Islamic descent' (NYT: 2001 09-12). It is quite bold to remind the nation of these matters the day after such an enormous attack. The trends in public opinion on civil liberties sketched out by Berinsky, referencing PEW Research Center, are telling.

> *Before the attacks of September 11, a significant majority believed that it would not be necessary to sacrifice civil liberties to curb terrorism. In the immediate wake of the attack, support for that position dropped sharply (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 163–164)*

At a time when many Americans were willing to sacrifice civil liberties it is easy to forget that too forceful measures 'could end up compromising important democratic principles without yielding any tangible gain in the fight against terrorism' (NYT: 2001-09-19). The WP was also on a similar cautionary tangent as early as the day after 9/11. 'The country cannot allow terrorists to alter the fundamental openness of U.S. society or the government's respect for civil liberties', it warned (WP: 2001-09-12). The other two newspapers in the data set were less preoccupied with these concerns.

The need for allies and **international support** was a concern in the first weeks of the war on terrorism. Diplomacy was the natural tool to build international coalitions and obtain direct assistance and tacit acceptance for the military dimension of the war on terrorism. The use of force is inherently controversial and diplomatic groundwork tends to precede wars.

America's chief diplomat Colin Powell was crucially involved in these efforts (Baker, 2013, p. 144). Some newspapers – none more than WP – were at pains to

emphasize the importance of diplomacy and international partners early on. WP wrote, 'the administration has rightly recognized that the greatest harvest from diplomacy can be gathered now, in the early going' (WP: 2001-10-07). Nine days later they would contend that, 'After five weeks of successful coalition-building, the diplomatic side of the struggle against terrorism may be entering a tougher phase' (WP: 2001-10-16). The years to come would prove WP to be accurate on that account.

The narrative on international support was perceptible two days after 9/11 as the Bush administration was told that 'It must seek to enlist allies around the world in a concerted assault' (WP: 2001-09-13). So they did, and the WP gave the Bush administration positive coverage for their considerable diplomatic efforts. The newspaper noted that the Bush administration was able 'to construct a formidable coalition against terrorism' (WP: 2001-10-07).

The diplomacy and coalition narrative separates the WP from the other editorials, mainly because WP wrote much more about it than the other newspapers as time passed. USAT also mentioned it in the first couple of days after 9/11, advocating bringing 'major nations into a global alliance to wage war against terrorism' (USAT: 2001-09-12).

An anti-diplomacy narrative also emerged, with WSJ as its most active proponent. It is rooted in a unilateralist Jacksonian approach to U.S. foreign policy (Mead, 2002, pp. 223–227). In a WP op-ed, Walter Russel Mead advised everyone to be 'Braced for Jacksonian Ruthlessness' (Mead, 2001) . The confrontational Jacksonian tradition relates to American exceptionalism, a well-known historical trend in American foreign policy (Lipset, 1996).

Yankelovich also explains public opinion on the Iraq war using 'American exceptionalism: Americans are a people chosen for a special mission in the world and especially blessed by God' (Yankelovich, 2005). A more elaborate definition is provided by Hilde Restad, who focuses less on the religious origins of exceptionalism. She lists three ideas that define American exceptionalism:

> *First is the idea that the United States is different from the Old World; second, that it has a special and unique role to play in world history; and third, that the United States will resist the laws of history (meaning that it will rise to great power status yet it will not fall, as all previous republics have) (Restad, 2014, p. 3)*

WSJ's editorial writing alluded to exceptionalist thinking stating that America does not need a 'permission slip from the World Court' to act on the world stage (WSJ: 2001-09-13). This is a reference to a U.N. Security Council mandate, an organization WSJ's editorial page regularly scolded throughout the entire war on terrorism. The WSJ openly embraced unilateralism: 'Mr. Bush will not be limited in his war aims by U.N. resolutions and other diplomatic barriers' (WSJ: 2001-10-08).

WP were also sceptical of increased U.N. interference in the war on terrorism, stating that it 'would amount to unconditional surrender' (WP: 2001-09-26). 'This is a recipe for paralysis', the WP (2001-10-21) concluded. WP advocated forceful bilateral diplomacy combined with a strong posture through NATO. For some nations, diplomacy and multilateralism go hand in hand. American exceptionalism and hegemonic position in the world give the country a particular brand of diplomacy.

Unilateralist writing corresponds to a Bush administration strategic narrative that was articulated by Donald Rumsfeld. Coalitions of the willing was a vehicle designed to give America control of the war on terrorism's military operations. The strategic narrative was quoted at length by the WP in an editorial titled 'The Coalition and the Mission'.

> *"There is no single coalition in this effort," Mr. Rumsfeld said. Instead, he said, there should be "a number of flexible coalitions that will change and evolve. Let me reemphasize that the mission determines the coalition, and the coalition must not determine the mission." (WP: 2001-10-21)*

Here we see an element of the Bush doctrine on display. At the time, the Bush administration emphasized the preponderance of action and unilateralism over institutionalism and coalitions. Rumsfeld advocates coalitions, but only if coalition partners did not demand influence on what the missions would encompass. In clearer words, the USA wanted to have a free hand, while welcoming extra hands to help

realize their goals. Rumsfeld's narrative certainly caught on and made it almost unabridged onto the WP editorial page

After an innovative attack involving airplanes, it is only natural to scrutinize **air security**. All newspapers mentioned this, with the NYT placing it firmly at the centre of the conflict: 'There is no disputing that civil aviation is a crucial front in the new war against terror' (NYT: 2001-10-28). USAT went beyond ordinary coverage and engaged in a sustained journalistic campaign to amend and fix air security in America, starting on September 12 with the editorial 'Air Security Fails'.

It is a traditional strain of opinion journalism to select a topic, stick with it, and demand government action to solve the problem. It is a form of advocacy journalism, in which a newspaper goes beyond ordinary news reporting (Hallin, 1986, p. 163). It relates to 'the democratic role of the press' in society (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 2). This role involves pointing out societies' shortcomings and pressuring those they deem responsible for the problems (Hallin, 1986, pp. 5–8; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014, p. x).

USAT's starting point was to ask 'whether failures in the airport security system overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration and the industry contributed to the disaster' (USAT: 2001-09-12). Here we notice how USAT puts FAA firmly in the hot seat, as their potential failures may have contributed to the disaster. Five days later the newspaper said the country 'will need to move decisively to redress urgent weaknesses, such as civil defense and air security' (USAT: 2001-09-17).

On this matter, USAT voiced direct criticism of President Bush, which was quite rare at the time. Bush's 'own initial weak response failed to ease public concern about air safety' (USAT: 2001-10-11). However, it was not only the President and the FAA that were singled out for criticism. WSJ reported that 'The airlines themselves are ill-equipped for this job. During government tests, their low-paid screeners have missed as many as 20% of dangerous items' (WSJ: 2001-09-14).

A heightened fear of imminent terror attack was enhanced by **'The Anthrax Scare'**, as a WSJ editorial was titled (WSJ: 2001-10-09). It resulted in few deaths and was only partly related to the war on terrorism. It did contribute to alarming the American people and its editorial boards. NYT wrote most about Anthrax, publishing at least eight different editorials on the topic on October 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 24 and on

November 1st. The anthrax scare created an anxiety for WMDs among Americans that could be exploited prior to the Iraq war.

The Anthrax scare impacted America's post 9/11 mood. 'Threats of bioterrorism magnified the sense of danger' (Leffler, 2013). Yet, it was partly a diversion from, America's war on terrorism. It was simply a misapprehension when 'anthrax was quickly identified as the most likely second blow that al Qaeda would launch against Americans' (Guillemin, 2011). There was no such second blow, and it was not al Qaeda who struck the first anthrax blow.

In 2010, the FBI closed its massive investigation on the Anthrax attacks. They went far in suggesting that it was an inside job from within the US government. The provided evidence, albeit much of it circumstantial that 'the 2001 attacks were carried out by Bruce E. Ivins, an Army biodefense expert who killed himself in 2008' (Shane, 2010). However committed the attacks, what remains certain is that editorial writing on anthrax did not materialize into much after period 1.

3.6 Fox News – Talking Points

Let us turn to Fox News and a quick description of the O'Reilly factor's content on the war on terrorism. On the whole, their coverage is closest to WSJ. They both have views that are right of centre and quite hawkish. O'Reilly started his post 9/11 commentary by expressing fury yet urging calm. 'I'm still furious, and I bet you are, too. But all Americans must avoid the temptation to overreact' (Fox: 2001-09-12). Still, TPM agreed with those (including WSJ) who bring out the World War analogy. 'Some are calling it World War III, and I don't think that's an overstatement' (Fox: 2001-09-13).

Fox retold many of the Bush administration narratives on a regular basis. On 21 September, TPM started with the now legendary video footage of Bush with a bullhorn at Ground Zero. Bill O'Reilly followed this by saying, 'President Bush rallying rescue workers and all Americans at the site of the terror attack as patriotism runs high throughout the United States of America' (Fox: 2001-09-21). Here we see reports of high patriotism being highlighted and fronted at the very beginning of the broadcast.

This is an example of TPM's direct quoting of Bush, and TPM also mentioned that 'an astronomical 87 percent of Americans approve of the way President Bush is handling his job' (Fox: 2001-10-30).

Applying the word astronomical demonstrates how Fox treated Bush's high approval ratings. Much like the other news sources, Fox also actively advocated support for war. This happened on a regular basis and often with stronger language and more specific advice on how to be supportive. On the day after the terror attacks, TPM urged Americans to unite: 'For the week next or so, we should be a nation of flag wavers' (Fox: 2001-09-12). This certainly occurred, and the flag waving lasted much longer than a week.

Nine days later, war support was enhanced in an overt and explicit manner. '*Talking Points* urges all Americans to put aside self-interests and personal fear and unselfishly help out the country, support the war on terrorism' (Fox: 2001-09-21). Supportive media statements cannot get much clearer than that. A month later, TPM also brought the government into the equation. O'Reilly stated that 'All this anthrax stuff has just made me angrier and more determined to support our government in the war against terror. I believe we're going to win the war' (Fox: 2001-10-17).

Osama bin Laden is frequently mentioned by TPM, and always negatively. This phrase is representative: 'Osama bin Laden and his cut-throat cowards are killers' (Fox: 2001-09-26). The first time Osama bin Laden was mentioned was the day after 9/11. And the day after that they stated, 'Osama bin Laden's days of freedom are numbered. His life is effectively over. He will pay with his life' (Fox: 2001-09-13). O'Reilly went on to specify that what he wanted was for bin Laden to be brought to justice 'preferably dead'.

This sentiment was explained by a leading voice on the opposite side of the political spectrum. NYT columnist Thomas Friedman wrote that when 'when we say we want someone "dead or alive" we mean "dead or dead"' (Friedman: 2001-10-28). It took longer to locate and kill bin Laden than anyone had expected, but in the beginning of May 2011 he was killed. His death will be the focal point of chapter 8.

The most important thing to document from TPM is the aggressive rhetoric that goes beyond the stated goals, modus operandi and rules of engagement advocated by

the Bush administration. It is characterized by raging, fire-breathing rhetoric, and it is possible that Bill O'Reilly is simply letting off steam. However, these passages will be a benchmark when we juxtapose the narrative on harsh detainee treatment and drone wars that emerged in later periods. The linkage between al Qaeda and Nazi Germany is alleged very clearly in this quote.

> *I hate to say this, but you have to fight terror with terror. The Geneva Convention does not apply anymore. It is quite clear that Osama bin Laden and Adolf Hitler are the same person. They will kill anyone using any method. […] We must kill these people as they sleep, destroy them where they live, without headlines, without guilt (Fox: 2001-11-07)*

In this quote, TPM argues for total, limitless war. Any method is acceptable, and no rules, not even the Geneva conventions, apply. Interestingly, Fox's commentary was a harbinger of debates to come over sidestepping the Geneva Convention in the war on terrorism. Guilt as a concept is also dismissed.

Saying that bin Laden and Hitler is the same person indicates that it is meant to act as agitating propaganda, designed to arouse Americans to war, not a presentation of facts. Things got even more controversial as the rhetoric grew tougher. The following quote calls for the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya to suffer, unless they depose their respective tyrants. This lengthy quote stands for itself and will not be analysed further. It is the harshest quote of this chapter, which has now reached its conclusion.

> *The Germans were responsible for Hitler. The Afghans are responsible for the Taliban. We should not target civilians. But if they don't rise up against this criminal government, they starve, period. Next, Iraq must be dealt with. Again, their infrastructure must be destroyed and the population made to endure yet another round of intense pain. I wouldn't invade Iraq. But I would put them out of every possible business. Maybe then the people there will finally overthrow Saddam. Target three is Libya and Qaddafi. Again, he either quits and goes into exile or we bomb his oil facilities, all of them. And we mine the harbour in Tripoli. Nothing goes in, nothing goes out. We also destroy all the airports in Libya. Let them eat sand. – Bill O'Reilly (Fox: 2001-09-17)*

3.7 Conclusions and findings in period 1

As subsequent chapters will show, this is the shortest of the five analytical chapters. The reason is simply that there was so much agreement and congruence in the editorial writing and therefore fewer differences between the news sources to document. Additionally, there is no earlier period to compare the findings of period 1 with. This chapter has established the comparative baseline for the ensuing chapters.

Before summing up the findings in this chapter it is worth restating the study's research questions. They deal with how the war on terrorism was portrayed in opinion journalism. The questions asked are

1. How was the war on terrorism portrayed in American editorials, and how did editorials attempt to influence public support for the war on terrorism?

2. Did American editorial pages develop their own media frames about the war on terrorism, or did they adopt strategic narratives from the elite rhetoric?

An initial observation when reconstructing the narratives was that the range of topics related to the war on terrorism was very extensive. One main reason for this was the widespread securitization going on in America. There was a renaissance in seeking funding for pet projects and earmarks sometimes with dubious links to 9/11. The analysis shows that the newspapers both participated in, and at the same time, criticised the securitization. They linked 9/11 to other issues, but also provided examples of issues they considered illegitimately linked to the 9/11 response.

The most important narrative of the 9/11 response was the master narrative of a war on terrorism. Here the analysis found that the newspapers were ready to use much of the Bush master narrative of a war on terrorism. As Adam Hodges points out, the war on terrorism master narrative constructed 'a socio-political reality that even opponents of the Bush administration's policy live within and must adopt the language of' (Hodges, 2011, p. 63). Al Qaeda's attack and Bush's decision resulted in the creation of a war on terrorism, a political fact with ramifications for the whole world.

The newspapers acknowledged that the nation was at war almost as quickly as the Bush administration did. This underlines the post 9/11 feeling of unity and togetherness. There was a tangible national will and determination in America, and the newspapers reinforced this sentiment in their editorials. Critical perspectives, questioning whether this was indeed a war, were scarce. By and large, 'in the months following 9/11there was wide support for the antiterrorism campaign and very few stories about dissent' (Hess & Kalb, 2003, p. 5).

A clear agency was observed for the media, they actively took part in forging the national will. The editorials at times openly call on the public to come out in support of the war on terrorism. Their reporting on polls is another indicator of this. The choice of writing editorials about record high approval ratings for Bush, and in support of military action, becomes a way of condoning and contributing to support for the war. Polls are treated as representations of political realities and their significance are thus enhanced.

It is a demanding task to scientifically prove a clear causal link between newspapers and public support. The conclusion the empirical evidence analysed here allows for is to say that the newspapers actively sought to rally support for the war. The exact effect of those efforts is very hard to measure. Still, the efforts of the newspapers at times were quite forceful. It is therefore likely to have had a significant impact on public support. Evidence of high war support is found in the poll numbers written about in the editorials, and in chapter 2.4.

The newspapers shared the agenda of the political leadership to build support for war, and the impact of these two influential entities is formidable. One possible counter-argument to linking high support, strategic narratives and news frames is that the sheer scale and brutality of the 9/11 strikes enraged Americans directly and instantly. This may have instilled in many Americans such a determination to get behind the fight that editorial efforts to rally support may have been superfluous. With this reasoning, pro-war writing is simply a bonus, far better than negative coverage, but not indispensable.

Bin Laden was at times given negative coverage. However, his treatment in the editorials is not entirely bad. He was overnight transformed into the world's most

wanted man, and the principal enemy of the United States. Bin Laden and al Qaeda had limited success in getting their perspective across. It was quite hard for them to get the editorials to retell their strategic narratives. However, their worldview was partly explained to readers, and being talked about as a formidable opponent was in many respects a success for bin Laden. Notoriety is currency for terrorists. It may bolster the power base of a terrorist group, and spread fear. The bottom line is that Al Qaeda was present and visible in the media battle taking place on America's editorial pages.

This study finds wide variation in the newspapers' use of direct quotes. WP incorporated direct quotes from the Bush administration extensively. This study therefore concludes that in the two months following 9/11, the Bush administration had great success in getting their message onto the WP editorial page, and the Bush administration were successful in utilizing their editorial page to wage media war. This study therefore argues that the post 9/11 period illustrates that 'public opinion is sometimes formed by streams of a monolithically one-sided elite discourse' (Zaller, 1992, p. 20). Elite cues seem instrumental in shaping the post 9/11media content.

USAT did not quote President Bush on its editorial page in period 1. USAT was also very supportive of the war on terrorism, but they consistently and independently processed the language of the strategic narratives. This led to less attention on the Bush administration's strategic narrative, and arguably, less impact on public opinion, than direct quotes might have achieved. USAT projected more independent news frames than just retelling the strategic narratives from the Bush administration.

A restrictive line was also adopted by the NYT in their coverage of opinion polls. The NYT editorial page never wrote about war-related polls in period 1. The NYT conducted opinion polls and wrote about them elsewhere in the newspaper. Since the comparative analysis reveals that it was extensively editorialized by other news outlets, it is hard to believe this was not a result of deliberate editorial policy.

The coverage of Iraq and Saddam Hussein displays perhaps the clearest differences between newspapers in period 1. According to WSJ, Iraq had to be included in the war on terrorism. WP initially thought so too, but decided to put the idea aside for the time being. Fox news, on the other hand, provided opinion content similar to that of WSJ. Fox sometimes went to extremes when describing Osama bin

Laden and arguing for war with Iraq, and even Libya. They preached patriotism to their viewers, while denouncing America's enemies in very harsh language.

In conclusion, many of the findings commented on here are in line with Entman's model of elite rhetoric cascading into the media frames. The clearest exception is that of the WSJ, who were far more outspoken about the necessity of war with Iraq than the Bush administration. This is a crucial finding of this chapter, going against the grain of established theory on the subject. On that account, the media frame came prior to a forceful strategic narrative projection. Narratives about attacking Iraq also provide a fitting bridge over to chapter 4, where narratives arguing strongly for war with Iraq are abundant.

4. The Invasion of Iraq: Unity Fractured

The cohesion and sense of unity that was conspicuous in America right after 9/11 could not last indefinitely. This chapter will document how that widespread support and unity quickly dissipated in the lead up to the war in Iraq (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 72). The widely supported war in Afghanistan was followed by the controversial war in Iraq (Everts & Isernia, 2015, p. 170; See also Graaf et al., 2015).

The Bush administration chose to define Iraq as a front in the war on terrorism, and considered the two to be closely connected. They performed what is known as a 'transfer' (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 2004, pp. 165–166). It involves linking something about which the audience already has an opinion to a different concept or entity. Transfer is considered a propaganda device, and the link established is sometimes dubious (Severin & Tankard, 2001, pp. 111–123). The transfer was not considered legitimate by all of the newspapers studied here, as we shall soon see.

The result of the transfer was that the high support for Afghanistan and the war on terrorism rubbed off on the Iraq war. The support was utilized, or exploited, depending on your point of view. As will be analysed in subsequent chapters, it opened the door to blowback effects on the larger war on terrorism, as the war in Iraq became less popular both at home and abroad. The war effort in Iraq had a fair amount of support in America in 2003, but was met with considerable opposition abroad, resulting in a transatlantic rift (Everts & Isernia, 2015).

What came across as nuances in editorials in 2001 were now replaced by clearer differences. For the NYT and USAT, their previous unconditional support had become conditional support. They respectively asked for more weapons inspections or diplomacy. It resulted in an interesting repositioning exercise for USAT and NYT once the war actually started, with a different timing than they preferred. WSJ held a very confrontational tone over Iraq, which turned into journalistic activism at times. Activism is here understood as a stronger variant of what is often referred to as 'advocacy journalism' (Hallin, 1986, p. 163). It goes beyond the conventions of opinion journalism and uses more confrontational language, in an advocacy fashion.

This second period of analysis includes some very notable events. The beginning of the war in Iraq is, of course, crucial. A seminal event was also Secretary of State Colin Powell's appearance before the United Nations Security Council. It was of great importance to the narrative on Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. This rhetoric put out by the Bush administration's elite was largely embraced, and reproduced, by the media, as the analysis will show. It is a good example of elite cue theory, utilizing 'the position of a prominent elite as a reference point' to garner public support for war (Berinsky, 2009, p. 69).

The response of the various news outlets to Powell's speech, and the State of the Union (SOTU) speech, will be focal points as we assess the media's evaluation of the Bush administration. One finding demonstrated in the data is that if an editorial board accepts the strategic narrative they have gone far in also supporting the war. Also for the purposes of the home front, it is not meaningful 'to draw a sharp distinction between strategy and strategic narrative' (Simpson, 2013, p. 184).

While chapter 3 started by analysing public support, this chapter will start by looking at assessments of the Bush administration. This is because of the great importance of the elite rhetoric that circulated early in the period analysed here. With the SOTU speech and Colin Powell's presentation to the UNSC, the Bush administration's narrative was effectively projected. This was a formidable force that swayed both editorial boards and the public to be more receptive of the Bush administration's strategic narrative.

4.1 The Bush administration's public performances

Through the decade studied here, no other event signalled a more overt governmental attempt to influence audiences than Colin Powell's presentation at the U.N. It was done to ensure support for a war already in the making. It was an elaborate account of the Bush administration's rationale for war, its *casus belli*. The audience was both domestic and foreign, and the media themselves were a target.

President Bush's 2003 State of the Union address received considerable media coverage, just as the year before when the Axis of Evil metaphor was introduced.

Weapons of mass destruction were the major theme of 2003 speech. Variants of the term 'weapons of mass destruction' were mentioned 27 times in the speech, compared to only nine times in 2002. WP got the message and led with a cautiously positive editorial stating that 'His [Bush] case against Saddam Hussein was strong; but it left him with much still to do in the coming weeks' (WP: 2003-01-29).

USAT's response to the speech was along similar lines. 'He provided answers to some of the concerns of U.S. allies -- and the American public' (USAT: 2003-01-29). Good, but with room for improvement, is one way of summarizing their assessment. USAT also outsourced some of their evaluations of SOTU and published a text with a large number of favourable expert opinions on the speech (Hall, 2003).[6]

The two remaining newspapers moved out of the centre and broke with the quite positive coverage of the editorial pages of USAT and WP. As one might expect, they diverged from the pack in opposite directions. NYT wrote that 'President Bush sought to revive a sense of national resolve last night'. They did not state whether they considered him successful or not in that effort, only that it was his ambition. They went on to note that some of the reasons for going to war are 'good, though circumstantial' (NYT: 2003-01-29).

The NYT editorial board seem apprehensive and unconvinced, but not clearly opposed to war. They also relate differently to the narratives on the war and on Saddam Hussein. They quoted Bush directly and delivered harsh criticism of Saddam Hussein. 'Mr. Hussein is a cruel despot who uses torture against his own citizens. ''Your enemy is not surrounding your country, your enemy is ruling your country,'' he [Bush] told the Iraqi people' (NYT: 2003-01-29).

Markedly more positive was WSJ's writing. They went beyond the merely supportive. Even at the time of the invasion WSJ appear more eager for an invasion of Iraq than the Bush administration itself. What is witnessed in period 2 is that the Bush administration is coming around to WSJ's position, not the other way around. As we shall in the section on intermittent narratives, this turned into outright political

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[6] Here are some of the comments provided by a range of different experts quoted in Hall's piece: 'Great seriousness of purpose […] a well-written and well-delivered speech […] He did very well […] he may have pulled the rug out of much of the resistance to his future plans both here and abroad […] What the audience in America" wanted to hear […] it ended with a great smash […] It was a speech to convert the American people in a crusade-like mission to fight against terrorism'.

advocacy, on WSJ's part. The quote below includes direct quotes of President Bush and goes further in pro-war rhetoric or propaganda, as it evokes the dangers of appeasement through the expression 'containing'.

> *On Iraq, Mr. Bush seethed with determination, […] He was particularly good in rebutting the argument of merely containing Saddam. "Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option," he said. (WSJ: 2003-01-30)*

After SOTU, the stage was set for Colin Powell's presentation before the Security Council. His own account of this is loaded with regret (Powell, 2012, pp. 217–224). We have seen how the newspapers differed in their coverage prior to Powell's speech. The NYT was neutral to mildly sceptical, whereas the WSJ provided a very favourable commentary. The two speeches, with little time in between them, provided a double-punch argument for war. And as is customary, the latter punch was the more effective of the two.

Writers and commentators were convinced by Powell's presentation. The *Washington Post's* Mary McGrory titled her column 'I'm Persuaded'. She admits 'He persuaded me, and I was as tough as France to convince' (McGrory, 2003). Respondents candidly stating that the persuasive communication made them change their minds is a good sign of effectively delivered strategic communication.

WP's other columnists followed suit with titles such as 'A winning hand for Powell' (Cohen, 2003; Hoagland, 2003; Will, 2003). The WP's editorial page concluded that the presentation 'had a predictably powerful impact on public opinion, at least in the United States' (WP: 2003-02-09). This assessment is adhered to in this study. Moreover, among the newspapers studied here, WP is the one that seemed to be influenced the most by Powell's rhetoric. They can rightly be labelled Powellists, when it comes to the war in Iraq.

Anticipation was high in the days leading up to Powell's speech. This was not an exercise in high politics among a secluded elite at U.N. headquarters. 'Public expectation was building on Powell's presentation' (Woodward, 2004, p. 298). WP hit on the public dimension of the presentation and linked it to support for war. 'The

decision to make so much evidence public will prove invaluable if it sways public opinion here and abroad' (WP: 2003-02-06). There was much talk of the quality of evidence, and WP titled their editorial the next day 'Irrefutable'. Other newspapers weighed in with their views on the new compelling evidence. Among the phrases focusing on evidence, published February 6 after Powell's presentation, were these.

New and forceful evidence […] the most convincing case to date (USAT)

The Powell evidence will be persuasive to anyone who is still persuadable. (WSJ)

Mr. Powell's evidence […] was overwhelming (WP)

The most powerful case to date […] offered stark evidence (NYT)

NYT remain the most measured in its praise, yet the newspapers were by and large convinced by Powell's presentation. WP concluded that 'it is hard to imagine how anyone could doubt that Iraq possesses Weapons of mass destruction' (WP: 2003-02-06). That is a very strong statement, and does not look too good in hindsight. Not only are they themselves convinced by Powell, they continue by pointing their finger at those who remain sceptical to the strategic narrative that Iraq possesses WMD.

WP's writing also echoes established elite rhetoric focusing on there being 'no doubt' about Iraq WMDs. On August 26 2002 Dick Cheney said, 'Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction.' Rumsfeld went further on September 13, 2002, in what borders to an outright lie. 'There's no debate in the world as to whether they have those weapons. [...] We all know that. A trained ape knows that. All you have to do is read the newspaper.'

Rumsfeld compared those who doubted the narrative with trained apes. If nothing else, he was right in suggesting that the newspapers would come on board and retell the strategic narrative widely and repeatedly. Powell continued on that note and the similarity with WP's Powellist editorial line is striking. In his presentation he said 'There can be no doubt that Saddam Hussein has biological weapons'. The mention of biological weapons is likely to have triggered connotations to the Anthrax scare from 2001 for many Americans. That intermittent narrative thus had a life beyond period 1.

The unfounded certainty continued all the way up to Bush's ultimatum speech on March 17. 'Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal [WMD]'. In contrast, NYT's coverage of Powell's persuasive presentation opened the door precisely for doubt as they applied the phrase 'whatever unconventional weapons he may have' (NYT: 2003-02-06).

USAT were positive in their editorializing, stating that 'Colin Powell delivered -- and then some' (USAT: 2003-02-06). However, in hindsight the pro et contra format of USAT served it well on this occasion. Although their editorial was positive, USAT's 'opposing view' column by *The Nation*'s Katrina van den Heuvel, included the following statement. It turned out to be closer to the truth.

> *Nearly all of the evidence was largely circumstantial or speculative [...] evidence of Iraq's links to al-Qaeda was played up despite CIA and FBI officials' charges that evidence is fragmentary and inconclusive and that the administration is exaggerating information to make a political case for war (van den Heuvel, 2003)*

The growing inclination to support the war can also be read out of the titles of USAT's editorials focusing on SOTU and Powell's speech. The day after SOTU, the editorial was titled 'Case for attacking Iraq still short on critical details' (USAT: 2003-01-29). A week later, the title was 'Powell lays out convincing evidence of Iraq's defiance' (USAT: 2003-02-06). 'Short on details' had been replaced by 'convincing evidence'. Here we see the upper hand of elite rhetoric in bringing in ostensible facts from intelligence assessments that are hard for the newspapers to challenge right away.

USAT continued to complain about lack of detail on the war plan, and their complain would grow in volume as the war came closer. Just before the war started they published an editorial titled 'Bush's case for war leaves key questions unanswered' (USAT: 2003-03-18). We note the measured criticism, particularly about planning and diplomacy, but less so over the wisdom and rationale for going to war against Iraq.

In contrast, criticism in the build-up to the war was scant, if not non-existent, in the WSJ. Observations underpinning a major argument of this thesis resurface again;

WSJ are more positive about the war and the speech, than the administration itself. They begin their editorial titled 'Powell's smoking gun' thus: 'In an article on this page Monday, Colin Powell warned that his U.N. presentation yesterday would contain no "smoking gun." He was too modest' (WSJ: 2003-02-06).

What we see is that even when the Bush administration admits their evidence is not bullet proof, the WSJ will argue that it actually is. This is the basis on which I argue that WSJ were more pro war than the Bush administration, even as the war begins. The WSJ also mocked the unconvinced peace doves and wrote that 'some people still refuse to believe what they see with their own eyes.' (WSJ: 2003-02-06). They returned to this line of reasoning twelve days later when they concluded that 'It is impossible to persuade the unpersuadable' (WSJ: 2003-02-18).

WSJ's pro-war stance was well established prior to 2003. A benign interpretation is that they are sticking to their guns, and following up on their earlier writing concerning the issue. On the other hand an argument can be made that they were too eager for war, as they dismissed dissent or legitimate apprehension to war. They disregarded counter-arguments to war rather than giving them careful consideration.

Let us leave the two major events of the beginning of period 2, and consider the end of period 2. What happens to criticism of the administration when the war becomes imminent? Two diverging developments occurred. The first consisted of a rallying around the flag; the second a dismissive attitude towards what were considered the Bush administration's unimpressive diplomatic efforts. The observed pattern is that all of the newspapers except WSJ treated assessments of the Bush administration and support for the war separately. This differs from 2001, when the two seemed inseparable in all five news outlets studied here.

NYT led the charge on the Bush administration's insufficient diplomacy. As March arrived, they noted that little could keep 'the Bush administration from going to war with its motley ad hoc coalition of allies' (NYT: 2003-03-06). In the days right before the invasion, the NYT editorial page offered criticism on a daily basis.

The Bush administration's erratic and often inept diplomacy has made matters immeasurably worse (NYT: 2003-03-16)

The United States, nearly isolated, is about to wage a war in the name of the world community that opposes it. […] The current path is reckless (NYT: 2003-03-17)

Under George W. Bush, however, Washington has charted a very different course. Allies have been devalued and military force overvalued. (NYT: 2003-03-18)

These are not subtle or measured sceptical observations on Bush's hand with foreign policy. It is a broadside of criticism of a war everyone understood was just about to unfold. We note the use of words such as 'ad hoc', 'motley', 'isolated, 'erratic and inept', all indicators of a dismissive opinion of the Bush administration's performance.

NYT's statements went far beyond any of the other news outlets' analysed here. The WP comes closest as they also report on 'the Bush administration's clumsy and often high-handed diplomacy' (WP: 2003-03-09). Clumsy is hardly a word of praise, nor is 'arrogant' which they used the day before President Bush's ultimatum speech. The process up until then, they lamented, would have benefitted from 'more diplomatic suppleness, more flexibility on timing and less arrogant tactics and rhetoric' (WP: 2003-03-16).

USAT shared these concerns as the lack of international support, resulted in 'a narrow coalition of allies' (USAT: 2003-03-17). They were concerned about the aftermath of the war, and gave the Bush administration low marks for not getting into specifics. This is something they commented on frequently right up to the invasion. 'The bottom line: With war likely hours away, Americans still don't know enough about what they're getting into' (USAT: 2003-03-18). Three days in a row USAT's editorial page published critical texts, culminating with the following assessment.

Today, the Bush administration is preparing for war in the wake of its biggest diplomatic setback. Instead of leading a broad global alliance against Saddam, the U.S. is heading into battle with a small group of partners […] While war is always a dangerous undertaking, it is, in this case, the best of the bad alternatives. (USAT: 2003-03-19)

Timing is an issue here. Both NYT and USAT want the administration to wait longer before invading. They do this for somewhat different purposes, however. USAT wanted to give diplomacy more time to build a stronger coalition. They saw the war as the right measure, but it was initiated prematurely. Attacking now was the best among bad alternatives. They apparently had given up on inspections and sanctions. The NYT, on the other hand, also wanted more time for inspections, creating a possibility of avoiding war altogether by means of a peaceful diplomatic solution. Their respective positions are made clear in the quotes below.

> *A strong case can be made that attacking Iraq now with a limited coalition, rather than waiting several months to garner broader support for combat, needlessly complicates the war's goals. (USAT: 2003-03-19)*

> *Even now, diplomacy might be resuscitated if the administration made an all-out effort to seek broad consensus around the British concept of disarmament benchmarks and specific, achievable deadlines. (NYT: 2003-03-16)*

There is a clear difference at work here, and it is a significant one. USAT's call for time was a reflection of a pragmatic, strategic concern acknowledging the *casus belli*. War with Iraq was needed, but should be postponed to facilitate a stronger coalition so that the conduct of the war would be smoother. Part of their argument was about the aftermath. USAT worried about post-war planning. History proved them prudent on that account.

On the other hand, as war loomed, NYT still considered non-military options. They did not rule out the need for war further down the line, but believed war to be unwarranted in March 2003; inspections, if given time, might still prevent it. In other words, NYT believed that the Iraq war lacked legitimacy because all other options had not been exhausted. They considered the war not to be a last resort. The use of force should always be a last resort according to the just war tradition (Orend, 2000, p. 97; Walzer, 2000, p. 84). It is also a requirement of the Powell doctrine (Powell, 2012, p. 202), which was influential in the build-up to the first Gulf war.

As we have seen so far, direct quotes of the Bush administration's strategic narrative were prevalent. Both sound bites and lengthy verbatim passages occurred

frequently on the editorial pages. This is reflected in the editorial passages already quoted. Yet, one from the frequently quoting WP is worth including as an example of how pervasive their direct quoting was at times.

> *Bush […] in a speech last week, would "show the power of freedom to transform this vital region." Mr. Bush pledged that American forces would begin by supplying food and medicine to Iraq's 23 million people, along with Security against those who would "spread chaos or settle scores." He went on to promise "a sustained commitment from many nations, including our own," that would lead to a new regime in which "all Iraqis have a voice" and "all citizens have their rights protected." (WP: 2003-03-02)*

Over a short paragraph WP, incorporate five different quotes from President Bush, interpolating their own words. The result is that Bush's words to some extent eclipse those of WP. Journalistically it is a question whether such massive use of direct quotes interferes with independent journalism. Regardless of that, it is a success on the Bush administration's part to inject so much of their strategic narrative into the WP editorial page. This quote adds weight to the elite cue theory and the indexing theory. There is simply so much elite rhetoric in this passage that it is futie to argue that WP has a distinct voice in the segment.

USAT's 'no quote policy' from right after 9/11 was abandoned by 2003. They used direct quotes from both Bush and Powell after SOTU and the UNSC presentation. USAT also provided direct quotes on a few other occasions, particularly right before the invasion, quoting Bush on the 18[th], 20[th] and 21[st] of March. Additionally, on March 24, USAT wrote that 'President Bush warned that the war "could be longer and more difficult" than some predict. On Sunday he told reporters that "this is just the beginning of a tough fight"' (USAT: 2003-03-24). Here USAT strings two separate Bush quotes together in one clause, a break with their previous editorial practices.

The pattern is that USAT used direct quotes around significant speeches. Speeches naturally lend themselves to both narrative projection and quoting. If you write about a speech, it may be hard to get around direct quotes. However, President Bush held many seminal speeches in period 1, at which time USAT refrained from using direct quotes.

For period 2, the extent of USAT's quoting surpasses that of the NYT. NYT are the most critical to war of the four newspapers and seem eager to distance themselves from the elite rhetoric. They are eager to provide an alternative perspective to the road to war described by the Bush administration and WSJ. They appear less impacted by the elite rhetoric, yet their editorial line also slid somewhat in a pro-Bush direction following Powell's presentation, as shown earlier.

NYT openly criticised a key pillar of the Bush doctrine when they wrote about 'the Bush administration's destructive "with us or against us" approach, which is being foolishly applied to some of our most important allies' (NYT: 2003-02-11). Here, direct quotes are utilized to form criticism. 'Foolishly' is not a word politicians hope to see in a description of their policies. This is yet another example of NYT being the least supportive of the news outlets analysed here.

WSJ's quoting also has a special twist. One text in particular is rife with lengthy quotes, 'Powell's Smoking Gun' from the day after his UNSC presentation. WSJ include a few lengthy passages of the examples of raw intelligence audio recordings that Powell presented. For instance, a discussion between two Iraqi officers saying 'I'm worried you all have something left . . . We evacuated everything' (WSJ: 2003-02-06) demonstrates how much trust WSJ had in Powell's evidence. They treat it like truth or facts. It is truly communication and cascading on many levels when Iraqi officers' statements, recorded by US intelligence are presented by the Bush administration at the UNSC, and subsequently quoted verbatim on WSJ's editorial page.

A final point to be made on the use of direct quotes is the adoption by the editorials of the language of UNSC resolution 1441. While WP surpassed the other news outlets when it comes to quotes, they used this particular kind of quote even more. It can be seen as part of WP's appreciation for international diplomacy. We recall that they also wrote more about this in period 1 than the other newspapers.

The other newspapers make an occasional reference to 1441. But WP is very persistent in tying its coverage repeatedly to the language of the resolution. They quote 1441 in inverted commas on January 26, 28, February 5, 6, 11, 15, 26, 27 and March

9, 11, 18, 21. At least twelve different WP editorials include quotes from UNSC 1441. Here are two examples written at the end of January and February.

> *Resolution 1441 offered Saddam Hussein "a last chance" to voluntarily disarm; it said that a false disclosure, coupled with "failure by Iraq at any time to comply . . . and cooperate fully" is a "material breach" that should trigger consideration by the council of "serious consequences," including military action (WP: 2003-01-26)*

> *The language of Resolution 1441 is very precise: It offers Iraq a "final opportunity" to voluntarily disarm but says that false statements or omissions by Iraq in its Weapons declaration, combined with failure "at any time . . . to cooperate fully," would be a "material breach" of the resolution (WP: 2003-02-26)*

Both of these segments contain four references in inverted commas to 1441. The editorials' narrative about Iraq, its WMDs, and the U.N. resolution to end it is constructed by linguistic building blocks from the resolution text itself. The result bears, of course, a great similarity between the strategic narrative projected by the UNSC, the Bush administration and the *Washington Post*. When a newspaper borrows so much of its vocabulary on a complex issue, it risks ending up presenting an understanding that corresponds with that expressed in the elite's rhetoric.

The 1441 rhetoric was forged by the member states of the Security Council. The precise wording of a UNSC resolution is a matter of much negotiation and considerable scrutiny. The Council's statements tend to be significant speech acts, as described by Austin (Austin, 1975). What would in many other contexts be considered mere nuances become important when it comes to UNSC resolutions. Therefore, it is important that the UNSC did not just call for consequences, but "serious consequences", a phrase widely interpreted to mean the application of military force.

An interesting dimension of the inclusion of so many direct quotes from the U.N. is that it potentially adds another layer to Entman's cascading theory portrayed in chapter 2.2. WP's coverage suggests that the narrative on Iraq and WMD cascaded from the U.N. to the Bush administration before reaching its editorial page. While some would argue that the USA is more powerful than the U.N., its resolutions still represent aggregated state interests at a supranational level.

4.2 American support

The newspapers' treatment of support for the war is harder to analyse in this period than in the first. Chapter 4.1 has already provided insights into how newspapers supported the war, through including elite rhetoric on terminating Saddam Hussein's possession of WMD through war. Now we switch the focus to the news media's contributions for or against public support for the war on terrorism. In the time after 9/11, support was widespread, and an almost scripted unity could be observed. One and a half years later, this unity of people, media and leadership had changed.

The analysed data document fragmentation on several counts. The level of support varied more between the news outlets. Additionally, some support was now conditional. Secondly, the agreement and cohesion between editorial boards and the people on the issue of support, are gone. Right after 9/11 the papers argued along the lines of, 'This newspaper supports the war on terrorism as does the people, as documented in polls'. In 2003 some editorial boards were still describing domestic public support, but were voicing concerns over the lack of international support for the war in Iraq. Interesting writing is penned as newspapers strive to support wars they partly oppose, once these wars get started.

There was also disagreement about what the polls were saying at the time. A quote displaying this lack of cohesion goes as follows. 'The country is embarking on a war that many of its citizens and elected officials oppose. We believe it to be necessary,' (WP: 2003-03-20). Here support is sliced and diced. The statement distinguishes between citizens' support and the political leadership's, as well as that of the paper's own editorial board. All these forms of support are discussed in the context of the country embarking on a war.

WP recognized opposition to war, and still maintained their support for war. This is an interesting position, and could have been followed by strong appeals to the public to support war, but it was not. Right after 9/11 the tone was very different, as chapter 3.1 documented. Calls for support, unity and sacrifice are to some extent replaced by an acknowledgement that this is a controversial war. This is a major shift in Battlefield Washington. 'Sceptical elected officials' is in all likelihood a reference

to Democratic politicians, many of whom were unconvinced by the Bush administration's war plans. Here we see the contours of disunited elites. As many have argued this is a particularly dangerous development for an administration seeking public support for war (Baum & Potter, 2008; Berinsky, 2009; Johnson & Tierney, 2006).

'The world -- like the American public -- is not yet really convinced that a Hussein-free Middle East is a goal worth fighting a war for', wrote the (NYT: 2003-01-26) As mentioned earlier, the attempts of the Bush administration to generate war support did not work too well on the NYT, or Democrats for that matter. In January 2003 'Republicans were over 30 percent more likely to support the war than were Democrats' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 102). This split would grow as the support for the Iraq war tended to follow party lines, and the issue became increasingly partisan (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 260).

WSJ understood the stakes and wrote that Bush 'is risking his [political] capital to persuade the country to support him' (WSJ: 2003-01-30). Whether it is legitimate or not to spend political capital like this is a question on which opinions differ. WSJ clearly thought so, and Bush echoed their line after being re-elected in 2004. He stated on November 4, 2004 that he had earned 'political capital, and now I intend to spend it' (Hodges, 2011, p. 67) Again we see the similarity between the thinking of the Bush administration, indeed of Bush himself, and the reasoning and arguments put forward by the conservative WSJ's editorial page.

NYT stood for a different line, and the persuasion/propaganda offensive would not convince them of the necessity of going to war against Iraq. By the end of February they were conveying these views to the general public as well. 'Americans support for this particular fight is thin as a wafer and based on misapprehension that Iraq is clearly linked to terrorism' (NYT: 2003-02-23). This quote has a lot in it. It opens by acknowledging there is some support for the war. However, the NYT believed this support could erode fast because it stemmed from a contra factual belief of links between al Qaeda and Iraq (Hodges, 2011, p. 64).

As war began, NYT preformed an interesting move in describing a form of reluctant support for the war. You could still support the war even if you disagreed

with the decision to go to war. It is an intricate – arguably paradoxical – argument that might have left some readers confused as to where NYT really stood on the issue. NYT were against the war until it started, but then somewhat ambivalently supported it as it got going, hoping for a swift American victory.

> *Even those who vehemently opposed this war will find themselves in the strange position of hoping for just what the president they have opposed is himself hoping for: a quick, conclusive resolution […] If things go as well as we hope, even those who sharply disagree with the logic behind this war are likely to end up feeling reassured, almost against their will (NYT: 2003-03-20)*

The final clause is particularly telling of the mixed emotions within the NYT itself towards the war. Reassured against one's will is a good way of expressing ambivalence. This statement speaks volumes of an increasingly torn nation grappling with a war that seemed unavoidable and at the same time was initiated on shaky grounds. It was clearly demanding for America to go war with a divided and apprehensive public at home, and considerable opposition abroad.

WSJ did not focus on an apprehensive public, whose support could easily evaporate. Their storyline went the opposite way. Right from the outset of the war they addressed the topic of public support on a regular basis. Here are three examples.

> *Support for war with Iraq has been growing in the U.S., as has public frustration at the U.N.'s obstructionism (WSJ: 2003-03-17)*
>
> *Polls show that most Americans understand the coming burden and still favor war; after 9/11 they realize the dangers of ignoring foreign threats (WSJ: 2003-03-18)*
>
> *In this war, we suspect, the reservoir of public support is especially deep because it comes in the wake of September 11 (WSJ: 2003-03-20.)*

The kind of phrases applied are that 'polls show' that 'Americans understand', and 'public support is growing'. The support is described as 'especially deep'. We note the stark difference between the NYT and WSJ on the issue. This difference may be a reflection of the left and right-leaning ideologies of NYT and WSJ editorial boards. They report public attitudes to the war quite differently.

It cannot be factually correct that support is especially deep and wafer thin at the same time. There was statistic polling data suggesting fairly high public support for the war in Iraq. Both the analysed editorials, and the poll data included in chapter 2.4, document war support percentages in the 70's. But the controversial nature of the war led to a somewhat fragile domestic support that could potentially wither as the war dragged on. WSJ were right that support in the 70's is considerable, but NYT were no less correct in predicting that support for the war in Iraq was hollow and fragile.

USAT criticised the Bush administration's efforts to build public support. They felt the war planning was insufficient and that the White House should be more upfront with the American people on the potential perils of the upcoming war. The newspaper concluded, 'That's not the way to build deep support or change minds. It invites a damaging public backlash' (USAT: 2003-03-18). Approaching the issue of support from different directions, USAT and NYT still manage to end up with similar conclusions: that the support was not robust enough to withstand a long, grinding campaign.

There were few explicit calls for Americans to support the war. What was called for was for the Bush administration to garner more public support. But unlike after 9/11, the newspapers did not enter the equation as actively with overt calls for war support. War support is the task of the administration. The non-conservative news outlets remained on the side lines, not truly on board. Even WSJ did not overtly petition the American people to support the war. They found the support measured in the polls strong and commendable, and wrote favourably about it.

Turning to **polls**, they were still a non-issue for the NYT editorial page. NYT maintained their stance on not referring much to polls. The one exception was when they wrote that 'every poll, every anecdotal reading of the American mood makes it clear that he [Bush] has not sold the public on anything difficult or drawn out' (NYT: 2003-01-26). As documented earlier, they described the support to be 'thin as a wafer'.

The very same day, WP read the public mood differently. They concluded that 'His [Bush] policy is supported by close to 70 percent of the country, a remarkable figure' (WP: 2003-02-23). The description of a 'remarkable figure' suggests WP is pro-war, and considered the American public to be similarly disposed. The NYT and

WP statements illustrate diverging trajectories in the coverage of the war on terrorism. This is a turning point at which two leading newspapers that earlier shared views of the war on terrorism now projected diverging frames and narratives.

The same 70 per cent figure appeared in the WSJ. 'The polls show support climbing into the 70%' (WSJ: 2003-03-20). WSJ seized on the same figure as WP, and also argued that it indicates a strong show of support among Americans. This is simultaneously an explanation of polling numbers and a justification of war support. They reinforce the Bush administration's strategic narrative by drawing lines from terrorism and 9/11 to the necessity of invading Iraq.

As regards truthful and veracious coverage, WP have one editorial which stands out in an unfortunate way. In their editorial writing WP use polls to document public support, and arguably consider high poll numbers to be a legitimizing condition for America to go to war. They wrote, 'Polls now show that a substantial majority of Americans believe the Bush administration has laid out enough proof to back up its case for action against Saddam Hussein' (WP: 2003-02-09).

This is fair enough. However, WP proposed a radically different policy towards foreign governments. American polling numbers for the war are considered an indicator that it is right to initiate the invasion of Iraq. Yet foreign leaders are explicitly encouraged to look beyond the numbers showing the level of anti-war sentiment in their respective countries. Consider the following depiction, stating that Chirac and Schröder had:

> *Chosen to ride a wave of antiwar and increasingly anti-American opinion.*
> *Remarkably, however, a far larger number -- 18 and counting -- are looking past the*
> *polls and reasserting their support for the United States. (WP: 2003-02-23)*

There are double standards at work here. The editorial heaped praise on prime ministers Tony Blair and Jose Aznar for performing 'the toughest political act in the world today' (WP: 2003-02-23): standing by America in the push for war, and looking past the polls and anti-war protests in their streets. This smacks of American exceptionalism, arguing that America by definition is inherently good and right

(Bacevich, 2008; Hodgson, 2009; Lipset, 1996; Restad, 2014). The concept of American exceptionalism will be defined more closely shortly.

USAT's use of opinion polls was limited. When they did mention them, it was often not in relation to the public support for war. On March 20[th] USAT cited specific poll numbers in support of war from Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and Russia. Turkish and British polling numbers were mentioned in earlier editorials. USAT considered support to be crucial for the war on terrorism, and the war in Iraq. However, they seem somewhat reluctant to engage actively in advocating and garnering support on the administration's behalf.

When they did probe the issue of American support for the war in Iraq they reverted to their deliberative pro et contra approach. This finding is more in line with subsequent research findings. Niall Stephens documents 'the ambiguity of mass opinion' over the Iraq war (Stephens, 2012, p. 228). Where WSJ and WP are impressed by high polling numbers, for NYT support was hollow and erodible. USAT positioned itself in the middle when commenting on polls just as the Iraq war was starting.

> 58% of Americans [who] stand squarely behind the President's war plans, according to a USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll conducted last weekend. But it leaves lingering questions for the 41% of Americans who have not found Bush's arguments convincing enough to back the war and the President. (USAT: 2003-03-18)

USAT does not read the polling data to be clearly for or against the war. If there is a mood to be deducted from the above statement it would be that 58 per cent is not enough to put USAT at ease. NYT are not too far from this view when they wrote that 'Americans who feel just one way about this war are easy to find, but they're probably not as common as Americans who feel two or three different ways' (NYT: 2003-03-25). The ambiguity of their treatment of opinion polls reflects the ambivalence of the American people.

Americans' war support often slides as campaigns draw out in time (Mueller, 2005; Mueller, 1973). This proved true in the case of Afghanistan and particularly Iraq. USAT were very concerned about this and based some of their scepticism on the

Powell doctrine. The USAT quote below sums this up nicely and accords not only with the Powell doctrine, but also the arguments of this thesis.

The finishing quote also underlines that both 'state leaders and publics experience international affairs through narratives'. (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 23). It is strategic narratives that make people understand the conflict. They are therefore indispensable to ensure deep support for a war. Therefore, compelling strategic narratives and sufficient public support are both highly desirable factors in successful American military campaigns.

> *Indeed, ensuring the deepest possible support of the American people for a cause they understand is a prerequisite for a successful military campaign under the "Powell Doctrine". (USAT: 2003-03-18)*

4.3 America's adversaries in the war on terrorism

The Bush administration sought to present the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq as equally important to the war on terrorism in 2003. A link was also alleged between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. In strategic communication and propaganda studies, such attempts to tie together entities, causing a migration of attitudes from one to the other, are called 'transfers' (Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 2004, pp. 165–166).

The linkage between Iraq and al Qaeda can be studied using several research methods. Adam Hodges applies discourse analysis while documenting how the Bush administration sought to establish Iraq as the central front of the war on terrorism (Hodges, 2011, pp. 55–59). He finds that the Bush administration applied parallelism and historical-causal entailment to weave Iraq into the fabric of the war on terrorism (Hodges, 2011, pp. 68–74).

Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda and Afghanistan were largely overshadowed by Iraq in this period. This is a token of the more general point that the war in Afghanistan suffered from lack of attention and resources from America. This point was made before the invasion, when some argued the Bush administration's 'focus on Iraq has sapped its effort against an undefeated al-Qaida' (Borger, 2002).

All newspapers wrote copiously about Iraq's alleged possession of WMDs. By and large, the newspapers adopted the elite narrative on that account. NYT wrote, 'No one who knows his history can doubt that he is secretly trying to develop weapons of mass destruction' (NYT: 2003-01-26). However, NYT differed more from the other newspapers on how to approach the problem. The news outlets differed over 'war soon or work through the U.N.' (Entman, 2004, p. 155). The choice was either to apply military force or diplomacy and inspections. Multilateralism versus unilateralism, as well as the need for support, both at home and abroad, varied. The descriptions of Saddam Hussein were mostly negative, but a few nuanced descriptions were found.

The exception to the very negative portrayal is USAT. They seem to have decided to limit the use of adjectives, and avoided pejorative terms about Saddam Hussein entirely. The language they applied was struck in a more matter-of-fact tone. They wrote that 'Saddam continues to defy the U.N.' (USAT: 2003-03-13). In the same editorial they proceeded by saying 'Saddam continues to hide them, U.N. inspectors say. […] Saddam has shown little willingness to give up his illegal weapons' (USAT: 2003-03-13). These examples are closer to factual statements rather than denigrating or heated rhetoric. They are also in line with what General Wesley Clark wrote in USAT: 'As for Saddam, he is relatively unimportant' (Clark, 2003).

The strongest language USAT applied to Saddam Hussein is probably what they wrote before SOTU. Still, what they did on that occasion was to place the words in the mouths of Hans Blix and Bush himself. 'Blix's allegations give Bush plenty of evidence to argue that Saddam remains a wily and ruthless dictator bent on dominating the Middle East' (USAT: 2003-01-28). The statement was not presented as fact, but as an argument Bush would be taking into consideration in light of Blix's statements. This is a delicate way to establish distance between the USAT and those statements.

The starkest contrast to USAT's coverage is found in WSJ. They used expressions like 'Saddam Hussein is an all too familiar animal' (WSJ: 2003-03-17). The next day they wrote about 'monsters like Saddam' (WSJ: 2003-03-18). Moreover, they had urged Bush to dispense 'with Saddam, [as] an act of global hygiene' (WSJ: 2003-03-07). This smacks of dehumanisation, although Saddam Hussein's record of repression is dark. One may argue that such language is warranted, as long as there is

some truth to it. On the other hand, it can be seen as a propaganda effort to whip up a sense of hatred and a pro-war attitude in the public. Who would disagree with a call to remove a monster?

NYT and WP also pointed to Saddam Hussein's brutality. NYT labelled him a 'brutal dictator' on January 26 and February 2. Here are examples of the Saddam Hussein coverage from NYT and WP.

> *Mr. Hussein is a sadistically brutal dictator, but that scarcely justifies an American invasion. (NYT: 2003-02-02)*

> *Mr. Hussein is a serial violator of both international law and Security Council resolutions (NYT: 2003-02-13)*

> *To free the Iraqi people from the sadistic repression of Saddam Hussein (WP: 2003-02-27)*

> *Saddam Hussein, [who] is guilty of some of the most terrible war crimes and human rights violations of the past 50 years. He has tortured, gassed and slaughtered his people (WP: 2003-02-05)*

There are many strong words here, with 'brutal' and 'sadistic' at the forefront. The sadism charges stand out as particularly denigrating. Not only had Saddam Hussein committed atrocities of a horrific kind, he apparently had taken pleasure in them too. There is no denying the force of the 'Saddam is evil' narrative. The communication must be judged against a background of decades of enmity. Americans' negative connotations of Saddam Hussein, from the previous war with Iraq, had not reached their expiry date. This was a predisposition, or one of Zaller's considerations, that had not reached its expiry date.

The rhetoric on Iraq had clearly heated since the time right after 9/11. While WSJ in period 1 argued for war with Iraq, and other newspapers thought it might be necessary at some point, the tone was different. In 2001 bin Laden was the bad guy. Everyone agreed Iraq was a secondary issue, apart from WSJ. In 2003, the opposite was the case. Iraq was the main issue and al Qaeda and Afghanistan were to some extent a side show. Al Qaeda and Bin Laden were still an issue, but were used in the narrative as a vehicle to link al Qaeda to Iraq. This is what is known as a transfer.

A whole literature exists on the Bush administration's misleading statements before the Iraq war (Corn, 2003; Fritz, Keefer, & Nyhan, 2004; Rampton & Stauber, 2003; Rutherford, 2004). This thesis supports Judith miller's view that it is too simple to just accuse the Bush administration of willingly misleading its people (Miller, 2015). Getting things wrong and deliberate manipulation are not the same. There was plenty of intelligence, some of it faulty, to back up the narrative and rationale for war. It is fair to argue that Bush and particularly Cheney played a role in manufacturing the intelligence failure on Iraq (Pillar, 2006).

A whole literature on faulty Iraq intelligence also emerged, including works by scholars like Richard Betts and Robert Jervis (Jervis, 2010). Betts suggests that the Iraq case could be 'the worst intelligence failure since the founding of the modern intelligence community' (Betts, 2007, p. 114). Retired practitioners also weighed in to explain why intelligence failed over the Iraq war (Drumheller, 2006; Rossmiller, 2008; Scheuer, 2008). Another account of how Iraq, al Qaeda and WMD got lumped together into a frightening worst case scenario requiring war, is Ron Suskind's *The One Percent Doctrine* (Suskind, 2006). It refers to a 'maxi-min' way of thinking that caught on within the Bush administration, and epitomized by Vice president Cheney.

The Maxi-min principle involves maximizing one's own guaranteed minimum payoff by eliminating the worst possible outcomes. Lawrence Freedman also noted that before the war in Iraq, 'worst-case analysis had suddenly gained a new credibility' (Freedman, 2004, p. 16). A nation handing WMDs to a terrorist group like al Qaeda was considered such an outcome. Allowing that to happen was not an option, and this line of thinking has been dubbed *The One Percent Doctrine* (Jervis, 2010, pp. 125, 203; Suskind, 2006, p. 62).

A result of this was that intelligence on Iraq was politicised, argues Paul Pillar. He was the CIA's national intelligence officer responsible for the Middle East from 2000 to 2005. The intelligence, he says. 'was misused publicly to justify decisions already made'. He also berates the Bush administration for 'aggressively using intelligence to win public support for its decision to go to war' (Pillar, 2006). Former CIA-director George Tenet argues that the intelligence played a very small role in the decision to go to war with Iraq (Tenet, 2007, pp. 359–367).

In this environment, the Bush administration 'consistently insisted that the invasion of Iraq was an integral part of the war against terrorism' (Holsti, 2006, p. 351). Not everyone was convinced. Woodward quotes Senator Graham as saying 'I think it's a stretch to call the war in Iraq another chapter in the war on terrorism' (Woodward, 2004, p. 193). The transfer at work was comprehensive with different entities treated as parts belonging to the overarching campaign of the war on terrorism. Adam Hodges also documents this slide from al Qaeda onto Iraq (Hodges, 2011, pp. 55–58). The table below lists the most important entities involved in the transfer.[7]

Figure 4.1 A transfer from Afghanistan to Iraq

2001	2003
War in Afghanistan	War in Iraq
Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda	Saddam Hussein
Taliban	Baath Party
Terrorism	Iraq as a tyranny and a terror state
9/11 and response to attack	Pre-emptive (preventive) warfare

Part of the transition from phase one to two is fairly straight forward. It is about identifying an enemy, and also legitimizing a geographic relocation of military operations between theatres. The bottom of the table includes concepts more than entities. The time perspective shows the temporal dimension of this strategic narrative with many of America's enemies in the war on terrorism. Emphasizing and embracing those concepts contributed to making invading Iraq a necessary and sensible option.

In the post 9/11 era, sitting around waiting for attacks and then responding to them became an unsatisfactory approach. This led to Bush's doctrine of pre-emption, which was more of a doctrine of prevention (Freedman, 2003, p. 113; Hodges, 2011, p. 48; Kegley & Raymond, 2004; Tucker & Hendrickson, 2004).

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[7] This is an updated version of a table presented in my previous work (Romarheim, 2005a, p. 87).

Equipped with this doctrine, spelled out by Bush in a speech he gave at West Point and subsequently enumerated in the National Security Strategy (United States Government, 2002), the Bush administration projected a powerful narrative of conflation and/or collaboration between Iraq and al Qaeda. The NSS is an overarching and highly influential document that impacts all security policy making across America's executive branch. It is an important source for analysing America's master narratives (Miskimmon et al., 2013, pp. 47–50).

Right before the invasion the US president and vice-president continued to press the Iraq narrative that had been prevalent for months. On March 16, Cheney said of Saddam Hussein, 'We know that he has a long-standing relationship with various terrorist groups, including the al-Qaeda organization'. The next day Bush concluded that Iraq 'has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda'. There was so much talk of Iraq and al Qaeda that Judith Yaphe, a veteran CIA analyst of 20 years' standing, described the situation thus, 'You're left to just hear the nouns, and put them together' (Corn, 2003, p. 234).

It was against this backdrop that the editorials on America's adversaries – Iraq and al Qaeda – were written. To start with the conclusion, the editorial boards were more reluctant to re-tell the transfer narrative linking AQ and Iraq, than the narrative on Iraq's possession of WMDs, with WSJ as the exception. Following SOTU, WSJ wrote that Bush was 'drawing on British Intelligence that has discovered clear links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda' (WSJ: 2003-01-30). They returned to the topic when the war started, and also provided some detail on what evidence other than the Bush administration's narrative they based their assessment on. 'There is plenty of evidence that Iraq has harbored al Qaeda members, among other curious facts detailed nearby by Laurie Mylroie' (WSJ: 2003-03-18).

Mylroie was a popular analyst with the neo-conservatives. She was strongly anti-Saddam Hussein, and equally forcefully for war against Iraq (Mylroie, 2003). In a NYT Op-ed entitled 'Saddam's Terrorist Ties', she presented her views on whether Iraq was 'a necessary part of the war on terrorism? The answer is decidedly yes.' Her thinking on Iraqi 9/11 involvement has subsequently been proved unwarranted and unfounded. (Benjamin & Simon, 2005, p. 145; Bergen, 2003; Clarke, 2004a, p. 95).

The editorials on the relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda resulted in a situation in which the four newspapers covering it assigned varying levels of veracity to the claims. WSJ believed in, and promoted, the ties, WP also went along with it, at least partly, but did not write much about it. USAT was more sceptical and NYT did not believe any such ties warranted going to war. WP wrote, after Powell's presentation, that Bush had 'offered a powerful new case that Saddam Hussein's regime is cooperating with a branch of the al Qaeda organization that is trying to acquire chemical Weapons' (WP: 2003-02-06).

A week later WP published an interesting editorial titled 'The perils of passivity'. It begins with a lengthy narrative on how Islamists of different stripes have attacked the US through years without much response. It is a variant of the from Beirut to 9/11 narrative. 'For more than two decades, the country tried a strategy of not poking the hornet's nest -- a strategy of accommodation, half-measures and wishful thinking' (WP: 2003-02-13).

In this piece, WP supported the narrative of tangible links between Iraq and al Qaeda. They continued by writing of 'the Islamists' willingness to set aside their disdain for Iraq's secular rule in the greater shared struggle against America' (WP: 2003-02-13). After this they wrote little of these connections, and focused more on WMD, particularly the UNSC dimension of WMD. The NYT's coverage on this issue is clearly on the sceptical side. They represented a notable departure from the Bush administration's strategic narrative. They wrote about this frequently and unequivocally throughout the period, as these four quotes document.

The administration accuses Iraq of links with Al Qaeda, but the connections are indirect and the evidence not definitive. (NYT: 2003-02-02)

The links between Baghdad and the terror network seemed more tenuous than his [Colin Powell's] other charges. (NYT: 2003-02-06)

There is no need for the administration to jeopardize its own credibility with unproved claims about an alliance between Iraq and Al Qaeda. (NYT: 2003-02-14)

But despite endless efforts by the Bush administration to connect Iraq to Sept. 11, the evidence simply isn't there.' (NYT: 2003-03-09)

NYT seemed to detect and understand the transfer at work. With the expression 'endless efforts to connect' they came close to warning their readers not to buy in to the elite rhetoric or propaganda. If nothing else, it reads as an alert to be vigilant and critical of some of the pervasive rhetoric and propaganda on Iraq and al Qaeda. Furthermore, they do have a point as regards jeopardizing credibility. They specifically mentioned this the day after Powell's presentation.

Powell was selected for the task precisely because of his credibility. 'You have the credibility to do it', Woodward claims Bush told Powell (Woodward, 2004, p. 291). Additionally, Bush apparently told Powell "You've got high poll ratings", "you can afford to lose a few points" (Baker, 2013, p. 242), and so he did. In 2005, after resigning, Powell admitted to ABC News' Barbara Walters that the UNSC presentation defiled his professional record: 'It's a blot. I'm the one who presented it on behalf of the United States to the world, and [it] will always be a part of my record. It was painful. It's painful now' (Powell, 2005).

Powell was a necessary ingredient for the effective projection of this narrative. This is because 'the salience of strategic narratives rest on their credibility, which needs to be established by actors' (Miskimmon et al., 2013). Powell's credibility in matters of war was impeccable after his leading role in Operation Desert Storm in the early 90s. In his memoirs, he concludes that the 2003-briefing at the UNSC 'was one of my most momentous failures' (Powell, 2012, p. 223). While NYT later apologized to their readers for not putting on the brakes over the Iraq war (New York Times Editors, 2004; See also Stephens, 2012), this is a part of their coverage that would warrant exemption from such criticism.

USAT wrote little on the links between Iraq and al Qaeda. They did not entirely reject the notion that there may be a link. However, they appear somewhat apprehensive about the main thrust of the transfer at work. Their coverage of the Bush administration's transfer attempt is therefore just as much an attempt to keep this distinction intact, and make sure that focus was not lost in the war on terrorism itself. The transfer would not remain intact. By the end of 2005 USAT reported that 'a record 55% say the war in Iraq is entirely separate from the war on terrorism that began with the Sept. 11 attacks' (Page, 2005).

4.4 Live war on terrorism

With the war in Iraq, Pentagon ventured upon a large-scale embedding experiment. Journalists were given unprecedented access in order to report on the war live, as it unfolded. In the initial stages of the war in Afghanistan the editorializing on the war on terrorism was massive, but not on the topic of instant coverage.

One reason for the limited coverage was that the opening stages of the war in Afghanistan were secretive, and based a lot on covert operations (Schroen, 2005; Woodward, 2002, pp. 260–266). In 2003, embedding brought the topic of live war coverage up, and interestingly the media related it to war reporting broadly, and war support specifically. The media seemed quite conscious of their role in projecting narratives that are vehicles for the leadership to garner public support.

In period 2, only one incident brought the master narrative of the war on terrorism to the forefront of the coverage, at the expense of writings on the Iraq war, The capture of the 9/11 operational mastermind, Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) (Bergen, 2011, pp. 110, 253). His arrest was a feather in the cap of the Bush administration and came at a convenient time. It reminded Americans that the war on terrorism was more than Iraq.

A recurring theme in USAT's coverage was the fear that the war in Iraq would steal attention from the war on terrorism itself. This argument itself may suggest a decoupling of the transfer in Bush's strategic narrative. USAT did concede that there were some connections between Iraq and the war on terrorism, and their writing was somewhat confusing. 'Disarming Iraq is a critical component to the war on terror -- as long as it doesn't distract from it' (USAT: 2003-02-14). One is left wondering how a dealing with a critical component can distract from the entity it is essential to.

This quote shows that USAT considered Iraq to be important, yet subordinate, to the war on terrorism itself. The crucial editorial here was aptly titled 'Singular focus on Saddam poses risks in war on terror' (USAT: 2003-02-14). They stressed the importance 'to avoid a rupture with allies who are less eager to attack Iraq, particularly because such a split could hamper the broader war on terrorism' (USAT: 2003-02-14). USAT criticised the administration on the same accounts a couple of weeks later too.

Still, the new evidence of looming terror threats raises short-term dangers in any single-minded pursuit of war with Iraq.[…] [The administration is] more interested in arguing the links between terrorism and Iraq than discussing how the connection complicates the war against terror (USAT: 2003-02-14)

USAT would not go along with the transfer. Yet, what they wrote is not all negative for the Bush administration, because USAT hone and highlight the war on terrorism as a distinct campaign. They argue that it is the all-eclipsing number one priority, and Iraq may prove a distraction from it. The positive thing, seen from the White House, was USAT's frequent usage of the phrase 'war on terrorism'. It is indicative of their adoption of the master narrative. On one occasion, they used the phrase five times in one editorial (USAT: 2003-03-04). The 'Iraq-must-not-undermine-Afghanistan' theme became a staple ingredient of USAT's editorializing on the war on terrorism.

Other newspapers spoke of the 'war on terror' phrase (and similar expressions e. g. 'war against terror') more sparingly. NYT voiced concern over 'the cost of the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq' (NYT: 2003-03-25). Again we see the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq dealt with separately in NYT editorials. In a NYT Op-ed a year later Richard Clarke dismantled the Bush administration's transfer by a careful choice of words. He wrote about: 'The war on terrorism and the separate war in Iraq' (Clarke, 2004b).

Let us turn to the incident that triggered the mention of the 'war on terrorism' by all of the newspapers, the capture of Khalid Sheik Mohammed (KSM) (Khan, 2003). This milestone in the war on terrorism brought the phrase back into circulation in the editorials, only a couple of weeks before Iraq was invaded. Mohammed was the operational planner of the 9/11 attacks, and he remains the most significant al Qaeda operative in American custody eleven years later. USAT referred to KSM as number 3 in al Qaeda, and concluded that 'Mohammed's capture is hardly the only victory in the 18-month U.S. war on terrorism, but it is one of the biggest' (USAT: 2003-03-04).

The other three newspapers' coverage was also positive and can be summed up by comparing the opening lines of their respective editorials on KSM's capture.

How much can one arrest advance the war on terrorism? A great deal.
(WP: 2003-03-04)

Maybe the war on terror is going better than the critics claim (WSJ: 2003-03-03)

The Bush administration proved over the weekend that it can plan for war against
Iraq and fight international terrorism at the same time (NYT: 2003-03-03)

NYT were not exactly full of praise for the Bush administration's security policies during this time. Only a few weeks before they had contended that with the emergence of Iraq, 'the war against Al Qaeda seemed to slip into the background' (NYT: 2003-02-12). Yet they complimented the administration on its capture of KSM. WP wrote, 'The operation offered a timely answer to critics who have contended that the Bush administration's focus on Iraq has weakened its campaign against al Qaeda' (WP: 2003-03-04). WP's statement can be read as a rebuttal of the NYT statement, and also conflicts with the views expressed by USAT documented above.

Khalid S. Mohammed's capture segued into a moment of optimism for America in the war on terrorism. For a time, the transfer worked, and Iraq was not portrayed as a diversion from the war on terrorism. However, a 'traditional realist, such as Scowcroft and Brzezinski', did not buy into this thinking (Kessler, 2007, p. 18). Looking back, March 2003 was a month of extraordinary importance for the war on terrorism. It saw the beginning of its most controversial war, and also contained the most high-profile arrest of the entire war on terrorism. KSM's capture also brought up the question of detainee treatment. Peter Bergen describes that Khalid Sheik Mohammed was waterboarded on 183 occasions (Bergen, 2012, p. 99).

The **live war** coverage element increased in importance with Iraq because of the extensive programme of embedding journalists on the ground in Iraq. Wars are brutal and horrific events, and the level of detail transmitted to the home audience matters. Vietnam came up in the editorials, and live war can be seen as the contemporary counterpart to Arlen's *Living Room War*. In his foreword to the 1968 edition, he wrote:

There were, after all, these two realities of Vietnam – surrounding us, pressing on us in ways you often couldn't feel: the reality of the actual war (whatever that may have been), and the reality of the play of media (Arlen, 1969, p. xi)

Tracing these insights in a contemporary context is an ambition of this thesis. Arlen alludes to Johnson & Tierney's work, as they describe fact-based (score-keeping) and intersubjective (match-fixing) ways to determine the outcomes of wars (Johnson & Tierney, 2006). For every war, the question is which of the two realities will be decisive to perceptions of the war and victory.

Embedding can be seen as an attempt to splice these two realities. It would undoubtedly generate more reliable facts about developments on the ground (score-keeping). However, facts without interpretation do not make a news frame. Embedding may be done to nurture the seeds of elite rhetoric and strategic narratives in the conflict zone, hoping they will influence perceptions of the war at home.

WSJ warned, and actively tried to prevent, televised war and the Vietnam syndrome. 'Television brought the brutality of war into the comfort of the living room. Vietnam was lost in the living rooms of America -- not on the battlefields of Vietnam' (WSJ: 2003-03-25). This statement challenges the findings of Daniel Hallin, which suggests that blaming the media for Vietnam is asking the wrong questions about why the war was lost (Hallin, 1986, pp. 34, 211). USAT also related the real time coverage to America's traumatizing and controversial Vietnam experience.

The world watches the first war covered in real time by the news media. [...] Few reporters have been allowed as much access to a war since Vietnam, when graphic footage of American casualties turned U.S. public opinion against the conflict, creating decades of military distrust of the media. (USAT: 2003-03-25)

There are several interesting points here, not least the clear link to war support. Another is that the military and the media regained a cordial appreciation of one another again. They had been at odds since Vietnam, as described in Powell's memoirs, and by Thomas Rid (Powell & Persico, 1995; Rid, 2007).

WSJ welcomed embedding, such interaction represented good opportunities for all involved. 'We'd say the "embedding" policy looks like one of those gambles that

may work for all parties -- the Pentagon, the media and the public' (WSJ: 2003-03-25). They certainly viewed the development positively, and believed it was also inevitable. 'The reality is that technology has created this world of instant communications and we cannot control it all even if we wished' (WSJ: 2003-03-25). This is somewhat similar to the ideas of Kilcullen, Castells and Miskimmon et al from the introduction.

On the same day WP wrote about 'a war waged more than any previous conflict on live television' (WP: 2003-03-25). In the days before, WP had several reflections on the impact of modern live war coverage. They noted that the nation had never been 'watching so much of a war "in real time"' (WP: 2003-03-22). The historical parallel employed in WP went further back than Vietnam. WP pondered the impact of instant coverage on public support. 'There's no way to know how public support for the World War II effort […] might have been affected by more immediate reporting' (WP: 2003-03-24). It is worth noting here that Berinsky's research on public opinion in World War II finds that it is not as different from other wars as is often held (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 33–60)

WP's and WSJ's editorials on this topic show an editorial interest in the interplay between people, military, leadership, and the media. The editorials also acknowledge the agency at work in the media organizations, as they themselves are actors providing information on the war. By means of embedding, the media gather information in a new and more intimate fashion. This may impact the whole equation of support for – or opposition to – the war. The working conditions and ethical aspects of reporting are affected (Sylvester & Huffman, 2005). These changed conditions for the individual war reporter can potentially change the coverage itself.

WSJ and USAT both worried about the impact of powerful war imagery on public support for the war. The latter pointed out that 'The Pentagon hasn't declared its media armistice out of the goodness of its heart' (USAT: 2003-03-25). However, both newspapers looked beyond the pitfalls of embedding and emphasized the great opportunities the concept offers. WSJ countered a belief that the American public could not stomach war zone imagery.

Once the American public is exposed to what is our first 24/7 television war, it will recoil in horror and force President Bush to bring the troops home. We think that fear is misplaced, [...] a single ugly battle can mislead about the pace of the broader war (WSJ: 2003-03-25)

Much of the success of the Iraqi war will be determined by public opinion -- in the USA and in Muslim nations. A primary force shaping public support will be the news reports on the war -- and the home audience's impressions about whether that coverage is accurate and complete (USAT: 2003-03-25)

The USAT quote sums up main arguments of this study. It concerns the shaping of perceptions of war, and the people's decision to support the war – or not – based on the strategic narratives and news frames the public encounters. USAT's reasoning describes public support as open to influence, and therefore also manipulation. The theoretical moorings of this project, in the shape of the Clausewitz triangle, again resurface, with a notion of an emotional populace, susceptible to strategic narratives emanating from military and civilian leadership. USAT also warns against stretching the elasticity of reality too far. Will the military narrative be perceived as accurate?

Another premise of USAT's and WSJ's arguments is Kissinger's emphasis on public support as a condition for effective US foreign policy (Yankelovich, 2005, p. 12). USAT also mentions the support of foreign publics as well. This relates to Kilcullen's argument about support across a whole range of actors and groups as a requirement for success in modern conflicts. Among those he includes are 'The home population, the host country, the global audience, the populations of allied and neutral countries, and the military' (Kilcullen, 2006, p. 121).

Discussions of victory relate to Johnson & Tierney's thinking, which can also be traced in the editorials analysed here. NYT wrote little about live war, but compensated by writing about the difficulties of measuring success in the war.

How will the American public be able to evaluate what it sees and hears as the campaign unfolds? Although the 1991 gulf war was a real military victory, exaggeration and television portrayals left a misleading impression of the effectiveness of high-tech weapons. This time around it will not be any easier to judge success quickly. Still, there are some benchmarks that can be used to measure how well the campaign progresses. (NYT: 2003-03-21)

NYT's call for benchmarks to measure success is an overt call to keep score of the campaign's progress. At the same time, they implicitly warn against match-fixing and the opportunities it provides for manipulative propaganda. The empirical studies Johnson & Tierney have conducted on the Iraq war suggest this was the case. 'Manipulation by the media and by elites also shaped perceptions of success in Bush's wars' (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, pp. 272, See also 279–281).

4.5 Intermittent media frames

The section addresses media frames on their way in or out of the editorials. Topics given much attention by individual newspapers also belong here. In period 1, one such theme was air security, which was covered most by USAT. In period 2, there is a similar project, the WSJ's journalistic activism on the Iraq war. But first, a brief comparative look at the frames examined in periods 1 and 2.

Table 4.1 Intermittent media frames period 2

Period 1 – post 9/11	Period 2 – leading up to the Iraq War
Detainee treatment and civil liberties	Detainee treatment and civil liberties
Air security	International support and France
Diplomacy and coalitions	WSJ's journalistic activism
The Anthrax scare	Securitization

The changes between periods 1 and 2 are as follows. Air security and Anthrax is gone, while securitization is almost gone. Diplomacy and coalitions and have moved into main news frames relating to the UNSC process fronted by Colin Powell. Detainee treatment and civil liberties have increased in importance, but coverage remained sporadic. Securitization moved out of the conflict remit where it was replaced by the writing on 'live war'. Finally, a new element is WSJ's activism, and in relation to that, the way France and international support was dealt with.

Why is **air security** gone? One plausible explanation is that the problem this spell of advocacy journalism focused on was actually fixed. Flying in – and especially into – America would never be the same again after 9/11. Air security procedures were strengthened across the board. It would be a stretch to argue that USAT's opinion journalism was instrumental in achieving improved air security, but changes certainly occurred.

The changes in air security were both a blessing and a curse. Some feared it had gone too far, and infringed on civil liberties and privacy. A literature emerged on overreaction to terrorist threats, arguing that countermeasures were out of proportion with threats. One of the cardinal arguments in John Mueller's book *Overblown* was coined by Leif Wenar: 'Americans seem to have developed a false sense of insecurity about terrorism' (Mueller, 2006, p. 3). Mueller relates this argument to the airline industry specifically, and asks whether the enforced security measures – such as removing shoes – actually makes passengers safer (Mueller, 2006, pp. 26–27, 158–161).

Writings on **securitization** decreased markedly. Again, the reason may have been that American society was operating on a securitized war footing. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security was one tangible bureaucratic measure. Editorial finger-wagging at politicians exploiting the conflict was hardly seen in period 2. One rare example was by WP. 'The administration -- under cover of warfare -- appears to be using this wartime "supplemental" to tack a few more big items onto this year's budget' (WP: 2003-03-25).

The question of **civil liberties and rights** continued to receive modest editorial attention in 2003. WP wrote about 'the struggle to preserve American liberties while enabling the domestic war on terrorism' (WP: 2003-02-12). The balance between security and liberty is of course a real dilemma in the war at home. NYT, more than the others, recognized the difficulties in deciding 'where to draw the line between fighting terrorism and protecting civil liberties' (NYT: 2003-01-25). NYT were concerned about 'the Total Information Awareness Program, a wide-ranging Pentagon monitoring scheme that could threaten the civil liberties of law-abiding Americans' (NYT: 2003-01-25).

WSJ were not concerned about detainee mistreatment at this time. Their worry was that the government's hands were tied, making it difficult to extract information on future attacks from captured terrorists. The only instance of WSJ discussing these matters found in the empirical material from period 2 relates to the arrest of KSM.

> *Mohammed is now in the hands of U.S. authorities, who won't say where he is. Presumably that's a secure location -- possibly Guantanamo -- where he can be interrogated without recourse to the helping hands of defense lawyers, criminal courts and the like. Mohammed is a pivotal figure in al Qaeda and we need to find out what he knows, however long in cold storage it takes. (WSJ: 2003-03-03)*

WSJ positioned themselves among the hardliners in the ticking-bomb argument in the ethics of counterterrorism literature (Brecher, 2007; Ginbar, 2008). What can you do to a terrorist who almost certainly has information about coming terrorist plots? WSJ's answer was quite a lot, including lengthy 'cold storage'. The quote also includes positive mention of Guantanamo. This would become a rarity as the notorious prison drew considerable criticism in the years that followed. In the quote it comes across as a "safe haven" where defence lawyers and the legal system could not stand in the way of effective interrogation.

WSJ's account contrasted with that of NYT and WP. WP wondered too 'how quickly and fully Mr. Mohammed can be induced to provide information' (WP: 2003-03-04). However, eight days later they stressed the importance of giving controversial detainees from the war of terrorism 'access to a lawyer' (WP: 2003-03-12). They did not agree that access to lawyers, would hamper the effective conduct of the war on terrorism. On the contrary, 'The Bush administration needs to develop a reasonable process on the detainees' behalf and explain that process publicly (WP: 2003-03-14). Two days later WP brought up 'the question of whether detainees in the war on terrorism are being tortured' (WP: 2003-03-16). Raising the issue of torture expresses a real concern on WP's part as to what is going on at the secret detention facilities abroad and at Guantanamo.

In period 1, NYT was the leading newspaper to voice concerns along these lines. Now, WP had equalled them. One main reason might be that NYT were more

preoccupied with critical writings questioning the wisdom of the invasion of Iraq. Nevertheless, they did not lose sight of the issue of rights and detention. Their critical view was presented in an editorial on the topic titled 'Forsaken at Guantanamo'.

> *The Guantánamo detainees are in legal limbo. The Bush administration refuses to designate them prisoners of war […] In refusing to let the Guantánamo detainees challenge their confinement, the administration is trampling on their rights. (NYT: 2003-03-12)*

'Legal limbo' is a fitting term when a legal issue still has no ending in sight more than a decade later. In the periods to come it will be interesting to see how Guantanamo and the emerging torture narrative play into the question of **international support** for the war on terrorism. Such support is largely garnered through diplomacy, yet the two are not entirely co-extensive. Parts have already been touched on in the opening of this chapter.

It is important to keep in mind that international support comes both from states and publics. In countries like Spain, Turkey and Jordan the authorities were much more supportive of the U.S. than the population. NYT and USAT were very concerned about insufficient support. NYT used the phrase 'broad international support' incessantly. Below are excerpts from five different editorials exemplifying its ubiquity. It was a key phrase in a persistent news frame on the NYT editorial page.

> *The United States cannot afford to confront Iraq without broad international support. (NYT: 2003-02-06)*
>
> *The potential consequences of war with Iraq are far too serious to take on without broad international and domestic support. (NYT: 2003-02-18)*
>
> *This is a war worth waging, but only with broad international support. (NYT: 2003-02-23)*
>
> *The United States should not invade Iraq without broad international support. (NYT: 2003-03-03)*
>
> *If it comes down to a question of yes or no to invasion without broad international support, our answer is no. (NYT: 2003-03-09)*

NYT offered much more space to this perspective on international support than the other newspapers. USAT advocated 'waiting several months to garner broader support for combat' (USAT: 2003-03-19). It would be worth the wait, in their opinion. WP, on the other hand, was losing patience and spoke of weeks rather than months as a fitting time frame for any additional diplomacy. 'If a few more weeks of diplomacy will serve to assuage the legitimate concerns of undecided council members, the effort -- even at this late date -- would be worth making' (WP: 2003-03-09).

The council member of particular concern here was, **France**. The country was the main target of **WSJ's activist journalism**, while Germany and Belgium also figured. Other newspapers also wrote critically of France's stance on Iraq. WP argued that 'some countries, including France and Russia, would oppose meaningful action against Saddam Hussein no matter what' (WP: 2003-03-16). Placing France alongside notorious UNSC resolution blockers such as Russia made quite a pointed statement.

USAT did exactly the same on their editorial page when they referred to 'obstructionists such as France and Russia' (USAT: 2003-03-13). Before SOTU WP also accused Germany and France of offering 'a series of hypocritical rationalizations' (WP: 2003-01-26). Hardly a characterization the countries would be content with. NYT had a different perspective. While they were not impressed by France's conduct on the Iraq issue, rather than pointing the finger at Paris, they put Washington and the Bush administration on the line.

France, in its zest for standing up to Washington, succeeded mainly in sending all the wrong signals to Baghdad. But Washington's own destructive contributions were enormous (NYT: 2003-03-18)

The conclusion NYT drew was that the Bush administration's inept diplomacy, just as much as stubborn obstructionism on the part of France, was decisive in bringing about the unfortunate split in the trans-Atlantic community (Everts & Isernia, 2015, p. 177). This view was not shared by WSJ in any way. Colin Powell and WSJ were often at odds over Iraq, but as regards France they largely agreed. It became clear, Powell

writes, 'that France would oppose any movement toward military action' and this 'made me – and most Americans – mad, very mad' (Powell, 2012, pp. 6–7).

WSJ wrote very passionately during the build-up to the war with Iraq. As period 1 documented, they advocated deposing Saddam Hussein before – not after – the Bush administration publicly espoused the same conclusion. What WSJ did was to call out to world leaders, to the point where it started to smack of ridicule. While pouring scorn on those who opposed the war, especially France and Belgium, world leaders who supported the war were invited onto their op-ed pages.

The editorial page, front page, and op-eds formed a cluster of texts that were part of WSJ's passionate pro-war line. First, they contacted Europeans leaders and published an op-ed by them in late January titled 'United we Stand' (Aznar et al., 2003). This was accompanied the same day by an editorial quoting the op-ed, and also a front page story by Marc Champion using sources from WSJ itself (Champion, 2003).

This cluster of texts drew criticism from the journalistic world, which again prompted the deputy editor of WSJ Europe's editorial page offered an explanation. It was written by a Deputy Editor, Michael Gonzalez, printed on February 3 (Gonzalez, 2003). Additionally, on the same day, and on the same page, figured a WSJ editorial forcefully defending the printing of the European leaders' op-ed.

Moreover, WSJ printed an in-depth front page story with scathing criticism of Belgium's military and leadership on February 13 (Shiskin, 2003). Shiskin's story elicited an extremely heated response from Belgium's minister of defence titled 'An insult to my country and its military' (Flahaut, 2003) It was published alongside an editorial entitled 'Belgian Blitzkrieg' on February 26. The debate got really messy.

Let us start with Belgium. Shiskin started by portraying Belgian soldiers as untrained hairdressers, doing Elvis impersonations in their abundance of spare time. This is a description no soldiery would be comfortable with. Flahaut, in his op-ed wrote, 'I am surprised that a newspaper of this quality is prostituting itself to this level.' Other expressions he used were 'unfair treatment', 'stupidity, 'vulgarity' and he argued WSJ presented his country through an 'awful caricature' (Flahaut, 2003).

WSJ on its part seemed surprised by the minister's harsh remarks. They simply retorted by pointing to 'the vehemence and substance of the minister's […] furious reply' (WSJ: 2003-02-26). There is no denying tensions were running high after Belgium refused to allow NATO equipment to transit or be based in Turkey. WSJ wrote about the obstructionism of 'France, Germany and their mini-me minion, Belgium' (WSJ: 2003-02-10). Calling a nation a 'mini-me minion' is quite negatively laden language.

Leaving Belgium aside, it is time to look at the main recipient of WSJs activist journalism. Extensive quoting is necessary to document the heated exchanges, and what the different actors injected to the debate.

As the eight Europeans write nearby, if Iraq does not disarm of its own accord, "our governments have a common responsibility to face this threat." "Failure to do so," they say, "would be nothing less than negligent to our own citizens and to the wider world." (WSJ: 2003-01-30)

Eight European leaders signed an op-ed article publicly calling for unity with the U.S. position, further shifting the global political calculus toward support for war. (Champion, 2003)

"We facilitated the letter from the eight European leaders. Aznar and Blair were the principal drivers of this letter, and we were very pleased and delighted that they chose to go with The Wall Street Journal," said a spokeswoman for the Journal. (Champion, 2003)

Champion reported the shift caused by the European leaders' statements in the calculus for global war support. This suggests that by publishing it, WSJ wanted to help the Bush administration's cause to generate support for the war. The WSJ spokeswoman stated they had merely facilitated the letter, and Aznar and Blair were the principal instigators. This triggered more discussion since it was established a few days later that it was WSJ who had contacted the world leaders, not the other way around. 'As to the letter from the European leaders, we initiated it' (Gonzalez, 2003).

It is also interesting that the editorial itself chose to use verbatim quotes from a text published next to it on the same page, A14. In a sense, they are clutching the European leaders' op-ed to their breast. The front page, the editorial page and the op-ed make for a massive salvo of pro-war media content across the newspaper's most

important sections. This is not ordinary news reporting, and it remains a question whether it is ethically prudent to go so far down the pro-war road. It undoubtedly is journalism with an abundance of opinion.

There was criticism of WSJ's coverage, but the newspaper stuck to its guns and fiercely defended its journalism. Gonzalez ensured readers that 'Our editorial pages take forthright positions, […] Our motives were entirely journalistic' on February 3. The same day the editorial page also included statements like 'In most newsrooms, they call this having sources and a nose for news. That's why our editors decided to solicit an op-ed' (WSJ: 2003-02-03). Accusations that WSJ was simply doing the Bush administration's bidding were countered as follows.

> *We admit to having sources in the Bush Adm., among other places, but they had nothing to do with our soliciting European leaders. We've been in favor of ousting Saddam Hussein for years, going back to the Gulf War and long before President Bush made it his policy. If the op-ed by Europe's leaders somehow helped Mr. Bush's diplomacy in addition to selling newspapers, that's fine with us (WSJ: 2003-02-03)*

WSJ's alleged indifference to the effect of their journalism is awkward. Their coverage is clearly geared towards war, as they admit in the quote. This is direct and overt agency in shaping world events and foreign nations' positions on the Iraq war. That their interests coincide with those of Aznar & Blair et al, as well as the Bush administration, is probably more than 'fine with us'.

WSJ pushed the envelope of what a newspaper should be doing in the run-up to war, yet they are candid and clear about what they engaged in. Had the war been less controversial, and not initiated on the false premise of WMDs in Iraq, WSJ might have attracted less criticism. WSJ sought to rouse public support for war. They may be right in saying that 'President Bush commands an effective diplomatic corps and doesn't need journalists to do his work for him' (Gonzalez, 2003). But that does not mean that Bush did not appreciate the helping hand of the agenda-setting force that the WSJ editorial page is.

4.6 Fox News – Talking Points

Another news source from which the Bush administration was less likely to be the target of criticism was Fox News. In 2001, Bill O'Reilly's Talking Points Memo (TPM) projected a hardliner's view, somewhere to the right of WSJ. This is less the case in period 2. By then, distance between Fox and WSJ had been erased to a large degree. WSJ's move to the right was documented in the previous section on WSJ's activism.

Early in 2003 Bill O'Reilly criticised Iraq war protesters. A group of left-leaning Americans, calling themselves *Not in our name*, had issued an anti-Iraq ad that enraged O' Reilly. This is what he had to say about it.

> *Dissent is always welcome on The Factor, but this kind of propaganda is insulting to the families who lost loved ones to the terrorists and damaging to the war on terror itself. [...] This is dishonest, disgusting and un- American, period (Fox: 2003-01-27)*

The words chosen here indicate high tensions. The opposition to war the ad represents is 'dishonest, disgusting and un-American propaganda' in O'Reilly's opinion. The impression is that dissent to the upcoming war is not particularly welcome, emphasized by the sentence's 'dissent is welcome…but' structure. Later, O'Reilly retreated on the un-American comment, conceding that it went too far. 'I was wrong when I said that Americans who continue demonstrating against the war once the shooting begins are being un-American. I'm taking that back.' (Fox: 2003-02-27). Instead he would refer to them as 'bad Americans', which is not that big a change.

TPM painted an interesting picture in which society at large has an obligation to support the nation, as it goes to war. In March, TPM advocated a boycott of French products: 'we are all soldiers in the war against terror here in America, and our weapon is our wallet' (Fox: 2003-03-10). TPM holds a very conservative vision of war support, and tie it to American family values. Right after SOTU, TPM outlined this family-based war support, while also pointing to politicians who were not convinced by the President's appeal to reason. Additionally, the excerpt starts with a reference to poll numbers, and overt praise for Bush's SOTU.

According to a CBS snap poll, 67 percent of Americans believe President Bush has made a convincing case against Saddam Hussein. That's up 20 points and reflects the success of the State of the Union address. […] So if President Bush is going to remove Saddam Hussein from power, I'm going to support that because I have an obligation to protect my family. […] I believe that politicians who do not support the war against Saddam will lose credibility in the months to come. (Fox: 2003-01-29)

The argument is that citizens must support the war to protect their families, and politicians must support it to protect the nation. Two days later Fox reported on the overwhelming support among Americans to have Saddam Hussein removed (Fox: 2003-01-31). Few would question Bill O'Reilly's patriotism. In fact, the title of one of his books employs a phrase from his show, *Pinheads and Patriots* (O'Reilly, 2010). He frequently referred to 'Americans' when urging loyal support for the war. 'We don't want to demonize anyone, […] We are all Americans here, and those fighting in our name deserve our loyalty' (Fox: 2003-02-26). Here the troops are brought in, and the nation should loyally support the war.

The labels Fox assigned to Saddam Hussein were very negative. Those applied by most of the other news sources were denigrating, but less so than TPM's. The word 'killer' is significant when analysing TPM's dealing with Saddam Hussein as a person. In one of the excerpts below, O'Reilly has a stab at the Pope too, whom he considers too much of a pacifist.

Saddam is a killer. He [the Pope] must know he's [Saddam Hussein] oppressed his own people using murder and torture.' (Fox: 2003-03-12)

A killer with huge stocks of anthrax and other deadly weapons (Fox: 2003-03-14)

This is not cowboy time but it is also not a time for paralysis. Thirty-seven percent of Americans would allow Saddam to stay in power. To these people I say this. You are failing to understand that we have entered into the most dangerous period of American history ever. The terrorists will kill you and your family. […] Today's terrorists are Nazis. They will slaughter you and your family (Fox: 2003-03-04)

These are confrontational and controversial scare-tactics. Arguing that terrorists are coming to slaughter your family is an outrageous statement. The references to people's families and Nazis would probably scare many in the American audience.

The 'Bin Laden is Hitler' comments from period 1 were still active in period 2. Only this time Saddam Hussein has replaced bin Laden as Hitler. When this is how the conflict is portrayed, the means deemed acceptable to ensure victory will naturally be many. 'After 9/11, we are living in a different world. The old rules have changed, because now there are no rules. Civilians are targets' (Fox: 2003-02-19). The 'no rules' approach, encompassed captured enemies and detainee treatment to some extent too.

In the opinion journalism of O'Reilly, America faces many different enemies. France is listed among them, alongside Russia and China. He finished one of his TPMs like this: 'France has now hurt the USA, and for many of us, payback time has arrived' (Fox: 2003-03-10). NYT are also targeted for criticism, and their less than enthusiastic position for war ridiculed. O'Reilly had clearly read NYT's ambivalent editorials; 'The "Times" wants a pyrrhic victory, that's a win with consequences, so we can say that more diplomacy should have been tried' (Fox: 2003-03-25). This was not the first time in this period that TPM criticised other news outlets. Below is a list of news sources singled out for criticism by TPM.

January 27	New York Times
January 28	New York Times
January 30	USA Today
February 12	National Public Radio, Public Broadcasting Service, ABC
February 21	L.A. Times, St. Petersburg Times
March 10	L.A. Times
March 25	New York Times, Boston Globe

The criticism was not only reserved for newspapers; radio and television organizations were also criticised. Among the harsher statements was the one on March 10, in which O'Reilly dubbed a column in the L.A. Times 'Disgraceful'. O'Reilly seems to hold a grudge against traditional news providers in America. After another bashing of the L.A. times, the cable news show host concluded thus: 'No

longer do the network news or the newspapers in New York or L.A. define the stories that are important to you. Now cable news does that' (Fox: 2003-02-21).

A main finding here is that Fox News and TPM went after opponents of the war – and quite forcefully too. To conclude the section on Fox news, another comment on how the O'Reilly factor, and its host, views their position in American news media may suffice. Support comes in different shapes and forms, and rooting is among the more overt types. Displaying a heavy dose of opinion journalism is freely admitted to in the quote below on Iraq.

> *Talking Points freely admits rooting for America, Britain, and Australia in the war against Iraq. We are a news analysis program with a heavy dose of opinion. My opinion is, the world is a better place without Saddam Hussein. (Fox: 2003-03-24)*

4.7 Conclusions and findings of period 2

With the controversy over how to deal with Iraq's alleged WMDs, the approximate unity over how America should wage the war on terrorism vanished. In period 2, the news outlets differed in their editorializing. The divide largely followed ideological lines. What editorial lines the news organizations chose corresponded well with their position on a left–right political spectrum. This represents a break with the similarity in editorial writing observed right after 9/11.

The reconstruction of narratives leading up to Iraq yielded several interesting findings. Among them was a change in how diplomacy was dealt with. In 2001, US diplomacy was portrayed favourably by the newspapers. It was mostly commentary of how the coalition in Afghanistan was going. This was no longer the case as NYT, USAT and WP wrote negatively of the Bush administration's diplomatic efforts.

Despite the increasing scepticism to the Bush administration's wars, the media displayed a tendency to follow the administration's drive toward Baghdad. In the language of Entman, pro-war narratives cascaded from the Bush administration onto the editorial pages. Niall Stephens content analysis found that the 'narrative that the public supported the war was close to 40 times more frequent than the simple, uncomplicated narrative that the public opposed the war (Stephens, 2012, p. 233).

Fox News was no longer as far to the right of WSJ as in period 1. This was mainly because WSJ's coverage moved closer to Fox's, not the other way around. WSJ and Fox were arguably more for war with Iraq than the administration itself. WSJ were, in a sense, before the curve, advocating the toppling of Saddam Hussein years before the US government. This can be described as Entman in reverse, with political elites coming around to the policy of an editorial board. WSJ went very far in their pro-war writings, perhaps too far, resulting in journalistic activism in its coverage of France and Belgium, and a pro-war op-ed from European leaders.

On the more sceptical side we find NYT and USAT. They too accepted the strategic narrative contending that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. They found the administration's resort to war to be premature, yet on different grounds. USAT wanted more time for hard-nosed diplomacy to assemble a stronger coalition before invading. NYT hoped that war might be avoided altogether, and that the crisis might be diplomatically solved using additional weapons inspections. Some of their statements also emphasized that the war would be the right course of action if diplomacy was exhausted.

 NYT also were most reluctant to accept the unwarranted links between Iraq and al Qaeda made in the Bush administration's elite rhetoric. While the Bush administration on many occasions stopped short of claiming tangible links between the two, their narrative created 'a well-built scaffold that allows listeners to make the leap (Hodges, 2011, p. 77).

In between USAT and NYT on the one side, and WSJ and Fox on the other, we find WP. They supported the war, and subscribed to much of the public rhetoric, particularly Powell's presentation. WP's writing indicates a considerable effect of the Bush administration's strategic narratives on them. Entman's cascading news frames are also illustrated, with UNSC Res. 1441 as an extra layer above the Bush administration. Additionally, the pattern described here also resembles Entman's findings: 'The framing contest was restricted mostly to arguing over "war soon" or "work thorugh the U.N." (Entman, 2004, p. 155).

WP quoted 1441 and the Bush administration extensively, and agreed with the administration's interpretation of what 1441 meant. WP later apologized to its readers

for its Iraq coverage (Kurtz, 2004), as did NYT. However, some critics, including Greg Mitchell, would argue the newspapers' apologies were insufficient (Mitchell, 2008, pp. 92–93). The final sentence of NYT's apology would be a precursor to the editorial line they would adopt going forward: 'we fully intend to continue aggressive reporting aimed at setting the record straight' (New York Times Editors, 2004) .

The biggest selling moment of the war on terrorism was arguably Powell's presentation at the UNSC. It was well delivered. The media bought it, and part of the public likewise. Powell himself assessed and acknowledged the great effects of his speech. 'It had enormous impact and influence in this country and worldwide' (Powell, 2012, p. 222). Yet, it turned out to be based on inaccurate assumptions about Iraq's illegal weapons arsenal, and al Qaeda links.

An interesting observation is that when direct quotes are at their most frequent, it coincides with a particularly propaganda-prone period of the war on terrorism. The direct quotes flourished in the editorials and the Bush administration's narratives were adopted. It is worth noting that USAT's 'no direct quoting' editorial line from period 1, was abandoned in period 2. The USAT's centrist, non-ideological approach to editorial writing resulted in coverage that was perhaps closest to the mark in hindsight. Their concerns over the post-invasion phase in Iraq were warranted, as were their persistent warnings about not dropping the ball in Afghanistan.

Detainee treatment and civil rights remained an intermittent narrative. Dissent was a sensitive matter; Fox engaged in this debate labelling opponents of the war in Iraq as 'un-American' and 'bad Americans'. The links between domestic and foreign support became evident and the Bush administration made conscious efforts to boost both, yet experienced limited success on international support. This gads weight to Berinsky's argument that partisan leanings are most important in shaping both foreign and domestic policy preferences in the public (Berinsky, 2009, p. 210).

All in all, the war on terrorism was pushed to the background as Iraq attracted enormous attention by policymakers and media organizations alike. This finding also corresponds well with Berinsky's research, which indicates that Afghanistan was in the background for the remainder of Bush's presidency (Berinsky, 2009, p. 27) Only when KSM was captured did the editorial boards truly stop to recount that there was a

highly significant non-Iraqi dimension to the war on terrorism. Little did anyone know, during this moment of optimism in the war on terrorism, that no higher ranking al Qaeda member would be captured or killed until eight years later in Abbottabad.

Finally, what seems to drive war support during period 2? The editorials show that ideology was starting to have an effect. The split between NYT versus WSJ and FOX is tangible. Republicans and Democrats were thoroughly divided on Iraq along party lines (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 100–111). Johnson & Tierney also conclude that 'the clearest factor shaping American perceptions of the Iraq war is political partisanship' (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 260). The traces of this were visible already from the start, but will surface even more clearly in the next periods to be analysed.

5. Re-election: Appointments Amid Controversy

Who you appoint is immensely important to presidents, and Bush dedicates chapter 3 of his memoirs to 'Personnel'. In the book he reveals that even before becoming president, he knew he 'wanted Condi Rice by my side', should he win (Bush, 2010, p. 83). Apart from Vice President Cheney, Condi was the only senior national security official of Bush's cabinet to serve through the entire presidency. Rumsfeld would be pushed aside and Powell resigned. According to Bush, Powell first said he wanted to quit, and then had second thoughts, but it was too late. At that point, the President 'had already decided on Condi' as his replacement (Bush, 2010, p. 91).

The media's attitude towards the war on terrorism can, to some extent, be gleaned from their treatment of the President's suggested security appointees. Rumsfeld remained Secretary of Defence, but the princpals of the other three most important cabinet positions for the war on terrorism changed in 2005. In addition to Rice replacing Powell, Michael Chertoff replaced Tom Ridge as Secretary of Homeland Security. Moreover, Alberto Gonzales succeeded John Ashcroft as Attorney General. Gonzales' nomination and confirmation hearings brought the war on terrorism's civil rights and liberties onto canter stage.

By 2005, rights, liberties and detainee treatment were no longer constituents of an intermittent news frame in the background. It was a primary concern in the media, and the Bush administration was forced to respond to claims of prisoner mistreatment and indefinite extra-legal incarceration. The spike in citizens' acceptance of harsh countermeasures against terrorism, potentially jeopardizing civil liberties, had now vanished. Public support for the protection of civil liberties had risen 'by 2004 nearing the highs found in the late 1990s' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 164). In other words, public opinion on civil rights and liberties allegedly was back at pre 9/11 levels.

On civil liberties, the Bush administration suffered self-inflicted wounds. The prison Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay had now become a publicity problem alongside the scandal surrounding the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Negative narratives emerged on this topic and such stories represented a challenge for sustaining public

support for the war on terrorism. This evolved into a highly critical 'torture narrative', dissected in chapter 5.2.

In 2003, the elite rhetoric and news frames were much about Saddam Hussein's possession of WMDs and alleged links to terrorist. Iraq was initially defeated in 2003, through superior military forces applying sophisticated weaponry and tactics (Miller, 2003). By 2005, the US had discovered the real Iraq, with its diverse provinces, its heterogeneous ethnicities and ferocious opposition to foreign occupation. Saddam Hussein's Iraq, which did not stockpile WMDs, proved to be a highly unruly country. This led to elite criticism of the war and 'by mid 2004 the levels of support for war had flattened out' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 31). Table 2.5 shows that the public was now divided evenly (47% vs 47%) between supporting and not supporting the Iraq war.

The absence of a friendly capable local militia, à la Afghanistan's Northern alliance, made the fighting in Iraq different from Afghanistan. Period 3 covers the final stages of the second battle of Fallujah (Ricks, 2006a, pp. 398–406). The battle in this city was arguably the hardest for American forces throughout the entire post-invasion phase in Iraq (Camp, 2009). As regards the U.S. Marines Corps, 'many consider it the corps' biggest and most iconic fight since Vietnam' (Oppel Jr., 2014).

The increasingly fierce post-invasion fighting resulted in new terminology to describe the conflict. The term 'insurgent' was now interpolated in descriptions of America's adversaries as terrorists. The term 'civil war' was also used. One might argue that reports of hard fighting represent a narrative in itself. The quotes in this chapter include references to violence and killing in Iraq, which inevitably tells of the actions of dedicated and hard-fighting Iraqi insurgents.

America's national enthusiasm, unity and purpose right after 9/11 had diminished. While the support of the news outlets leading up to the Iraq war varied, the focus was still often dictated by the Bush administration's presentations and elite rhetoric in period 2. Period 3 sees a greater occurrence of media generated frames. Criticism of the Bush administration's policies and appointments increased markedly, with NYT spearheading those efforts. In short, if you read the NYT, the Bush administration could hardly do anything right, whereas the administration rarely put a foot wrong in its war management according to WSJ. The WSJ expected a hard fight.

The newspapers wrote less explicitly of public support for war. While they actively encouraged support in earlier periods, some were now implicitly discouraging support by writing negative editorials on the war on terrorism. The one outlet that increased its material discussions of war support was TPM Fox News. Therefore, Fox became more important to analyse than in previous periods. Fox also covered Bush's team shuffle extensively, whereas WSJ wrote sparingly about the Bush administration's new appointments. The exception to this pattern is the controversy surrounding the appointment of Gonzales.

5.1 President Bush and his appointments

Media assessments of the Bush administration's performance were communicated particularly clearly around a series of appointments after the re-election of Bush. The most important ones in this respect were Condi Rice and Alberto Gonzales, and of course George W. Bush's inauguration. Additionally, the editorials mentioned Michael Chertoff replacing Tom Ridge as Homeland Security Secretary. These personnel changes will be analysed primarily in chronological order as the appointments became the centre of attention of editorials: Rice, Bush and Chertoff.

WP made some broad remarks as all the candidates for new cabinet positions became clear. 'A striking feature is the continuity of the national security and foreign policy lineup', they observed. This could result in 'an absence of fresh thinking' (WP: 2004-12-10). WP seemed less than impressed, but continuity is not an entirely negative word in this setting. They simply pointed out that the personnel changes taking place were unlikely to trigger major policy changes. Rice was, of course, a well-established insider even before Bush's first inauguration. On the day of Bush's second inauguration WP urged Bush to 'change course on numerous policies. But it doesn't seem likely' (WP: 2005-01-20).

The tone surrounding the appointments varied considerably. This is true of the editorials and also of the senate hearings taking place. The day after Rice's hearing, NYT titled its editorial 'A diplomatic hearing for Ms. Rice'. The meaning of diplomatic alludes here to the act of keeping up appearances and covering up difficult

issues. 'Ms. Rice acted as if things were going according to plan in Iraq and everywhere else, and the senators acted as if she were not part of the serial disasters of the administration's foreign policy' (NYT: 2005-01-19).

The use of the phrase 'serial disaster' is indicative of NYT's dismissive stance towards the Bush administration throughout period 3. On Rice, they continued by stating that 'she was so much the public face of the drive to war with Iraq that her appearances on Sunday morning talk shows became a running joke' (NYT: 2005-01-19). NYT stand alone in their ferocious attacks on appointee Rice. USAT drew the conclusion 'That she has the brilliance and the ability for the job is not in question' (USAT: 2005-01-19), whereas WP openly endorsed her candidacy writing 'Ms. Rice probably will be confirmed by the Senate this week, as she should be'.

Views differed widely among the more centrist and left-leaning news outlets. There is quite a distance between calling Rice brilliant, and labelling her TV performances a joke. Senator Barbara Boxer was the hardest hitting during the hearing and WSJ (2005-01-28) interpreted her grilling of Rice on Iraq as 'calling her a liar'. Fox News (2005-01-26) was also unimpressed by Senator Boxer's treatment of Rice, reporting that Rice was 'batted around by a few democratic Senators'.

NYT quoted, and thus added weight and publicity, to the arguably most scolding remark Boxer had about Rice. 'Your loyalty to the mission you were given, to sell this war, overwhelmed your respect for the truth.' (NYT: 2005-01-19). There were several arguments for war, according to Rice, whereas Boxer contended that WMDs was the main issue. Ex-CIA Director Tenet points out that WMD 'was the public face that was put on it' (Tenet, 2007, p. 321). Weapons inspector Hans Blix notes the same, and sided with Boxer in stating that WMDs 'was by far the most important reason offered to the U.S. Congress and the American public' (Blix, 2004, pp. 266–267). During the hearing Boxer stated, 'when we voted to support the war, which I did not but most of my colleagues did. It was WMD, period.' That statement was shown in a video clip by TPM (Fox: 2005-01-19).

Talking Points Memo was not content to sit on the side-lines, and launched a counterattack of their own on Boxer. On January 18, they screened a video clip of the heated exchanges between Rice and Boxer. The final comment in the clip was Rice

pushing back forcefully: 'Senator, we can have this discussion in any way that you would like, but I really hope that you will refrain from impugning my integrity' (Fox: 2005-01-18). The title of the TPM the next day was 'Senator Barbara Boxer and the war on terror'. Bill O'Reilly lashed out and contended that anyone who approached the war on terror in the manner Boxer did, would have to be insane:

> *Senator Boxer wants to modify the Patriot Act, is against coerced interrogation of illegal combatants, against the war in Iraq, against funding the action in Afghanistan, and opposes just about every other anti- terror measure […] Is there anyone watching me right now, anyone, who would want Barbara Boxer calling the shots in the war on terror? No sane person would. (Fox: 2005-01-19)*

Whether it helped or damaged Rice that Fox openly and forcefully came to her rescue, remains an open question. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that the Bush administration's approach at times was to the left of conservative outlets. It resembles how WSJ wrote about France and Belgium's reluctance before the Iraq war. It also demonstrates how derogatory language was applied by NYT to describe Rice, and by Fox to Boxer after their public clash. A few days later, Fox derided Boxer by putting her in what they would consider questionable company. The company in question was 'Senators Kennedy, Kerry, Boxer, Jacques Chirac, Vladimir Putin, and all the rest who refuse to take a proactive stance against Islamic fascism' (Fox: 2005-24-01).

This is a clear example of an internal media battle, featuring politicians and media outlets as actors and combatants. Condi Rice had fought hard in the media to generate support for the war in Iraq. Barbara Boxer vehemently opposed her confirmation. NYT sided with Boxer and criticised Rice heavily. WSJ weighed in, as Fox also entered the fray, directing a counter-attack of its own at Boxer.

Rice was somewhat bruised after the battle, and was confirmed with an unconvincing 82 to 13 votes. The vote count was quite a statement of opposition, put in historical perspective. It was the highest number of no votes against a Secretary of State since Henry Clay in 1825, and 'the last nominee for secretary of state to receive any "no" votes was Alexander M. Haig Jr. in 1981' (Stolberg, 2005b). In comparison,

Hillary Clinton was approved by 94 to 2, and when she was succeeded by John Kerry during President Obama's second term, he was voted in by 94 to 3 (Gordon, 2013).

Rice took over State Department stating in her hearing that 'the time for diplomacy is now', a statement Bush echoed (Baker, 2013, p. 385). Her leadership style was quite low profile, compared to her high-profile predecessor Colin Powell, and her successor Hillary Clinton. And on her ascending from National Security Advisor to Secretary of State, she was certainly not given a free pass, either by the media, or by the Senate. In her memoirs she recounts the fight, and landed a final blow on 'Senator Boxer; she always managed to descend into a personal assault' (Rice, 2011, p. 299).

Rice's boss, President Bush, was given better treatment by the media leading up to his second inauguration. He was a controversial president, elected through the tightest of elections, with one-state margins both times. Florida made the difference in 2000, and the state of Ohio was decisive in 2004. Still, at the halfway mark, his cabinet appointments drew more editorial flak than the President himself. However, outside of the editorial pages, a Bush-bashing literature had already emerged and would continue to grow (Corn, 2003; Dowd, 2004; Ivins & Lou, 2003).

On Bush's inauguration, USA Today (2005-01-18) wrote that 'The Bush inauguration is a parade of contradictions'. WP pointed out that the inauguration would 'have security precautions unlike any the nation has ever seen' (WP: 2005-01-08). It was a celebration of liberty, in a free democracy, with the protagonist – the most powerful individual in the world – protected behind layers of bulletproof glass and security barriers.

WSJ quoted extensively from Bush's inauguration speech and offered the following positive assessment urging Bush to battle on 'If he can stick to his guns and principles, his second term will confound the sceptics as much as his first one did ' (WSJ: 2005-01-20). USAT also made use of some quotes and highlighted some positives. They noted that 'the inaugural speech was not a dramatic policy shift, but "it sets a bold new goal for the future" that will require "the commitment of generations," Bush said' (USAT: 2005-01-20). A trademark pro et contra approach for USA Today.

More surprising was NYT's editorial writing on the inauguration. They abstained from any criticism and paid the President respect on inauguration day. This was rare, as NYT were highly sceptical to most aspects of the Bush administration's policy in 2005. Yet on inauguration day, they reminded critics of 'Mr. Bush's role, which was to summon the generalities that unite us. The rest should wait for another day' (NYT: 2005-01-21). Many of those days would come in the years ahead.

Fox News were positive towards the speech, and highlighted that 'The best thing about the speech was that it was vintage Bush. His supporters loved it' (Fox: 2005-01-21). It seems appropriate to include Fox News and O'Reilly himself among Bush's supporters. They had earlier pointed out that 'the culture war is getting nastier by the day. The progressive secular movement is furious President Bush won re-election' (Fox: 2005-01-03). Later in this chapter, Fox News' attacks on 'liberal' media outlets in this 'media culture war' will be analysed.

On the inauguration speech, WP concluded that it was 'More Wilsonian than conservative […] Mr. Bush's address promised an aggressive internationalism' (WP: 2005-01-21). These were hardly the words his communication team would have opted for. Bush was eager to be seen as conservative, probably had problems with parts of President Wilson's League of Nations legacy, and at times tried to counter descriptions of him as 'aggressive'. Bush came across as a principled leader, and few expected major changes to how foreign policy and national security was conducted.

The use of direct quotes from speeches, reported in a positive manner, is an indication of narrative success for the Bush administration. WSJ stands out in this period with a quote-heavy editorial titled 'Liberty Bell Ringer' following Bush's inauguration speech. In between the many ad verbatim quotes, WSJ also noted that 'Mr. Bush left the word "Iraq" unspoken. But in a sense the entire speech was about Iraq' (WSJ: 2005-01-21). They portrayed the speech as the ideological mooring of the Bush foreign policy.

Fox were equally impressed, and as reliant on quotes, as WSJ. Their TPM on inauguration day included a quote-filled video 'collage to document the day' (Fox: 2005-01-20). WP in previous periods had quoted most frequently, but were perhaps matched by WSJ in period 3. The two newspapers also had very similar editorial titles

picking up on the fundamental ideological nature of Bush's speech. WP's was titled 'The Rhetoric of Freedom'. In the editorial, WP made another observation about keywords not mentioned in the address, namely 'war' and 'terrorism'.

USAT's approach to the inauguration differed from that of the other four news outlets. One reason was that they published an op-ed by the President himself on inauguration day. The heading was 'I see a bright day coming for America' (Bush, 2005). Those who thought USAT had been given sections of the speech beforehand were wrong, because the op-ed is more specific than the speech. It has three sections, the first listing achievements for the first term, the next on the war on terror, and finally, goals and priorities for the second term.

The President of the United States rarely publishes op-eds, so it was quite a scoop for USAT. At the same time, it does represent an act of "handing the microphone" over to Bush, even though most newspapers would probably have relished the opportunity to print the text. It, nevertheless, gave Bush a narrative success in getting what borders to unabridged access to place his narrative next to USAT's editorials. He confidently asserted that 'We are winning the war on terror because of the courage, idealism and sacrifice of our military, Intelligence and homeland security personnel' (Bush, 2005).

Personnel changes at Homeland Security were also about to take place around Bush's inauguration. Tom Ridge was the first ever Secretary of Homeland Security, and he was not particularly successful. His departure in 2004 was noted by USAT and NYT as follows.

> *President Bush has a chance to appoint someone better. […] Mr. Ridge became known best for, well, playing with colors. […] Mr. Ridge lost turf battle after turf battle. (NYT: 2004-12-01)*

> *It's easy to blame Ridge for still-plentiful weaknesses in the nation's security, and even easier to mock the secretary's much-maligned color-coded alert system or his suggestion that families have a ready supply of duct tape for emergencies. But doing so fails to measure the man against the enormity of the task. (USAT: 2004-12-01)*

NYT mocked Tom Ridge for 'playing with colors', referring to the infamous Homeland Security Advisory System launched with its colours ranging from blue to

red. The colour code system 'became material for late night comics' (Clarke, 2004a, p. 251). It came across as confusing and did more to scare than to alert citizens. USAT recognize that it is easy to mock Ridge, and cut him some slack. They also gave him some credit for making sure 'the nation's skies are more secure than on 9/11, and its borders less porous' (USAT: 2004-12-01). USAT's air security news frame was mostly gone, but was revisited briefly on this occasion.

Despite mocking Ridge's legacy, NYT did acknowledge that he was at the losing end of a series of turf wars. The newcomer, DHS, was particularly prone to this, and in Washington's security policy environment 'surviving meant avoiding unnecessary bureaucratic fights' (Woodward, 2006, p. 323). This was an approach Ridge probably should have paid more attention to. He had little experience of the Beltway, and his nascent portfolio and authority were mauled into from several quarters. The result was an inefficient DHS, as portrayed in the editorials.

Appointing Ridge's successor would also not be trouble-free. Bush's first suggestion, Bernard Kerik, fell flat. NYT wrote much on it. They published an editorial titled 'Questions for Mr. Kerik'(NYT: 2004-12-09), and when his candidacy stranded they wrote he was 'relegated to a footnote in the history of Homeland Security'(NYT: 2004-12-19). Later they scolded 'the feckless vetting of Bernard Kerik as the nominee for secretary of homeland security' (NYT: 2005-01-05). The former police chief would later serve a four year sentence for 'eight felony charges, including tax fraud and lying to White House officials' (Dolnick, 2010).

In the end, Michael Chertoff became Secretary. Following Ridge's poor showing, and after the Kerik debacle, any candidate may have seemed an improvement (Orin & Bishop, 2007). The editorial pages were quite lean on Chertoff's appointment, as was the US Senate which confirmed him unanimously in a 98-0 vote (Stolberg, 2005a). This provided a stark contrast to the bruising confirmation battles of Rice and Gonzales. Chertoff had good prospects of improving on Ridge's meagre successes in turf wars, wrote WP. It bodes well, they added, referring to his broad experience in Washington, 'for his ability to transcend on-going squabbles between DHS and the FBI, between DHS and Congress, and within the department itself' (WP: 2005-01-12).

It is hard to determine why 'Chertoff's nomination sailed through the Senate, in contrast to the intense debates about Condoleezza Rice, the secretary of state, and Alberto R. Gonzales' (Stolberg, 2005a). Chertoff's record was undoubtedly less controversial, and it was previous policy, more than below par performances in the hearings that resulted in criticism of Rice. To liberal politicians and news outlets, Rice was synonymous with Iraq and WMD.

5.2 Gonzales and the torture narrative

While the views differed on the appointments analysed so far, the media battle intensified over Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez' nomination. He was treated as a walking incarnation of some of the Bush administration's most controversial policies. War is by nature controversial, but unlike torture it is not a priori reprehensible. Wars are fought for good and for bad reasons. But does anything justify interrogation techniques tantamount to torture? Another question is what qualifies as torture. Such questions were part of an emerging torture narrative in the war on terrorism. The expression 'torture narrative' was employed mockingly by WSJ (2005-01-05) at the time.

By nature, such a narrative constitutes a problem for the Bush administration. There are few benefits from facing torture and mistreatment allegations. This differs from most of the political stories that can be spun, emphasizing the issue's more attractive and sellable sides. Minor benefits such as being seen as hardliners and instilling fear of capture in terrorists are far outweighed by the drawback of being called a torturer. This thesis largely disregards such concerns and will treat this news frame as one the Bush administration would rather be without. It is also as an example of the media setting the agenda, as opposed to the administration itself.

The backdrop of the torture narrative was the Abu Ghraib scandal which erupted in the spring of 2004 (Higham & Stephens, 2004). The independent panel investigating the shocking mistreatment of prisoners opened their report by stating that what went on 'at Abu Ghraib prison were acts of brutality and purposeless sadism' (Strasser, 2004, p. 1).

Rumsfeld later acknowledged the huge impact of this scandal and narrative on public support. 'The pictures from the prison had come to symbolize the war many had come to oppose' (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 551). He even offered his resignation to President Bush over the scandal on two different occasions. This is well documented in several of the involved politicians' memoirs, with Bush quoting from the second resignation letter (Bush, 2010, p. 89; Rice, 2011, p. 298; Rumsfeld, 2011, pp. 547–550).

The media and the public demanded to know why such despicable behaviour could have taken place at a military detention facility. One perspective is that the problem goes all the way back to 2001. WP was perhaps the newspaper to sum up of this line of thinking most clearly. 'The torture portrayed in the photographs, […] grew out of a system of abusive treatment of prisoners established by the Bush administration after Sept. 11, 2001' (WP: 2004-12-05). USAT argued along the same lines but linked Gonzales to the scandal. They wrote that a Gonzales legal memo 'helped lead to the Abu Ghraib prison abuses' (USAT: 2005-01-06).

The 9/11 Commission's report documents a dramatic sense of urgency right after the attack, with Bush reportedly saying 'I'm tired of swatting at flies' (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004, p. 202). The CIA-Chief Tenet shared that assessment of the post 9/11 mentality. 'For us at CIA, the new doctrine meant that the restraints were finally off' (Tenet, 2007, pp. 170–171).

Tenet's statement echoed that of the Chief of CIA's Counterterrorist Center, Cofer Black, who famously said to Congress: 'After 9/11 the gloves come off' (Priest & Gellman, 2002). There's no doubt that a new mentality supplanted the security-averse thinking of the '90s that led to decreased budgets for the security sector, including the CIA. The phrase *Never Again* would be the guiding principle of Attorney General Ashcroft, and is also the title of his memoirs (Ashcroft, 2006, pp. 130, 279).

Bob Woodward also sees sentiments right after 9/11 as important. 'The rules, maybe all of them, changed that morning' (Woodward, 2002, p. 8). Tenet describes circulating a memo on September 16 arguing that post 9/11 'there can be no bureaucratic impediments to success. All the rules have changed' (Tenet, 2007, p. 179). This was partly true, and the change was partly mirrored in public opinion which

was more accepting of government policy at odds with the protection of civil liberties (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 164–166). Unfortunately for the Bush administration, this disposition was about to change, making some of their policies highly controversial.

While policy elites may want quick changes to how government operates, there is a lag in judicial restraints and procedures. Before a government practice is established, you often need legislation and laws that are commensurate with the Constitution. This is where Alberto Gonzales enters the story, as he played a pivotal role in providing some of the legal opinions that warranted new and tougher detainee treatment.

During Gonzales' hearing, the gloves came off too, and he was given a rougher ride in the editorials than any other appointee. To some extent, he became the Bush administration's public face of the rough treatment of detainees, and in turn the punching bag of the liberal media. NYT (2004-12-01) simply wrote that Gonzales 'signed off on two legal opinions that justified torture'. The procedures in question were described very differently in the newspapers. The definition of torture became a focal point, and here are examples of the newspapers' positions on that account.

The twisted legal reasoning behind the brutalization of prisoners at military jails (NYT: 2005-01-05)

an extremely permissive definition of torture prepared under the direction of Mr. Gonzales, […] the administration's twisted interpretation of torture or the Geneva Conventions. (WP: 2004-12-05)

Loud music, temperature extremes, and uncomfortable positions. To call such discomforts "a form of torture" is to rob the word of all meaning (WSJ: 2004-12-02)

The gap is quite wide. To NYT, it was 'torture'. WP were also highly critical, employing the negative phrase 'twisted interpretation'. On the other side stood WSJ, who maintained that the Bush administration's critics were about to rob the word 'torture' of all meaning. WSJ's editorial also included an attack claiming that the International Red Cross had 'increasingly become an ideological organization' and went on to blast the 'open ICRC hostility toward U.S. conduct in the war on terror'

(WSJ: 2004-12-02). It is probably safe to label a position hawkish when someone accuses the Red Cross of open hostility.

On the hearing itself, Gonzales received little praise. NYT (2005-01-07) wrote that 'Things went rapidly downhill', and 'the hearing served to confirm that Mr. Bush had made the wrong choice'. WP were even more negative stating that 'Gonzales was vague, unresponsive and misleading in his testimony' (WP 2005-01-26). Senators were right to have 'grave reservations' (WP: 2005-01-07) and voting for him would constitute 'endorsing the systematic use of "cruel, inhumane and degrading" practices by the United States?' (WP: 2005-01-26). This was a scathing repudiation of his candidacy that WP shared with NYT. NYT advised the senate to 'reject his nomination' in an editorial simply titled 'The Wrong Attorney General' (NYT: 2005-01-26).

WSJ and Fox balanced this negative line. Fox chose to go on the offensive and attack the attackers, two days in a row. The two quotes below document the media battle over the torture narrative and Gonzales' candidacy. It took place on the front pages and on the editorial pages, and Fox put it resoundingly in the context of Bush's re-election, providing a long list of all instances of negative coverage of Gonzales.

The New York Times ran a front-page torture story and two anti- Gonzales op-eds. The Washington Post ran a front page torture story and an anti-Gonzales editorial. The Los Angeles Times ran a torture story and an anti-Gonzales editorial. The Boston Globe ran a torture story, as did The Chicago Tribune […] The Wall Street Journal defended him on its editorial page, but that was it. (Fox: 2005-01-06)

Alberto Gonzales is a patriot and a role model for minority children. He is not a sadistic torture-monger. He is not a villain. The left-wing press should be ashamed but it's not. It's angry, angry that President Bush won re-election (Fox: 2005-01-07)

O'Reilly came to Gonzales' rescue: 'It's flat out wrong for the left wing media to slime the guy' (Fox: 2005-01-07). Again, the choice of wording suggests a no-holds-barred debate. Examples of confrontational words are 'angry', 'ashamed', 'villain', and 'sadistic torture monger'. He also called Gonzales a 'patriot'. This is among O'Reilly's strongest terms of virtue, and he routinely praises people either as pinheads or patriots on his show. According to his book on the topic, pinheads do

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'awful, dumb or evil things', whereas patriots do good things, based on principles derived from 'a Judeo-Christian philosophy' (O'Reilly, 2010, pp. 2–3).

Turning to the WSJ's defence of Gonzales, they urged 'Mr. Gonzales to go on offense and defend his entirely defensible actions' (WSJ: 2005-01-06). The hearing represented 'a great chance for the administration to do itself, and the cause of fighting terror, some good by forcefully repudiating all the glib and dangerous abuse of the word "torture"' (WSJ: 2005-01-06). This is a highly controversial statement that again shows the WSJ surpassing the administration itself in urging an aggressive posture on the war on terrorism.

The debate was indeed about 'dangerous abuse', but of people, not merely of words. The policies the WSJ made themselves champions of were later widely deemed torture, including by President Obama in a landmark anti-terrorism speech at the National Defense University, Fort McNair, in May 2013 (Obama, 2013). A Washington Post column in response to the speech was titled 'The end of the 'war on terror' (Robinson, 2013).

It is interesting that WP, which broke to the right leading up to Iraq, was breaking to the left and equalling NYT in critical coverage of the torture narrative. WP accused the administration of 'systematic violations of human rights' on two occasions (WP: 2004-12-05; WP: 2005-01-05). The torture narrative is an example of a narrative founded on and nurtured by the media, with the administration playing defence, most of the time. The offensive counter attack was launched by Fox and WSJ.

The potentially neutral ground in the torture narrative was held by USAT in period 3. They write considerably less about this topic than the other outlets. They voiced concern over Gonzales suitability, but offer only limited open criticism. They wrote that he 'will take office under a cloud of doubts as to whether he fully grasps the importance of individual liberties' (USAT: 2005-01-25). This is quite different from urging senators to vote against his confirmation, as NYT and WP did. USAT's editorial represents a measured criticism in which they also listed Gonzales' qualifications for the job. Such perspectives were absent from NYT and WP.

Alberto Gonzales was confirmed in the end, but it was in a closer vote than expected. He was supported by 60, while 36 senators voted against him. A tough vote,

but still not as controversial as Condi Rice's in historical perspective. The appointment of Gonzales' predecessor, John Ashcroft, was also very controversial; he was confirmed by a narrow vote of 58 to 42 in January 2001. Ashcroft's confirmation was apparently the most contested since 1925 (Lichtblau, 2005). In his memoirs, Ashcroft devotes two full chapters to what he describes as his 'Senate confirmation battle' (Ashcroft, 2006, pp. 39–72).

As Ashcroft withdrew from politics, the torture narrative emerged. Its importance to the war on terrorism was significant and very damaging. It would not disappear quickly, as Obama's 2013 statement at NDU proves. As we turn to how the conflict itself was referenced in period 3, it is fitting to end with words by the official most in trouble over Abu Ghraib. Rumsfeld describes clear links from photo material exposed in the media to legitimacy and war support. He acknowledged that 'The photos threatened to weaken support and call into question the legitimacy of our on-going efforts' (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 545).

5.3 A global struggle against insurgent terrorism

How the master narrative of the war on terrorism itself was portrayed had undergone a radical makeover by 2005. The word 'insurgency' was used sparingly in the earlier phases, but the violence in Iraq increasingly bore the traits of insurgency and guerrilla warfare. This development is important, since insurgency is less condemnable than terrorism. Terrorism by definition selects illegitimate targets, such as non-combatants. Often, terrorism and insurgency bleed into another, as was the case in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Additionally, the situation in Iraq was at times described as 'insurgency or a slide toward civil war' (USAT: 2004-12-22). NYT (2005-01-12) described civil war as a very bad outcome 'to be avoided at all costs'. WSJ stood out from the three other newspapers on this issue. They did not say the result might be a civil war. To them, the civil war had practically started, and constituted no unforeseen horror scenario. The WSJ rejected the 'claim that the election will produce a "civil war." We think this gets things backward. A civil war is already under way in Iraq' (WSJ: 2005-01-20). Five

days later, they elaborated by dismissing 'hopes of averting a Baathist-Sunni vs. Shiite-Kurd civil war. But we all now know we got that civil war anyway. It's called the insurgency' (WSJ: 2005-01-25).

The grey shades between different categories of violent conflict are underlined in WSJ's statement where they argue that the war on terrorism, in the Iraqi theatre, is at the same time an insurgency and a civil war. This proves the point that a volatile nation rife with conflict will endure several forms of political violence and armed conflict. NYT addressed the US public directly on this matter writing that 'the public needs to be aware, and be worried, about the larger picture […] an open-ended counterinsurgency war' (NYT: 2005-01-02).

The term 'counterinsurgency' had been used sparingly up until this point in the war on terrorism. That would soon change, and NYT was ahead of the curve on this. NYT mentioned COIN on a few occasions (2004-12-22; NYT: 2005-01-22). None of the other four media outlets applied the phrase during period 3. The narrative of insurgents rather than terrorists was initially actively countered by Rumsfeld. Columnist Dana Milbank argued that Rumsfeld did what he could to discourage the use of the word 'insurgent' (Milbank, 2005).

In the op-ed, Milbank quoted Rumsfeld arguing at a press conference that referring to Iraqi fighters as insurgents 'gives them a greater legitimacy than they seem to merit, […] This is a group of people who don't merit the word 'insurgency' (Milbank, 2005). Despite the strategic communication efforts of Rumsfeld, 'insurgents' stuck. It would subsequently be embraced by the U.S. military.

The development we see in period 3 is that the vocabulary changed along with the conflict, its support, and probabilities of success. After Bush's inauguration speech, WP made the following sharp observation about Bush's choice of words. Bush did not define 'the threat as one of "terrorism," or the response as "war." Neither word appeared in his address.' WP continued by openly questioning whether the war on terrorism would be discontinued. 'What has been a war on terrorism, Mr. Bush seemed to be saying, must now become a global struggle against dictatorship' (WP: 2005-01-21).

WP asked whether there was indeed a war, and if it was directed at terrorism. This was a serious questioning of 'the war on terrorism' as a master narrative and overarching concept. One reason for excluding such words in the speech, is that presidents might want inaugural speeches to be timeless, visionary and principled, rather than rife with the politicking of the time. Nevertheless, America's perhaps most political newspaper picked up on this, and asked their readership whether the war would continue.

NYT conflated the war on terror with the torture narrative. They primarily used the phrase in connection with civil liberties and inhumane treatment of prisoners. This is important because it represents a re-interpretation of what the war on terrorism signifies and stands for. They quoted Gonzales arguing that 'the war on terror "renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners" (NYT: 2005-01-05). They also quoted Senator Lindsey Graham on how 'mistreatment of detainees had hurt the country's standing and "dramatically undermined" the war on terror' (NYT: 2005-01-26).

While WP mentioned the war on terrorism in connection with detainee treatment, they also employed the phrase in a more positive context. They mentioned it when considering the contributions of allies in the war on terrorism such as Europe and Pakistan (WP: 2004-12-30; WP: 2004-12-31). USAT apply the phrase in several different contexts, while WSJ's usage is clearly more positive. In a lengthy editorial on the final day of the year WSJ looked back on 2004 and wrote the following:

> *When the history of the war on terror is written, 2004 will be remembered as the moment when the romance of the terrorist finally faded away. […] Elsewhere in the world, the year's news in the war on terror tended to be good. (WSJ: 2004-12-31)*

There was an overall positive tone to WSJ's treatment of the master narrative of a war on terror. WSJ suggested that what happened in the war on terrorism in 2004 was of historic proportions. They concluded that the war was going well. This measuring of success, of the score-keeping category, involves highlighting specific incidents that suggest the war is going well. Some of these are not controversial,

including the uprooting of the AQ Khan nuclear proliferation network. Others come across as more questionable such as celebrating the downfall of the Taliban. WSJ highlighted this in an editorial of its own titled 'Goodbye Taliban' (WSJ: 2004-12-22). The title seems quite premature ten years later.

The overall pattern we see here is that NYT started employing negative connotations and contexts to the war on terrorism. WP and USAT remained largely neutral, whereas WSJ openly condoned developments in the war on terrorism. USAT is nevertheless in a special position. This is due to two different reasons. First of all, Bush's own op-ed in the paper on his second inauguration day gave him a microphone through which to project his administration's narratives, and this he did. One of his two subtitles was simply 'The War on Terror', and he asserted 'We are winning the war on terror' (Bush, 2005).

Bush's mentioning of the war on terror in the op-ed demonstrates the co-existence of different concepts of the war on terrorism. His op-ed is a clear example of elite rhetoric specifically designed for dissemination through the press. Moreover, a narrative battle is evident in which Bush and WSJ compared their positive view with NYT's concerned and more negative view of the conflict. At this stage, the competing narratives seemed to co-exist although WP openly questioned whether there was a 'war', and if so, whether it still was against 'terrorism'.

Before 9/11 there was also a question of whether there was a war going on. The 'Beirut to 9/11' narrative recurred in period 3. The essence of it is that the war on terror was a one-sided affair prior to 9/11, and that the lack of forceful response from the US up until that point left the nation vulnerable to terrorism, even inviting it. It was Fox News that brought this narrative up. Fox were concerned the fighting mentality of Americans was waning. The narrative was pursued two days in a row. On January 24, O'Reilly complained about 'American opposition to an aggressive war on terror' and mentioned Beirut and the World Trade Center. The next day he laid out this narrative comprehensively.

> *For nearly 20 years, the USA allowed worldwide terrorism to go unchecked. From the bombing of the American embassy in Beirut in 1983 to the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 to the Khobar Towers bombing that killed 240 Americans in Saudi Arabia to the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa to the attack on the USS Cole and finally to 9/11. (Fox: 2005-01-25)[8]*

This is a complete narrative as it constitutes *an actor's compelling story lines that convey meaning about specific events to an audience.* It is TPM's explanation of the trajectory to 9/11, and it is a frame that endorses remedies. It compels forceful action in the war on terrorism. A final quote from the same TPM shows how upset O'Reilly was over this, and leads us over to the adversaries in the war. The notion of military means as the prime countermeasure against terrorism was losing traction.

> *According to a new Pew Research Center survey, only 17 percent of Americans who voted for John Kerry believe military force is the best way to defeat the terrorists. Incredible! Does anybody really believe you can convince bin Laden and Zarqawi to stop slaughtering civilians in the name of Allah?(Fox: 2005-01-25)*

5.4 Declining and rising adversaries

The landscape of adversaries facing America had become less tidy by 2005. Saddam Hussein was defeated and captured, but it was evident that America faced multiple capable enemies among the remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime. His search and capture have themselves become the subject of several books offering different perspectives (Maddox & Seay, 2008; Moore, 2004; Russell, 2011). There was also some confusion as to whether Saddam Hussein was indeed captured in the manner described by the military.

Globally the focus was still to some extent on Al Qaeda and the elusive bin Laden, but new faces emerged spearheading the assault on coalition forces in Iraq. Abu Musab al Zarqawi is a prime example. The Jordanian led the terrorist group Tawhid wa Jihad. The group operated primarily in Iraq, and formally put its banner under al Qaeda in 2004 (Benjamin & Simon, 2005, p. 44). Under its new name, al

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[8] The casualty numbers were mixed up by O'Reilly. It was the attack in Beirut that resulted in about 240 casualties.

Qaeda in Iraq was a manifestation of the linkage between the war on terrorism, and the war in Iraq. As Loretta Napoleoni's book title suggests, the Bush administration now had to grapple with *Insurgent Iraq: Al Zarqawi and the new generation* (Napoleoni, 2005).

The ferocious fighting taking place in itself provided a narrative to the American media arena. Rather than sending videotapes condemning the American presence in Iraq, tales of killed and wounded soldiers convey a message and demonstrate resistance and a will to fight. While Afghanistan certainly took its toll, the fighting in Iraq in 2004–2005 was arguably the hardest the American military experienced throughout the entire war on terrorism. With a meagre coalition, there were fewer shoulders to burden the fighting. This added to the toll on the US army and marines. The narrative battles lost over Iraq, and its WMDs, led to international friction, and added to the enormity of the task.

In 2004–2005 some editorials argued Afghanistan had been left on the back burner. Polling suggests that the public – just like the editorial boards – were more concerned about Iraq than Afghanistan (Yankelovich, 2005). One reason might be that Afghanistan was NATO's, and even the U.N.'s, war, as well as America's war. In Iraq, however, success almost entirely depended on the fortunes of the American forces.

The opponents America faced on the ground were diverse and dedicated fighters. Al Qaeda came in with international jihadist fighters, and the remnants of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime took to arms. In addition, there were independent Shiite and Sunni militias. Iraq developed into a messy theatre, in which the initial backing of major international institutions, such as NATO and the U.N., could have lightened the burden. Instead, the incidence of sectarian violence and reciprocal killings surged. NYT wrote about a broad uprising with 'large numbers of people who cannot be classified as Al Qaeda supporters, Islamic fundamentalists or sworn followers of Saddam Hussein' (NYT: 2004-12-22).

These violent ruptures in Iraqi society were of great concern to America's editorial writers and policy makers. That Sunnis and Baathists would fight the coalition was hardly surprising, despite Dick Cheney's infamous comments to NBC's

'Meet the Press' on March 16: 'we will in fact be greeted as liberators'. Most worrying were the Shiite attacks on coalition forces. The Shiites were thought to be potential allies, welcoming the toppling of the dictator. After all, there was a time before the invasion 'when Saddam Hussein was ruthlessly persecuting Iraq's Shiite majority' (NYT: 2005-01-05).

WP did not share NYT's view on this matter. They contended that 'violent "resistance" to U.S. troops now is limited almost entirely to those minority Sunnis' (WP: 2005-01-30). In line with that, WP questioned the judgment of 'Analysts who reduce the war in Iraq to a nationalist "resistance" against a U.S. occupation' (WP: 2005-01-30). This described the problems in Iraq in a more benign fashion. It was closer to the elite rhetoric at the time, arguing that Sunnis and Baathist were the main problem. Looking back, NYT's description seems the more prescient.

Contrary to this, America's most senior official in Iraq in 2003 and 2004, L. Paul Bremer, was very concerned about the influential Shiite cleric and warlord Muqtada al-Sadr as early the summer of 2003. His assessment was that 'Muqtada al-Sadr has the potential of ripping this country apart' (Bremer III, 2006, p. 122). Thomas Ricks also describes al-Sadr's Mahdi army as a formidable, skilled military adversary, and quotes army Captain John Moore saying, 'The Mahdi Army fought very courageously and demonstrated good tactical patience' (Ricks, 2006a, p. 338). WSJ pointed to a main reason Iraq's Shia mistrusted America: 'the U.S. failed to support their anti-Saddam rebellion in 1991 after the first Gulf War' (WSJ: 2005-01-20).

As already alluded to, WSJ (2005-01-20) considered 'a Baathist-Sunni vs. Shiite-Kurd civil war' unavoidable. Whereas USAT's writing on the enemies in Iraq was limited, they did, however, voice concerns and openly questioned whether there was 'any hope of even a modestly successful conclusion to Bush's Iraqi enterprise' (USAT: 2004-12-10). These quotes show how concerned USAT were about Iraq, whereas WSJ were not. WSJ's lack of concern likely stems from their highly dedicated support for the war. In their opinion, taking out Saddam Hussein was considered of such strategic importance, a post-invasion civil war was an acceptable cost.

Turning to **Al Qaeda**, the original enemy of the war on terrorism, the group's activities outside of Iraq largely faded out of sight within the editorial boards. In 2005,

there were too many highly active enemies inside Iraq for America to pay much attention to enemies outside Iraq. America had not been struck by large-scale terrorism inside its borders between 9/11 and Bush's inauguration. Europe was increasingly the scene for international terrorism against the West, where al Qaeda executed its second and third deadliest attacks against the West. 191 people were killed on commuter trains in Madrid in March 2004 (Hoffman, 2006, pp. 251–252; Sageman, 2008, p. 88). An attack against public transport in London killing 52, followed in the summer of 2005.

This allowed America to focus on the war it was primarily conducting on its own. Powell's cautionary pottery barn rule would prove its relevance. 'If you break it, you own it', he told Bush prior to the invasion of Iraq (Powell, 2012, p. 210; Woodward, 2004, p. 150). America had its hand full in Iraq whereas America's NATO allies, with a few exceptions, had their hands full in Afghanistan. To the extent that al Qaeda was even mentioned in editorials, it was primarily Zarqawi and al Qaeda in Iraq that broke through and made it to the editorial pages.

As my discussion of previous periods has established, few narratives issuing from al Qaeda made it to the editorial pages. This notwithstanding, Zarqawi succeeded with an audio statement prior to the first Iraqi national elections. The elections were a transitional milestone and held on January 31 (Bremer III, 2006, pp. 293, 397). USAT even quoted Zarqawi, writing 'A taped audio message attributed to Zarqawi declared a "fierce war" on "this evil principle of democracy," (USAT: 2005-01-26). They argued America should exploit the weaknesses of the statement, and that 'Zarqawi's message suggests the U.S. and Iraqis have at least a chance of turning the insurgents against each other and averting all-out civil war.' (USAT: 2005-01-26). WSJ and WP also picked up on the story, and quoted Zarqawi.

> *Merely listen to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the terrorist leader in Iraq who issued an audiotape this week saying that "We have declared a bitter war against the principle of democracy and all those who seek to enact it" (WSJ: 2005-01-28; See also WP: 2005-01-30)*

It is clear that both newspapers employed the Zarqawi quotes to discredit him, his cause and accomplices. Another dimension is that they were used to spark American support. Democracy is among America's most emphatic virtue words. An open acknowledgement that a leading enemy in Iraq wages war on democracy, suggests the fight in Iraq is just and worth winning for America. Despite using the statement in this way, it is nevertheless an example of a strategic communication success for Zarqawi. His goal is not peace with America, and he was probably content having his messages quoted by leading American newspapers.

An example of the rising significance of Zarqawi is that USAT mentioned him alongside Bin Laden twice. USAT wrote of 'Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Osama bin Laden's agent in Iraq,' (USAT: 2005-01-26). At Fox, they pulled the Nazi card on one occasion during period 3 as well. O' Reilly spoke of bin Laden and Zarqawi by name, as quoted earlier. 'These guys', he said of Zarqawi and bin Laden, 'are Nazis, fascists who kill for sport in the name of God' (Fox: 2005-01-25). Whether it is possible to kill for sport and in the name of God at the same time will remain an unanswered question.

Quantitatively, Zarqawi and bin Laden are mentioned roughly the same number of times across the data set, in period 3. USAT mentioned Zarqawi seven times and bin Laden five. However, six of USAT's mentions of Zarqawi were in the same editorial from January 26, whereas bin Laden's five mentions are spread across four different editorials. In contrast, WP hardly mentioned either of them, referring to Zarqawi once, and bin Laden twice. In WSJ, bin Laden is not mentioned at all, whereas Zarqawi is mentioned eight times. NYT swung the opposite way mentioning bin Laden four times, but never Zarqawi by name.

This short quantitative analysis shows that Zarqawi was given as much attention as bin Laden in period 3. In period 4 this would change, because Zarqawi would be killed by American forces in June 2006. His importance to the battle in Iraq is underlined by President Bush himself. He recounts getting Zarqawi, and considered it a 'bright spot' and 'a dramatic sign of progress' in Iraq (Bush, 2010, p. 365). Zarqawi was a rising adversary, who quickly declined. Subsequent leaders of AQI have never come close to the notoriety and infamy of Zarqawi. His status remained unparalleled

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until the rise of ISIL in 2014. His significance reflects what America's primary focus was in 2005–2006, Iraq – not al Qaeda.

Turning to al Qaeda and Taleban, WSJ's coverage stands out from the rest. They mention the two together in passages such as the 'Taliban and al Qaeda prisoners at Guantanamo Bay,' (WSJ: 2004-12-02). Al Qaeda, and narratives about the threat they constitute, are more widespread in WSJ than in the other three newspapers. NYT and WP mentioned the terror group only in passing. This is mostly true of USAT too. Like WSJ, USAT related al Qaeda to Guantanamo Bay (USAT: 2004-12-20).

WSJ's al Qaeda focus is worth pondering. Why would they write more than the others about al Qaeda? After all, they had communicated their stalwart support for the war in Iraq, and written extensively about it. There are of course several possible explanations. One could be that since they had lobbied hard for invading Iraq, once it was achieved they could focus on other adversaries.

Another explanation could be that they were eager to demonstrate that Iraq was not a diversion from the war on terror and Afghanistan. Senator Kennedy was among those arguing publicly that Iraq was having a negative impact on the war on terror. Recognizing this, WSJ would perhaps remain focused on Taleban and al Qaeda to ensure they were not neglected. The empirical data offer some evidence of this as WSJ were dismissive of claims that 'the Bush Administration's war in Iraq was causing reverses in the broader war on terror.' (WSJ: 2004-12-22).

WSJ wrote that Afghanistan was 'emerging as a success story in rebuilding failed states. (WSJ: 2004-12-22) While the same editorial added the caveat, 'We realize Afghanistan is not out of the woods', the constructed narrative was still one of high optimism and prospect. They returned to the topic nine days later in a spirited *tour d'horizon* of the war on terror: 'In Afghanistan, the Taliban is disbanding itself' (WSJ: 2004-12-31).

The Taliban as a defeated foe in the rear view mirror was off the mark. The other newspapers chose not to focus much on the militant group during this period. WP once berated Pakistan for not taking the fight to this particular foe with sufficient force and determination. 'Mr. Musharraf's army has carried out offensives against al Qaeda's low-ranking cannon fodder but shies away from attacking Taliban leaders'

(WP: 2004-12-31). This observation would prove forward-looking and prescient. As of 2014, the Taliban remains a serious force to be reckoned with.

Finally, an enemy that would remain in Iraq by 2014 was Moqtada al-Sadr. He survived and endured many a conflict with the United States, both political and military. This is quite an accomplishment as he was a target in America's crosshairs. Ambassador Bremer even suggests that al-Sadr was as dangerous as Zarqawi. 'I realized Zarqawi was the mirror image of Muqtada, a Sunni Muslim fascist. *Somebody has to stop them both before the poison spreads*' (Bremer III, 2006, p. 325).

5.5 American Support and Fox News

Open calls for war support featured heavily in previous periods, but declined dramatically in this. One reason is that the first two time periods were at the outset of major invasions of foreign countries. War was less omnipresent in the national psyche and the political debate after Bush's re-election. Time and casualties tend to take its toll on the American public's appetite for war. As John Mueller points out, this effect seemed to operate faster than normal with the war in Iraq (Mueller, 2005, p. 45). The fighting was rough; maimed soldiers and body bags create war-weariness. The divide between Republicans and Democrats on war support had double since period 2. Now you were 60 percent more likely to support the Iraq war if you were a Republican, as opposed to a Democrat (Berinsky, 2009, p. 102).

Support received less attention in the editorial pages. The exception was Fox news, which stepped up its efforts to bolster support for the war on terrorism. Fox initiated a media battle against liberal leaning news outlets that were sceptical about the war, and took both Condi Rice and Alberto Gonzales in defence. The one newspaper that continued to write a little about support and polls was USAT. We will start off with the other newspapers and then proceed to a comparison primarily focused on USAT and Fox.

Even though NYT did not write explicitly about support, they can still be labelled critical. They had undoubtedly soured on the war on terrorism, and almost all their writing reflected pessimism and dismay with the war. NYT did not want the

public to be supportive of a war they believed most things were wrong with. This approach can be seen as a continuation – and counterpart – of the sentiment communicated in period 2, according to which, if the war went well, people could 'end up feeling reassured, almost against their will' (NYT: 2003-03-20). The war did not go well, and the NYT editorial board were not showing signs of being assured.

The NYT balanced such sentiments by providing supportive commentary for elections in Iraq. They stressed they still had 'grave doubts' over strategy, and the direction of Iraq. They then added, 'Yet today, along with other Americans, whether supporters or critics of the war, we rejoice in a heartening advance by the Iraqi people' (NYT: 2005-01-31). This commentary on the election is one of very few positively worded passages found about Iraq in NYT during time period 3.

WSJ also rarely wrote about war support in this period. They broached the topic seemingly only once, when they warned 'Kennedy Democrats' not to run their campaigns in 2006 too hard on an anti-war message. 'It's just as possible that voters won't want to reward Democrats who sound like they're cheerleading for America to fail' (WSJ: 2005-01-28). This was a clear warning, bordering indeed on condemnation. To suggest the Lion of the Senate, Ted Kennedy and his allies, would prefer military defeat in Iraq is controversial.

WP devoted more space to war support and polls, than did WSJ. On Bush's inauguration day, they contrasted his approval ratings of 52 per cent with those of his recent fellow two-termers. 'Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan enjoyed better than 60 percent support as they began their second terms' (WP: 2005-01-20). Thus, they suggested that Bush's position was weaker than that of other re-elected presidents. WP continued by encouraging 'all Americans, blue-staters and red-staters alike, to wish him and the country success in the coming four years' (WP: 2005-01-20).

While these two quotes are not explicitly about support for the war, statements urging support for a wartime president arguably have relevance for war support. Some might relate such statements to a rallying-around-the-flag mentality. A week later, WP elaborated on the necessity to stay the course in Iraq for Bush. 'He's also right not to be stampeded by losses or the growing unpopularity of the war into aborting the Iraqi mission' (WP: 2005-01-27).

USAT considered poll results too, but approached them in quite a different manner. They also comment on Bush's low approval ratings on inauguration day. But in doing so, they explicitly link the numbers with war support. They described the American nation's sentiments as follows.

The nation still deeply divided, with Bush's approval rating among the public scarcely above 50%, [...] A USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll over the weekend showed that 52% say sending troops to Iraq was a mistake. (USAT: 2005-01-20)

Americans are worried. A USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup Poll last weekend showed 58% disapprove of the way the U.S. has handled Iraq during the past few months. For the first time, a majority -- 51% -- regrets the decision to go to war in the first place. These figures do not yet amount to a Vietnam-style hard turn against the war. (USAT: 2004-12-21)

WP urged Bush to remain steadfast in the face of dwindling war support. USAT do not offer such advice. They describe the people as divided and worried, and also having regrets about invading Iraq in the first place. They reinforced the polling numbers by treating them as facts. Their description was not entirely objective and neutral. It was slanted against the Bush administration. 'Not yet Vietnam-style' constitutes bringing up ghosts from the past, providing a dire prediction. For the Bush administration, WP's approach – urging Bush to look beyond polls – was clearly more beneficial to Bush, than what USAT wrote.

In another editorial USAT stated that 'Most Americans seem to understand the difficult road ahead' (USAT: 2005-01-13). They do not claim that President Bush does not grasp the difficulties in Iraq, but the reference made to Vietnam suggests USAT felt a gap was developing between elites and the public. Unlike earlier periods, USAT did not actively seek to prevent this from happening through their editorial writing. In their opinion, that was the President's job. 'Bush has a mammoth task ahead if he's going to unite a divided country behind highly divisive policies' (USAT: 2005-01-20). Their assessment of Bush's policies as divisive is another example of USAT taking a critical stance.

A tentative conclusion to this would be that once wars draw out, newspapers will more rarely actively address the public, to encourage it to support the on-going

war. While they continue to write about the war, the writing typically does not manifest itself as a call for or against war support. WSJ were still clearly for the war. But they advertised their own support rather than directly urge the people to support the war. We have earlier seen that newspapers tend to be loyal in the early days of a conflict. But in period 3 the most inspired call for war support came from the TV station in the data set.

Fox was in a league of its own when it comes to commentary on war support in period 3. They effectively make continued war support a question of loyalty. They provided some caveats, but the message was that those who did not support the war were rooting for the terrorists. As in previous periods, grasping the essence of Fox news' highly distinct news frames requires a few lengthy quotes.

> *All loyal Americans must understand the complexity of the new war on terror. Again, disagreement is healthy. Honest dissent is noble, but what these people in France, the U.N. and even here in the far left precincts are doing, effectively rooting for the terrorists, is unacceptable. (Fox: 2004-12-07)*

> *All loyal Americans should be hoping that Iraq will stabilize and that democracy will take root there. Even if you don't support the war, the goal of a free Iraq is noble. And Americans are the good guys in Iraq. And there's no other honest way to see it. (Fox: 2005-01-03)*

> *Some Americans [who] actually want the USA to lose in Iraq, primarily so that President Bush will look bad. [...] But losing in Iraq means more U.S. casualties, so Americans cannot hold that sentiment and still be called loyal. Let me repeat that. You can't root against your country in Iraq and still be a loyal American, period. (Fox: 2004-12-17)*

Not only do these quotes demonstrate Fox's emphasis on loyal support. They also targeted their remarks at those who feel otherwise. Opposition is ostensibly tolerated, but subsequently slammed as 'unacceptable' or not 'honest'. This is a replay of the concepts of 'un-Americanism' or 'bad Americanism', described in chapter 4.6. It is an editorial line with a clear divide between good and bad, loyal and un-American, pinheads and patriots. Effectively, TPM eliminate the nuances in between, and propose a worldview with Manichean traits.

Another dimension of Fox's loyal support is that it also means supporting the military. The distinction between supporting the troops and supporting the war seems

to be blurred. 'Like many others, "The Factor" has questions about the Iraqi war, but we support our military all the way' (Fox: 2004-12-17). Even though this is an attempt to separate the two, the third statement quoted above suggests that not rooting for America means in effect rooting for the enemy. TPM therefore seemed to conflate support for the war, with support for the troops. This divide was operative in previous periods for the other news outlets, but Fox held onto it.

In an extension of this confrontational line towards war-opposing American citizens, and countries such as France, TPM instigated a media battle with other news outlets. O'Reilly attacked news outlets who espoused views he wrote off as disloyal or anti-Bush. After the inaugural speech, TPM started by telling off WP for its coverage and went on to note that 'The L.A. Times and The Boston Globe followed suit. But The New York Times was neutral, cautious in its appraisal of the President's speech' (Fox: 2005-01-21). As documented in chapter 5.1, this was probably NYT's most positive editorial about Bush in period 3. In contrast, NYT was mentioned negatively by Fox on January 4,6 and 7, as part of the intra-media media battle.

When tensions are running high and there are accusations of misleading or unpatriotic news reporting, the notion of propaganda war comes to mind. The intermittent narrative section will start with this concept, which also featured USAT more heavily than any other newspaper. In conclusion, USAT seemed more likely to simply follow the polls in their editorial writing. This leads to a tentative conclusion that polls shape USAT's writing on war support, more than the other way around. A final quote from USAT links the discussion of support and polls to a discussion about the veracity of elite rhetoric.

> *Polls show that the administration's pre-war campaign was so effective that about 40% of Americans still believe Saddam had Weapons of mass destruction when the U.S. invaded.(USAT: 2005-01-14)*

5.6 Intermittent media frames

Over time, media frames receiving considerable – yet secondary – attention varied. This was the case between periods 1 and 2, and yet more changes occur from period 2 to 3. The most important change is that detainee treatment and civil liberties no longer were minor concerns. These issues moved to the forefront, and became a "torture narrative" as described in chapter 5.2. WSJ's activism was particularly strong in the Gonzales case. WSJ's activism is therefore no longer considered intermittent. That writing style migrated into the wider narratives discussed above.

Another change is the emergence of a narrative of a propaganda war, with allegations of misleading statements in the elite rhetoric. It is tied to the narrative of WMD, and of intelligence failure. 'The public, over time, arrived at a seemingly firm conviction that the Bush administration's justifications for the war exceeded the elasticity of reality' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 57). People, at home and even more so abroad, simply believed the Bush administration had overstretched the truth on Iraq.

Intelligence, including its veracity and potential failures, was integral to the opinion journalism at the beginning of the war on Iraq. In period 3, intelligence is back as an intermittent, limited concern in the way it was right after 9/11. Editorials typically ask how they could get Iraq's possession of WMDs wrong. Intelligence, propaganda and governmental misdemeanour were all combined in the travesty surrounding the disclosure of CIA agent Valerie Plame.

What is almost gone in period 3 is securitization and air security. As shown in chapter 5.1, USAT mentioned air security just once. The only real concerns for securitization were also found in USAT. 'Pork barrel politics has won out over protection' they observed (USAT: 2005-01-18). Their line of reasoning was that money was dished out on unnecessary protection measures, a theme underlined by the editorial's title: 'Symbols of security'.

What was discussed more was the international image of the US and the United Nations. While WSJ were leading the attack on what they considered an inefficient U.N., it is interesting that USAT wrote most about the other intermittent narratives. This reflects the difference between USAT's editorial page thematically and

stylistically and the other newspapers. Below is an overview of the intermittent news frames variations over the three first periods.

Table 5.1 Intermittent media frames period 3

Period 1 – post 9/11	Period 2 – leading up to the Iraq War
Detainee treatment and civil liberties	Detainee treatment and civil liberties
Air security	International support and France
Diplomacy and coalitions	WSJ's journalistic activism
The Anthrax scare	Securitization
Period 3 – Bush's re-election	
Propaganda war	
Intelligence failure	
The U.N. and international support	
The Valerie Plame affair	

Propaganda is often confused with 'white lies'. While propaganda often involves inaccurate information, this is not the essence of the concept. Propaganda is highly results-oriented communication, designed to achieve certain outcomes, sometimes by using false, sometimes correct information (Romarheim, 2005b). This was the case around the Iraq war too, and it is from here the accusations of the Bush administration misleading the American public stem. A key text was USAT's editorial titled 'In battle for credibility, Pentagon injures its cause' (USAT: 2004-12-14).

The Pentagon were offered an opportunity to respond in USAT 'Opposing view' column, but abstained. Perhaps because the editorial hit particularly hard; 'The Pentagon, it would seem, does not take kindly to falsehoods. Or does it?' The Pentagon 'drum up patriotic sentiment or cover up embarrassing truths. It also includes

sophisticated psychological operations, or "psyops" campaigns, that spread false information'. Black psyops is something the Pentagon would by default not comment on. However, not answering leaves it to others to define your actions, potentially damaging you credibility. This is risky, as pointed out by USAT.

> *This effort to win the war of words can be won only if the military speaks with credibility and authority. That doesn't allow for fabrications or misrepresentations, which have become all too commonplace. (USAT: 2004-12-14)*

These are serious allegations, underlined by accusing words such as 'fabrication' and 'misrepresentations'. It is an attack on the treasured commodity of credibility, and therefore likely undermines the entire foundations of the war on terrorism. If the people no longer believe the administration's rhetoric, the prospects of bolstering support are, of course, severely limited. The link to Iraq, and the breadth of the credibility problem across the administration, were highlighted when USAT returned to this news frame a month later.

> *Top Bush administration officials insisted that Saddam Hussein was hiding Weapons of mass destruction. "There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us," Vice President Cheney said in August 2002. Six months later, Secretary of State Colin Powell made the case, including satellite photos, to the United Nations. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld scoffed that even "a trained ape" knew it was true. (USAT: 2005-01-14)*

The names of Powell, Cheney, Bush and Rumsfeld are collectively linked with the inaccurate statements. Two of them are even quoted verbatim. The four most powerful politicians in America are all portrayed as complicit in efforts to mislead the nation. Rumsfeld's quote is particularly damaging because not only did he make his case, he mocked those who questioned Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction. The full quote – also mentioned in chapter 4.1 – reads:

> *There's no debate in the world as to whether they have those weapons. There's no debate in the world as to whether they're continuing to develop and acquire them [...] We all know that. A trained ape knows that. All you have to do is read the newspaper (Rumsfeld, September13, 2002)*

Rumsfeld's insistence that 'all you have to do is read the newspaper' is particularly interesting to a project like this one, focusing on how newspapers relate to elite rhetoric. It demonstrates that a year after 9/11, Rumsfeld was confident about succeeding in disseminating his narrative into the newspapers. Moreover, he implicitly acknowledges being aware of the processes that Entman labels cascading effects. If the Bush administration's strategic communication – or propaganda – was forceful enough, it would shape the media's content. Chapter 4 proved this to be the case, and here we see USAT overtly deconstructing the narrative of Iraq's WMD possession.

In chapter 4.3, before the invasion, NYT warned the Bush administration not to 'jeopardize its own credibility' (NYT: 2003-02-14). In hindsight there is no denying they suffered from a credibility loss. This was a problem Bush would have to address, as the statement below from April 6, 2006, documents.

> *And one thing that I think is really important for our citizens to understand is that when the President says something, he better mean what he says. In order to be effective, in order to maintain credibility, words have got to mean something.*

The words spoken about WMDs were meaningless or wrong. How did this happen? Weapons inspector Hans Blix's account does not suggest 'that Blair and Bush spoke in bad faith'. Blix only notes that 'a deficit of critical thinking' was widespread at the time (Blix, 2004, pp. 260–263). In an interview with WP in 2004 Powell made the front pages, acknowledging that 'The absence of a stockpile changes the political calculus', about going to war (Kessler, 2004, p. 299; Suskind, 2006). Blix echoed this sentiment. 'Indeed, presence or absence of weapons ought to make a difference as regards the response that is to be chosen' (Blix, 2004, p. 270).

The other instance of a news outlet pointing to inaccurate pre-war statements on Iraq in the empirical material from period 3, was in the NYT. Their criticism of most aspects of the Bush administration's policies also touched on this and mentioned another Bush administration official by name. Rumsfeld's under Secretary Douglas

Feith established and headed the Policy Counter Terrorism Evaluation Group (PCTEG).

> *The office essentially fabricated a link between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden - a link used to justify the Iraq invasion, and one that Mr. Rumsfeld was not getting from the C.I.A. (NYT: 2004-12-21)*

This office has been at the centre of much debate. Feith himself notes that his office had become 'legendary literally, because nearly everything said about the PCTEG has been a legend – that is make-believe' (Feith, 2008, p. 116). Paul Pillar, formerly with the CIA, goes far in arguing that initiatives like the PCTEG functioned as a means to bypass the CIA (Pillar, 2006). PCTEG and Feith no doubt was controversial as Rice pointedly writes in her memoirs 'Feith, made clear that the Pentagon neither needed nor welcomed the opinions of others' (Rice, 2011, p. 192). Moreover, George Tenet and the CIA mockingly invented the term 'Feith-based analysis' (Tenet, 2007, p. 348), and Woodward claims Powell privately called this group of people 'Feith's Gestapo office' (Woodward, 2004, p. 292).

However this may be, what matters most here is that accusations of fabrications of intelligence were printed in USAT and NYT's respective editorial pages. The question of credibility evolved and turned into a problem complicating the execution and undermining the support for policy for President Bush.

A statement from Bush a year later demonstrates how defensive he was in projecting a compelling strategic narrative on Iraq and al Qaeda. At a press briefing in the Pentagon, on January 19, 2006, Bush insisted that he was telling the truth and not making things up. His words were: 'See, al Qaeda thinks they can use Iraq as a safe haven from which to launch attacks. That's their stated objective. I'm not making this up' (Bush, 2006).

Turning to **intelligence** failure per se, a fair amount was written about it, much of it less emphatic, however, than what was written about topics like appointments and torture. NYT's December 11 editorial was titled 'Intelligence and Civil Rights'. NYT assessed that 'the nation needed to overhaul its badly flawed intelligence system'

(NYT: 2004-12-11). All the same, this should not be at the expense of civil rights, they stressed.

Around the same time USAT also called for Washington 'to fix the nation's broken Intelligence system' and to repair 'the Intelligence system's monumental disorganization' (USAT: 2004-12-08). Expressions like 'badly flawed' and 'broken' are certainly negative. Yet the criticism of America's Intelligence system nevertheless comes across as a well-drilled routine. There has been so much written and said about it that strong words no longer have the power to shock, they merely communicate an established consensus.

Intelligence failures were the reason 'the nation had been caught blind by the 9/11 attacks' (USAT: 2005-01-14), and the non-existent WMDs in Iraq were by many considered to be 'one of the biggest Intelligence failures in the nation's history' (USAT: 2005-01-14). This view won the support of Colin Powell years later in his memoir (Powell, 2012, p. 222). This is confrontational language, indeed. However, it rarely received an answer; everyone – including the Bush administration – more or less agreed that intelligence reform was needed. The man the media were after had already been sacrificed; George Tenet had been relieved of his duties (Priest & Pincus, 2004).

Tenet's response and version of the events came in the shape of a memoir. Serving Intelligence leaders must be extremely tight lipped. After retirement, this is less the case. Tenet's volcano-like interview with 'CBS 60 minutes' documents this (Pelley, 2007). His book is highly combative and pushes the blame for Intel failures up to the top level of the Bush administration. He argues that the decision to go to war with Iraq was taken prior to any intelligence assessments on Iraq's WMDs (Tenet, 2007, pp. 359–367). His view is supported by one of his top deputies at the time, CIA veteran Paul Pillar.

> *What is most remarkable about prewar U.S. intelligence on Iraq is not that it got*
> *things wrong and thereby misled policymakers; it is that it played so small a role in*
> *one of the most important U.S. policy decisions in recent decades (Pillar, 2006, p. 16)*

This view was also to some degree accentuated by USAT. 'Cautionary voices, including within the CIA, were dismissed in the rush to war' (USAT: 2005-01-07). WSJ, on the other hand, were not eager to give the CIA a free pass. They wrote about 'the badly needed housecleaning at the CIA' and 'the myriad U.S. intelligence failures of recent years' (WSJ: 2005-01-25). Sympathetic to the Bush administration in general, and the Rumsfeld/Cheney line in particular, they considered the CIA to be the culprit in misinforming the administration.

Bush himself writes that he decided to 'not criticize the hardworking patriots at the CIA for the faulty intelligence on Iraq' (Bush, 2010, p. 269). His choice of words, however, indisputably assigns blame. Bush just decided to not criticise the CIA for their mistakes and faulty intelligence.

Bush was quoted verbatim one of the few times WP wrote about intelligence in period 3. Again he laments the Intel community's capacity to foresee events and get things right. "I don't think anyone would say that the intelligence left anyone with the impression that you'd be in the degree of insurgency you're in today," he said' (WP: 2004-12-10). His use of the word insurgency also is interesting, as it gradually became the dominant narrative and category to apply to the resistance America faced in Iraq.

The CIA was on the editorial pages for a different reason as well, the disclosure of their secret operative **Valerie Plame**. This story could have been taken out of a spy thriller and the facts of it can only be briefly summarized here. Her story was in fact turned into a movie, *Fair Game*, based on her memoirs of the same title. The story was mentioned in USAT and NYT during period 3. The Plame story ties together intelligence, Iraq, weapons of mass destruction and internal in fights in the administration.

In short, Dick Cheney's Chief of staff, Scooter Libby, was suspected of deliberately leaking Plame's secret CIA identity to the press. He was never found guilty of that. He was however found guilty of obstructing justice. The leak was considered a retribution for Joe Wilson's (Plame's husband) undermining of the WMD argument for war with Iraq. Ambassador Joe Wilson went to Niger in 2002 to ascertain whether Iraq had sought to acquire uranium there. He concluded that they

hadn't, and spoke out when his findings were disregarded in the Bush administration's official statements (Wilson, 2003, 2004)

NYT were particularly involved in this story since one of the recipients of the leaked information was one of their journalists. Judith Miller went to prison for refusing to disclose the identity of the official who leaked Plame's identity to her. At the time, she described her experience reluctantly giving testimony to the investigating grand jury. There she opened for 'the possibility that the White House was unfairly attacking a critic of the administration' (Miller, 2005). A decade later, she would publish a book recounting her experience in jail, and in reporting the build-up to the war in Iraq (Miller, 2015).

This sentiment also came through as NYT wrote about the Plame affair. They were deeply concerned about 'The Bush administration's abuse of power in leaking the name of a covert C.I.A. operative' (NYT: 2004-12-20). 'Power abuse' is an allegation politicians are particularly sensitive to. USAT ventured down the same path. They concluded, 'Plame's identity, after all, was leaked not to expose government wrongdoing, but to punish a political enemy' (USAT: 2004-12-09)

In a story with few winners, many of the involved looked bad. Plame lost her job. Miller stopped working for *The Times*, and Scooter Libby was imprisoned. President Bush's refusal to pardon Scooter Libby is perhaps the strongest known grudge between Bush and Cheney. In his intrusive account of Bush and Cheney's leadership Peter Baker uses the quarrel over Libby's pardon as a prologue, thus assigning great significance to the disagreement (Baker, 2013, pp. 1–11).

Cheney urged Bush to pardon Scooter many times, and told him 'you are leaving a good man wounded on the field' (Cheney, 2011, p. 410). Again we sense the intensity of internal turf wars within the Bush administration. Powell's memoirs also weigh in with unfavourable writing about Scooter (Powell, 2012, pp. 219–220). In hindsight, no one feels good about the Plame affair. USAT may have had a good point when they predicted, 'the real loser will be the public' (USAT: 2004-12-09).

Lastly in this chapter, traces of narratives about the **U.N. and international support** will be considered. Let us start with how the U.N. was treated in the WSJ. They had replaced France as the favoured target of criticism. WSJ pursued a highly

confrontational line towards the U.N. As previous subchapters have shown, this activism spread to other segments of their coverage as they defended Rumsfeld and Gonzales by attacking their critics.

The titles of WSJ's two most pointed editorials communicate corruption and incapacity to relate to the real problems in this world. In 'On Planet U.N.', WSJ had picked up that senior U.N. officials had 'declared that those of us who write these columns are "from another planet" (WSJ: 2004-12-07). WSJ tried to turn the tables on the accusation stating that the WSJ editorial board and the U.N. did not belong to same world, adding that the U.N. barely had entered 'our solar system' (WSJ: 2004-12-07).

In another editorial titled 'Oil for influence' they referred to the 'Oil for Food scandal' (WSJ: 2005-01-19). Moreover, Kofi Annan himself took flak in a long editorial on 'The Oil for Food Audits' (WSJ: 2005-01-13). As a long time U.N. critic, WSJ may have felt vindicated by reports of corruption at Turtle Bay. NGOs were not in high standing among WSJ's editorial board.

Other newspapers were not as concerned – or excited – by the revelations on misconduct at the U.N. NYT did come to Kofi Annan's aid, in an illustration of the left–right spectrum of the newspapers studied here. USAT and WP remained indifferent and non-committed about the issue, whereas NYT berated Annan's critics: 'It seems wildly premature to call for Mr. Annan's resignation' (NYT: 2004-12-10). Fox devoted its TPM to chastising Annan two days in a row. They applauded WSJ's editorial page, and carved into NYT's liberal stance on the issue.

> *The conservative editorial page of The Wall Street Journal is leading the media charge to remove Annan, citing his dismal record of oversight on atrocities committed on his watch and also corruption. Predictably, the liberal New York Times is Annan's biggest defender in the media, (Fox: 2004-12-07)*

Turning to **international support**, especially of foreign states, it was a concern in periods 1 and 2. In period 3, it receded more into the background, or was taken up in association with Abu Ghraib and other detainee-related transgressions. The focus was on how America's standing in the world would suffer from such practices and transgressions. The independent panel investigating Abu Ghraib concurred. The

images had done great damage 'to the image of the U.S. among populations whose support we need in The Global War on Terror' (Whitney, 2004, p. xxii).

Also on this narrative *USA TODAY* led the way. We see a more active USAT than before on several topics. They wrote about Abu Ghraib's impact on the image of the United States abroad, on January 6. They elaborated on this topic on another occasion.

> *Prisoner abuse, helps fuel anti-Americanism around the world.' With U.S. military and diplomatic resources stretched thin by Afghanistan and Iraq, the nation needs more friends, not more enemies abroad. (USAT: 2004-12-20)*

This statement is truly interesting, as it relates the prospects of success in the military theatres of the war on terrorism to public opinion abroad. State-to-state diplomacy is also mentioned. It seems clear that USAT perceived success on all of these different fronts – military, diplomacy and public opinion – to be connected. Moreover, all these fronts were badly affected by the 'torture narrative', emanating from the dungeons of Abu Ghraib. USAT continued, 'The Iraq adventure also soured relations with many long-time allies in Europe and elsewhere, and it undermined popular support around the globe' (USAT: 2005-01-20).

In period 3, WSJ never expressed much concern either about international support or public opinion. WP, on the other hand, wrote much about diplomacy and coalitions in period 1. They briefly touched the latter topic in period 3, and related it to Guantanamo. Its 'foreign detainees has caused enormous damage to America's standing around the world, and even to relations with close allies' (WP: 2005-01-05).

Fox scoffed at suggestions that international support was important to the success of the war on terror. They quoted, and subsequently ridiculed, a statement by Senator Kennedy about the Iraq war. 'It has increased support for Al Qaeda, made America more hated in the world, made it much harder to win the real war against terrorism, the war against Al Qaeda' (Fox: 2005-01-25). Fox criticised Kennedy on numerous occasions. His name was mentioned more than 20 times in period 3. On one

of those occasions, TPM stated that 'Senator Kennedy and other internationalists have a completely unrealistic view of the world' (Fox: 2005-01-27).

What occurred in period 3 is that both sides of the political spectrum alleged the other side was being untruthful and did not understand the world. Hans Blix summed up the opposite worldview to that of Fox and WSJ. He related intelligence to political and public support, and loss of credibility. About the Bush administration and its allies he wrote:

> *They were exaggerating the risks they saw in order to get the political support they would not otherwise have had. I think this is a conclusion that a large segment of the public has drawn. The consequence is a loss in credibility (Blix, 2004, p. 271)*

5.7 Conclusions and findings in period 3

In period 3, controversies over the war on terrorism, within America, reached unprecedented levels as new appointments were made and the gruesome treatment of detainees became known. Iraq – not al Qaeda – was America's main focus in period 3, just as in period 2. The narrative battle of whether the enemies in Iraq were primarily terrorists, or also insurgents, prepared the ground for adopting the term insurgency into the vocabulary of the war on terrorism.

The torture narrative is the clearest examples in this study's material of a media frame dismissing and dominating the strategic narratives of the Bush administration's elite rhetoric. The narrative was linked to Alberto Gonzales. As we have seen, everyone from the editorial boards to Abu Ghraib investigators, Hans Blix, Bush and Rumsfeld agree on how damaging this narrative was to the image of America abroad.

By 2005, the major problems of the war on terrorism had arrived. Unilateralism was allegedly exercised in period 1, but grew in period 2 with the coming of the Iraq War. Additionally, the torture narrative and controversial personnel selections entered the stage here in period 3. Bush's second term would not add any problems greater than these to the President's daunting agenda. In some ways, the next chapters will be about how to solve the problems that emanated in Bush's first term. One recipe would be a strategy of counterinsurgency.

Of the five media outlets, only NYT used the word 'counterinsurgency' during period 3. Additionally, NYT was by a clear margin the least supportive newspaper in period 3. It was followed by USAT. USAT's coverage of the war on terrorism grew in size and importance. They wrote the most about a few narratives, including on 'propaganda war'. They also engaged more in discussions of public support for war, a topic of decreased importance in period 3 for the three other newspapers.

The other news outlet to engage much in discussions on public war support was Fox news. Fox's activism and irate tone also became more conspicuous in period 3, with its active targeting of newspapers, nations and politicians deemed to espouse "unpatriotic" sentiments on the war in Iraq, and the war on terrorism. Fox stepped up its media battle in the face of waning war support.

America stood increasingly alone in Iraq; coalition building yielded insufficient results in 2003. The news outlets shared the Bush administration's focus on Iraq, but remained sceptical, apart from WSJ and Fox. Reports of brutal fighting grew into a narrative of its own, increasing war weariness and a decline in public support for the war. 'Fallujah became a metaphor for post-combat failure in Iraq,' argue Gordon & Trainor (Gordon & Trainor, 2006, p. 500). The importance of Iraq, at the expense of al Qaeda and Afghanistan, was also evident in the attention given to Zarqawi in editorials – roughly twice as much as bin Laden himself. Afghanistan was on the back-burner.

A final observation is that Bush seems more popular than his cabinet's top members. Rice and Gonzales received much rougher treatment than their boss in the editorials. The internal turf wars within the administration were also more clearly in evidence after Powell's and Tenet's resignations

From period 1, to 3, we have seen how unity was first formed, then fractured and splintered. The result was increasingly strong opposition to the war in editorials. The war was messy, but most newspapers still believed it could be won. Prospects of success affect support for war, and a final quote from WSJ can take us over to the next chapter. WSJ seemed eager for victory, and not only in a match-fixing way.

When these columns endorsed the war in Iraq, we didn't sign up for a short or easy war. We signed up to support whatever it takes to win (WSJ: 2004-12-21)

6.   The Surge and the ISG: A shift of strategy

While Bush re-shuffled his security and foreign policy team after being re-elected in 2004, the Congressional elections of 2006 also brought about changes. Rumsfeld left the Pentagon the day after the elections, partly 'to find common ground' with Democrats (Stolberg & Rutenberg, 2006). Personnel changes remain important in this period. Robert Gates and General David Petraeus entered the stage, and injected optimism into the very dire situation in Iraq in 2007. As events unfolded, it became clear that 2007 would be the deadliest year for US troops in Iraq (Berinsky, 2009, p. 27; Cave, 2007).

Just like 'Iraq was always Bush's battle' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 31), Petraeus was inextricably linked with the surge. It brought around 21,000 new troops tasked with bringing security to Iraq. The approach chosen by the Bush administration differed from that suggested by the Iraq Study Group (ISG), who favoured regional diplomacy, a gradual drawdown in troop numbers, and a focus on training Iraqi forces (Baker III & Hamilton, 2006). The result was a heated debate over policy, diplomacy and strategy options in Iraq.

Condi Rice writes that 'the president clearly understood' that he needed ISG 'to stabilize support for continuing the war Iraq' (Rice, 2011, p. 538). Polls measuring support for the war in Iraq in period 4 was sorry reading for the Bush administration. Two thirds of Americans (67%) opposed the war (See appendix II). Turning the tide on plummeting war support was a Herculean task as most people 'had already made up their minds on Iraq' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 84).

The war in Iraq reached a volatile phase after the blowing-up of the al-Askari Mosque in Samarra in February 2006. In a lengthy interview with WP's editorial board in December 2006, Secretary Rice was explicit about this. She told WP that 'this most difficult phase goes back to the Samara bombing and what was a deliberate strategy on the part of Zarqawi and al-Qaida to stoke sectarian tensions' (Rice, 2006). She restated the significance of the mosque attack in her memoirs, noting that AQI leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was behind it (Rice, 2011, p. 431).

President Bush, Robert Gates and Donald Rumsfeld shared Rice's view of the devastating effect of the mosque bombing on progress in Iraq (Bush, 2010, p. 361; Gates, 2014, p. 29; Rumsfeld, 2011, pp. 679–680). Almost a year after it occurred, WP wrote that 'the bombing of a Shiite mosque touched off sectarian war across Iraq' (WP: 2007-01-22). Kilcullen also mentions the Samarra bombing and concludes that 'Iraq in early 2007 was the most dangerous place in the world: a pitiless environment' (Kilcullen, 2009, pp. 132, See also 142).

Unquestionably, the Iraq war remained a highly divisive issue, at home and in the media. As stated on the opening page of this study, Bush himself considered ordering the surge his toughest decision (Bush, 2010, pp. 340–341). In his memoirs, Karl Rove rates it the second most important decision of Bush's entire presidency: 'His most consequential decision was going to war in Iraq' (Rove, 2010, p. 471).

In period 3, NYT was scathing in its criticism, but by 2006 they left regular critical commentary and at times engaged in journalistic activism. The intensifying critical tone of the news media was related to the deteriorating situation in Iraq. At the same time, criticism had reached unparalleled levels after a disaster at home: Hurricane Katrina. After Bush's 2007 state of the union speech, NYT blasted Bush's leadership during 'Hurricane Katrina. Always, he failed to deliver. He did not even mention New Orleans last night.' (NYT: 2007-01-24).

In his memoirs, the botched Katrina response is among the decisions Bush berates himself hardest for. Bush wrote that Katrina 'cast a cloud over my second term' and forthrightly admits that 'many of our citizens, particularly in the African American community, came away convinced their president didn't care about them' (Bush, 2010, p. 310). Cheney also admits the response should have been 'better at all levels' (Cheney, 2011, p. 432). 'The I'm-in-charge, we-will-succeed message that worked after the September 11 attacks did not work this time' (Baker, 2013, p. 407).

A report from Pew documents that 67 per cent of the American people were critical of Bush's Katrina handling (Pew Research Center, 2005). Pew also documented how the hurricane overshadowed the Iraq war in news media coverage, and how the American people were content with the media's critical coverage of the

disaster. This contributed to a new media climate in which the Bush administration's garnering of war support would take place.

War support was in the background in period 3, here in period 4 it makes a conspicuous comeback. Support for the war, and for the troops, are highlighted when large overseas deployments are about to take place. An interesting, yet intermittent, narrative emerging in the wake of war support is the notion of the military as a living organism. The rising number of casualties suffered by the US army and marines coincided with a clearer adoption of a personnel-heavy counterinsurgency strategy. Another trend which further aggravated military fatigue and overstretch was the emergence of new zones of conflict in the war on terrorism. This is related to the ISG's regional focus and the spill-over effect of violent conflicts. While the war on terrorism always was a global struggle, this period shows a clearer focus on addressing it in several different countries. Iran, Pakistan and Somalia were editorialized as potential new fronts in the war on terrorism. America's enemies were of many stripes and exploited porous borders to neighbouring countries of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Finally, the strategy discussions of the war on terrorism increased massively in this period. Bush announced publicly, and restates in his memoirs, that 'It is clear that we need to change our strategy in Iraq' (Bush, 2010, p. 378). Linking political goals and outcomes to tangible military objectives is a constituent of military strategy. Many definitions of strategy exist, and Baylis and Wirtz provide a short list (Baylis & Wirtz, 2007, p. 5; See also Freedman, 2013).

In 1957, Liddell Hart wrote that strategy is 'The art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy' (Liddell Hart, 1991, p. 321). A caveat is needed, as military means are here understood broadly to encompass media battle. As Rupert Smith points out, 'A strategy therefore is an expression of the aim and its links to the overall purpose and the context of the conflict' (Smith, 2007, p. 15).

The understanding of strategy applied here lies between these two approaches. Whether counterinsurgency is indeed a strategy, or is more accurately explained as an operational approach, is an interesting question (Simpson, 2013, p. 131). What matters more here is that in 2007 COIN was treated as, and considered to be, a strategy by America's political and military leadership.

6.1 The Iraq Study Group versus the Bush Administration

The publication of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group's report turned into a focal point for the Iraq discussions in America. The group was established in an understanding that the current approach was not working, and it was time to give new ideas careful consideration. The group was also known by the surnames of its co-leaders: James A. Baker III and Lee H. Hamilton. It argued for strengthening regional diplomacy.

Diplomacy, as an instrument and a strategy, will be dealt with here in this chapter. The regional focus will be analysed more in chapter 6.3. Dick Cheney sums up his reaction to the report as follows. 'I appreciated the work […] But I was troubled as I listened to their suggestions […] This was not a strategy for winning the war' (Cheney, 2011, p. 447).

The founder of USAT, Al Neuharth, takes up his pen from time to time. On the ISG he concluded that 'reactions have been mixed, among the public and in the press.' He went on to note that the newspapers balanced stance on the report was 'in line with its [USA Today's] politically independent approach.' Following that, he explained the reception by quoting from 'editorials from the country's three biggest newspapers' (Neuharth, 2006).

A negative view of the ISG was provided by WSJ columnist Bret Stephens, who was later promoted to deputy editorial page editor. He dubbed the ISG report 'lamentable' (Stephens, 2006). TPM's initial reaction to the report was that 'The Iraq study group did a good job. The folks on it are smart and honest. And the president would be wise to listen.' (FOX: 2006-12-06).

After considering the report's suggestions, Bush and his 'administration largely rejected the Baker-Hamilton approach' (Kessler, 2007, p. 237). A finding here is that the media's attitudes towards the report are closely connected to their attitudes to the Bush administration. As it became clear that Bush distanced himself from the ISG, some media outlets embraced the report more wholeheartedly, as it was seen as a challenging competitor to Bush's surge strategy in Iraq. The mechanism worked both ways as Bush was criticised indirectly through positive editorial writing about ISG.

The report starts by acknowledging that on Iraq 'many Americans are dissatisfied' and 'there is no magic formula'. It then proceeds to stress the importance of being 'candid and forthright with the American people in order to win their support' (Baker III & Hamilton, 2006, p. ix). The study's leaders thus place the report firmly in the context of a battle at home, to generate support for the war abroad, in Iraq. This is further emphasised when they point to the importance of political will and that 'success depends on the unity of the American people' (Baker III & Hamilton, 2006, p. x).

The ISG's portrait of Iraq in itself constitutes a narrative. Some of its applied wording was repeated in editorials. 'Severe consequences' 'magic formula' and 'slide towards chaos' being examples of elites – in this case the ISG authors – framing news content on Iraq. The idea was to build an American consensus behind an effective strategy. WP, with its emphasis on Washington politics and diplomacy, were receptive towards this thinking. WP foresaw a consensus, because part of the ISG's recommendations 'corresponds with what the Bush administration, leading members of Congress and the Iraqi government already are proposing' (WP: 2006-12-03). On this, WP would be proven partly wrong. As time passed, differences between ISG and Bush's strategy became clear.

Headlines are often telling, and on the day the ISG issued its report, NYT's leader bore the title 'Welcome Political Cover'. The next day USAT ran two separate editorials titled 'Iraq report just cover for surrender?' and 'With military options limited, it's time for Plan B: Diplomacy'. Both newspapers describe the ISG report as a 'cover', indicating that the whole process was a deceptive scheme. Some argued the report was produced and issued under false pretences.

USAT's headline included the word diplomacy. Just like WP, USAT were supportive of the ISG's diplomacy approach. They were also early and accurate in anticipating the inherent conflict between the ISG and the Bush administration. They wrote that 'For President Bush, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group's long-awaited report must have had the shock value of an unexpectedly bad report card' (USAT: 2006-12-07). Comparing the President to an underachieving student is not very appreciative of his efforts. It also played into existing narratives of Bush as an unruly rich man's son.

The day after, USAT followed up on the diplomacy track, calling for 'New diplomatic initiatives […] for ending the Iraq war' (USAT: 2006-12-08). The phrase echoes the opening section of the ISG report. The ISG's first main recommendation was titled 'The new diplomatic offensive'. It consists of the first 3 of the ISG's extensive list of 79 recommendations (Baker III & Hamilton, 2006, pp. 44–46). NYT explained that 'The Iraq report is a deeply diplomatic document, […] and exactly what he [Bush] needs to get the country out of the hole he has dug' (NYT: 2006-12-07). Thus they established a split between the Bush administration and the ISG.

Earlier chapters have established WP's credentials as firm believers in the effectiveness of diplomacy. Their writing right before the release of the ISG report, was optimistically in favour of 'more aggressive diplomacy' (WP: 2006-12-06), yet sceptical to whether Bush would go along with further diplomatic solutions (WP: 2006-12-03). As events evolved, WP did not themselves condone the diplomatic strategy of the ISG. Three days after the report was released they describe the ISG as being 'untethered to reality. […] the group's proposed "New Diplomatic Offensive" would be to suppose a Middle East very different from what's on the ground' (WP: 2006-12-10). Evidently, WP were thinking of different diplomatic solutions than the ISG report prescribed.

Turning to WSJ, the recommendations of the ISG are considered insufficient. They argue for a forceful response and label the ISG report a 'bipartisan strategic muddle ginned up for domestic political purposes' (WSJ: 2006-12-07). This is a very dismissive stance, but in line with their anti-diplomacy writing of earlier periods. They also suggest the ISG is more about the domestic scene, in other words, the war at home. USAT presented a similar sentiment as they wrote that the report 'does focus attention on how the United States can better manage the war at home' (USAT: 2006-12-07).

How to manage the war in Iraq turned into a fierce political struggle. In its ordinary reporting, NYT cited the WSJ quote above and other highly critical statements about the ISG.

> *Wall Street Journal's editorial page described the report as a "strategic muddle,"*
> *Richard Perle called it "absurd," Rush Limbaugh labeled it "stupid," and The New*
> *York Post portrayed the leaders of the group [...] as "surrender monkeys." (Broder &*
> *Toner, 2006)*

When the right wing of American politics is vehemently against something, the common pattern is that NYT will be for it. This was increasingly so, as it became clear that Bush would present a strategy that tilted more towards military power than diplomacy. A week after the ISG release, NYT wrote that Bush was simply

> *waiting for public enthusiasm for the Baker report to flag before Mr. Bush tries to*
> *explain why he won't follow through on some of the report's most important and*
> *reasonable suggestions. (NYT: 2006-12-13)*

This quote demonstrates both NYT's animosity towards Bush, and how they warmed up to the ISG with its 'important and reasonable suggestions'. NYT also include the public's enthusiasm into the equation. Bush is portrayed as unwilling to take advice, and accused of applying delaying tactics. The quote insinuates a calculated, cynical effort to deceive by a President unwilling to listen. Thus, it has elements of the intermittent narrative on NYT activism.

A final narrative concerning the ISG emanated in Iraq and made it onto WSJ's editorial page. This time it was not America's enemies, but its presumptive allies that were quoted. WSJ noted that the ISG came under much criticism at home, but argued that 'the more revealing reaction has been from Iraq itself: "Unrealistic", "inappropriate" and "very dangerous". These descriptions, provided by Iraqis themselves, 'exposes the flawed conception of the ISG process' (WSJ: 2006-12-15). This line of criticism hit at the heart of the ISG, as WSJ argued that more responsibility needed to be handed over to Iraqis themselves, and that US forces should focus more on training Iraqis than on combat missions.

On the whole, NYT gradually came to approve of much of the ISG. WSJ disapproved strongly thinking it lacked strong leadership through military means. WP and USAT positioned themselves in the middle, but still had perspectives, that differed from the ISG recommendations. WP wanted stronger diplomacy, but of a different

kind than that proposed by the ISG. USAT were eager to withdraw from Iraq, and called for diplomacy to facilitate an orderly withdrawal. In the parlance of USAT's founder, this was 'USA Today's "cut and stay" analysis' (Neuharth, 2006). What sort of signal a "cut and stay strategy" would communicate remained unexplained in Neuharth's column.

6.2 Bush's surge and the emergence of counterinsurgency

The surge and the ISG approach offered different strategies for Iraq, and newspapers and foreign policy elites advocated compromises and combinations with elements from both strategies. America was bogged down in a vicious and costly military campaign, in which it had lost momentum. Decisions at home were needed to recapture the initiative abroad. Practically everyone, including the Bush administration, acknowledged a new strategy was required. The ISG had come with its regional diplomacy bolstering proposal. Bush instead decided to launch the surge. Over time, the surge came to be synonymous with David Petraeus.

A crucial question was the utility of military force – in Rupert Smithian terms – in Iraq. The counterpart to this question was the prospects of effective diplomacy in the Middle East region. The capacity of both the US and the Iraqi military was also a factor, as the ISG wanted Iraqis to stand up and take on more of the fighting.

President Bush asked for impartial and bipartisan advice on the way forward in Iraq. This was partly done to rally the nation, yet the opposite may have been the outcome in the short term. In some respects, the ISG report worked against the Bush administration because the reliance on military means differed significantly between the two strategic alternatives. This gave the editorial pages a solid document to refer to, as they voiced scepticism to the idea of sending additional troops to Iraq. The American people were war weary in 2006–2007, making it an uphill struggle for Bush. This was partly why the surge was the hardest decision of his presidency.

Long before Bush publicly stated that he had decided on a troop increase, editorials discussing such an increase were published. WP started writing about a surge before Christmas 2006, voicing 'scepticism about whether such a "surge," which

could not be sustained for long, would do any good' (WP: 2006-12-19). Similarly, USAT wrote negatively about 'A temporary "surge" of 15,000 to 30,000 U.S. troops in a last-ditch effort to stabilize the violence-wracked nation. […] No one seems to have a clear idea of what such a surge might achieve' (USAT: 2006-12-21). USAT plainly wondered what the utility of increased military forces would be.

It is interesting to note that both newspapers put quotes around the word "surge". This adds to the notion that no one really knows what the surge is, and what it is meant to achieve. WSJ did the same thing right before Bush presented his new strategy. They stated 'we hope Mr. Bush also refrains from using the words "surge" or "temporary" to describe his plans this week' (WSJ: 2007-01-08). They thought the surge was too weak militarily, whereas the three other newspapers thought the opposite. This left Bush with precious little editorial support for his strategy, initially.

This discussion of what wording to apply to the new strategy is a finding that brings Entman's cascades to mind. Both proponents and opponents of the surge were not eager to adopt the Bush administration's rhetoric, initially. As time passed, and the surge went on, the name stuck. This enforces Entman's idea of policy elites labelling concepts sometimes against the preferences of the media and their news frames. The newspapers felt uneasy about the concept of a surge, but Bush still managed to both adopt the strategy and craft a strategic narrative widely used to describe it.

The term surge would stick. WSJ more or less conceded defeat in this narrative battle admitting that what was launched was 'widely described in the press as a troop "surge" (WSJ: 2007-01-11). Media reluctance to the term 'surge' was matched by the editorials' initial descriptions of it. The response was not what the Bush administration hoped for. The editorials vacillated between scepticism and dismissal. USAT's description of it as a 'Last-ditch effort' communicates USAT's dislike of the surge. NYT went much further after Bush had held a speech on Iraq.

> *President Bush told Americans last night that failure in Iraq would be a disaster. The disaster is Mr. Bush's war, and he has already failed […] There is nothing ahead but even greater disaster in Iraq. (NYT: 2007-01-11)*

This is a completely dismissive attitude towards both Bush and the war he is conducting. Fox News quoted the last sentence about disaster on the same day in its TPM. The statement 'doesn't leave "The Times" much wiggle room, does it? That paper continues to have a vested interest in the failure of the Iraq conflict.' (FOX: 2007-01-11). NYT's writing can be described as journalistic activism. Within this editorial, titled 'The Real Disaster', the word disaster figures four times, and is applied in equal measure to the war in Iraq, and Bush himself. Such an attitude is of course incompatible with most kinds of war support, as NYT clearly believed the chances of success in Iraq were virtually non-existent.

WP did not share NYT's sentiment, but Bush nonetheless had 'a formidable task in convincing Congress and the public that such a "surge" makes sense' (WP: 2007-01-07). Four days later they wrote: 'the new plan for the war Mr. Bush outlined last night is very risky' (WP: 2007-01-11). WP were concerned because Bush's strategy differed from the ISG's. They believed 'Mr. Bush could have forged a bipartisan consensus if he had embraced the military strategy laid out by the Iraq Study Group' (WP: 2007-01-14). The same editorial describes the criticism of the surge in Congress as a tempest. Things were getting brutal in Battlefield Washington.

USAT reported 'a fusillade of criticism on Capitol Hill' (USAT: 2007-01-12). Rice knew she had a 'tough sell', as she was to appear before the Senate. In her memoirs she admits that 'the questioning was more brutal than I had expected', and calls the session 'one of the lowest points of my entire career in government' (Rice, 2011, p. 547). Condi was fighting the war at home, and Glenn Kessler points out that: 'There have been few congressional hearings held the day after a major presidential speech in which not a single lawmaker from either party defended the president's proposals' (Kessler, 2007, p. 237). When Congressional Republicans do not support a Republican President's proposal controversy is high, and such intra-party rifts will always make for good news (Baum & Groeling, 2010).

The Democratic-led Congress now fought hard against Bush's proposals in a way he had never encountered before, since Republicans controlled Congress during the first six years of his presidency. The new leadership in Congress sent Bush a letter that was quoted by WSJ. Senator Reid and Speaker Pelosi told the President that

"Surging forces is a strategy that you have already tried and that has already failed' (WSJ: 2007-01-11). For their own part, WSJ argued that 'the one "strategy" that simply isn't credible is the idea that anybody's interests would be served by a hasty U.S. exit from Iraq' (WSJ: 2007-01-11).

Instead of support, Bush ran into direct and articulated opposition to his surge strategy. It is hard to identify any determined will to fight among the American public at this point. An interesting observation is that the conservative WSJ joined forces with liberal politicians in Congress. The surge brought enemies together who opposed the surge for diametrically opposing reasons. What they could agree on, was simply that Bush's strategy was flawed, and had little chance of success. USAT even argued that what Bush suggested was not even a strategy. 'The surge is an idea in search of credibility, not a strategy […] this is a political non-starter' (USAT: 2006-12-21).

USAT's view is highly interesting, as it is in direct opposition to WSJ's strategic advice. What unites all the newspapers is their opposition to the initial version of a surge. WP because the surge disregarded diplomacy, and was 'against the consensus strategy favored by the Iraq Study Group' (WP: 2007-01-11), whereas WSJ thought it was too small a force to achieve much. NYT had given up on the war altogether, deeming it an irreversible disaster. USAT's opposition was against more troops, referring to polls and war weariness, both in the American public and in the military.

The strategy debate that emerged as the surge was about to be launched, involved Congress and foreign policy elites in new ways. It seems that any old General, or former politician, wanted to come forth with their own particular strategic advice. There was a flux of op-eds and letters advocating a wide ranging set of options. It is worth remembering that some foreign policy makers 'such as Scowcroft and Brzezinski, opposed the invasion of Iraq, believing it was an unnecessary diversion' (Kessler, 2007, p. 18). Mechanisms, such as cognitive dissonance, often make people stick with their initial assessment and attitudes. This debate mainly took place in the *Washington Post*. Here are some of the views expressed.

The worst of all worlds would be a small, short surge of U.S. forces. We have tried small surges, and they have been ineffective. (McCain, 2007)

America should take the lead with direct diplomacy […] there is little hope that a troop surge and accompanying rhetoric will be anything other than "staying the course" more. (Clark, 2007)

The commitment of 21,500 more troops is a political gimmick of limited tactical significance and of no strategic benefit. (Brzezinski, 2007a)

Former secretary of state James A. Baker III has pointed out, that diplomacy consists of talking to enemies as well as friends.' (WP: 2007-01-12)

The Baker-Hamilton report supports this conclusion. It said: 'We could, however, support a short-term redeployment or surge of American combat forces to stabilize Baghdad.' (Hadley, 2007)

McCain sided with WSJ in calling for more troops. Contrary to this, General Clark sided with Baker and the ISG in calling for more diplomacy. Zbigniew Brzezinski's view bears similarities to USAT's approach. He didn't recognize the surge as a strategy, and considered it to be insufficient and mere tactics. He also pointed to war weariness as expressed in polls. 'The majority of the Iraqi people, opinion polls show, favour such a withdrawal within a relatively short period' (Brzezinski, 2007a). He ended his op-ed by labelling Bush's policy 'self-defeating' and a 'fatal flaw'. Brzezinski would later in 2007 publish a book in which he took issue with American grand strategy and leadership, resulting in a crisis of American superpower (Brzezinski, 2007b).

The final two quotes above are parts of an argument about what Baker and the ISG actually supported. WP called for diplomatic initiatives towards both friend and foe, and pointed to the ISG report. Bush's National Security Advisor wrote an op-ed in which he stressed that a limited surge was mentioned in the ISG report. Hadley's argument is not particularly convincing, and arguably constitutes a slanted reading of the report.

Without newspaper support, and with elite advice pointing in all directions, the decision of Bush to order the surge comes across as immensely daring and demanding. As the next period will demonstrate, the surge in hindsight is widely considered a

successful strategy. It contributed to a shift in the trajectory of the Iraq war, tilting the outcome of the war on terrorism somewhat in America's favour.

The army doctrinal fundament for the new surge approach was also published in 2007. The Army and U.S. Marines new field manual (FM 3-24) largely reflected General Petraeus' thinking, and it acquired such a readership that it was published as a book (United States Army & United States Marine Corps, 2007). A rich academic literature on the topic also emerged (Kilcullen, 2010; Mackinlay & Al-Baddawy, 2008; Nagl, 2005; Rid & Keaney, 2010). FM 3-24 was the new doctrine for counterinsurgency operations (COIN), which formed the core of Bush's new surge strategy.

WSJ were the only ones who seemed to realize the significance of this publication, when it was published. The other editorial pages wrote practically nothing about it. There had been some well-informed in-depth articles elsewhere in the newspapers (Gordon, 2006; Ricks, 2006b). WSJ's editorial page even quoted directly from FM 3-24's opening chapter. This is an instance of elite rhetoric – this time from the military elite – making it to the editorial pages. WSJ believed in Petraeus' approach from the very beginning mentioning both him and FM 3-24. 'As the Petraeus Counterinsurgency Manual puts it, "security is essential to setting the stage for overall progress"' (WSJ: 2007-01-11).

From period 3 to 4, writing about COIN had moved from the left and all the way over to the right of the political spectrum of the newspapers. In period 3, the only newspaper to focus on COIN was NYT. But now, it was WSJ who wrote about COIN, and embraced the concept. They noted that 'beginning in 2005, Mr. Bush began talking of a counterinsurgency strategy modelled on the successful "clear, hold and build" operation' (WSJ: 2007-01-08). Through this statement, WSJ emphasized that COIN was both Petraeus' and President Bush's strategy. Such links between Bush and COIN is one possible reason why NYT ceased writing favourably about COIN. Kilcullen concludes that 'The new strategy, as announced by President Bush, finally began to reflect counterinsurgency best practice' (Kilcullen, 2009, p. 129).

The war on terrorism was full of pivotal moments, and January 2007 was undoubtedly one of them. In this period, as in period 2 and 3, we see Iraq generating

the headlines. Senator John McCain would a few months later famously run his presidential campaign saying in May 2007 that he would be willing to be 'the last man standing on Iraq' (Novak, 2007). In his memoirs, Bush wrote appreciatively of his primary rival from the 2000 elections, John McCain, noting that 'a few brave souls defended the surge' from the very beginning (Bush, 2010, p. 379).

As this subchapter has shown, Bush's listing 'a few brave souls' is no exaggeration. There was scant support for more troops in Iraq, with WSJ as a partial exception. How did the extensive writing on the surge affect the narrative of a war on terrorism? A final quote from WSJ illustrates how the war on terrorism was gaining a counterinsurgency strand. It knits together Iraq and COIN with the master narrative on the war on terrorism. WSJ also applaud President Bush's strategy.

> *In Iraq and in the war on terror. […] his strategy is best framed as providing the forces necessary to protect the population that most military experts believe is the key to successful counterinsurgency. (WSJ: 2007-01-08)*

This is a long way from NYT's writing about the need to 'rescue this country from the consequences of one of its worst strategic blunders in modern times' (NYT: 2007-01-14). This negative view was shared by the soon-to-be President Obama, and one of his secretaries of defence to be, Chuck Hagel. In *Foreign Affairs*, about a year before being elected president, Barack Obama was critical of the war in Iraq, and 'the strategic blunder' of choosing to wage it in the first place'(Obama, 2007, p. 4). Senator Hagel, then a Republican, applied similar terminology as he was quoted in USAT, stating that Iraq was 'the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam' (USAT: 2007-01-12). These comments would haunt Hagel when he returned to the Senate for confirmation in 2013.

6.3 New zones of conflict and adversaries in war on terror

This chapter has so far looked at the ISG, the surge and COIN, leading to seminal changes in the war on terrorism. Another development was the increased importance of regional diplomacy, partly stemming from the ISG report. The war on terrorism

started to bleed into new geographic areas. A narrative involving the border areas to the main military fronts of the war on terrorism emerged. The challenges posed by porous borders and regional spill-over effects were constituents of a new narrative, which highlighted insufficient, or unwanted, involvement from neighbouring states.

Rather than treating Afghanistan as an isolated "island" of its own, the country was now often seen in relation to Pakistan, and referred to as the Af-Pak region. Kilcullen argued 'What we need is not an Afghanistan strategy as such, but an integrated Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy,' (Kilcullen, 2009, p. 111). Other states were also related to the war on terrorism, with Iran and Somalia topping the list. Iran had been written quite a bit about before period 4, but mostly on its own merit, rather than as part of the war on terrorism, or as a proxy combatant in Iraq.

In Bush's second National Security Strategy from March 2006, Iran was described as the primary threat to the United States. 'We may face no greater challenge from a single country than from Iran' (United States Government, 2006, p. 20). In comparison, Iran was only mentioned once in Bush's previous NSS, from 2002, and then only as a victim of Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons attacks (United States Government, 2002, p. 14).

With the 2006 NSS, Iran had reclaimed the closest of attention of security policy elites in America, a position Iran had not had since its controversial inclusion in the Axis of Evil in the State of the Union speech of 2002. Back then, the members of the alleged Axis were described as 'not merely an evil but a conspiracy of evil' (Heradstveit, 2003, p. 14; See also Heradstveit & Bonham, 2007). This was the result even though the Axis was meant to refer to the links between Iran, Iraq, North Korea and their terrorist partners (Frum, 2003, pp. 236–239; Woodward, 2004, p. 93). The reactions to the metaphor left Condi Rice 'stunned and so was the President' (Rice, 2011, p. 150).

The Axis of Evil represented an early warning that other territories than Afghanistan would be included in the war. The WSJ quote that rounded off chapter 6.2 underlined the links between the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism. NYT discussed this relationship in light of Robert Gates remarks during his confirmation hearing in the Senate. Gates 'said that Iraq was only "one of the central fronts" in the war on

terror — a departure from the official litany.' (NYT: 2006-12-06). From this we may conclude that the transfer, as described in chapter 4.3, was still operative. Furthermore, we see that NYT express relief that the new Secretary of Defence was focused on the wider war, and not only the Iraqi theatre. WP also mentioned the war on terrorism after the Gates hearing. They wrote 'He said one of his two principal goals was to help forge a truly bipartisan policy for the war on terrorism' (WP: 2006-12-06).

Turning to the master narrative of war on terrorism, the phrase was not used very frequently. When it is written about, some of the writing is quite negative. USAT used the phrase more often than did the three other newspapers' editorials. They wrote that 'Afghanistan needs the kind of attention Iraq is getting -- attention that can perhaps finally lead to capturing al-Qaeda leaders and regaining the lost focus of the war on terror' (USAT: 2007-01-18). This is also a clear reminder of the neglected status of Afghanistan. It was increasingly lumped 'into the larger war on terror'(Berinsky, 2009, p. 27). At the same time they embrace the idea that an important war on terrorism is in need of more resources. Progress and success require 'first a seriousness of purpose about the war on terror' (USAT: 2006-12-19).

The negative coverage of the war on terrorism far outweighed the positive writing. In quite a few instances, writing was related to the torture narrative and civil liberties. This was a bad development seen from the Bush administration's perspective. Such associations represent a considerable legitimacy crisis, both at home and abroad. In a very long editorial titled 'Unfinished Business', NYT described 'some recent images from George W. Bush's war on terror' (NYT: 2006-12-17). The text had four subtitles, which are telling for what NYT associated the war on terror with. They were 'Military Tribunals', 'The C.I.A. Prisons', 'Domestic Spying' and finally 'The Intelligence on Iraq'.

These four concepts each represent different problematic aspects of the war on terrorism. The intelligence on Iraq was faulty, leading to a war initiated on false premises, and arguably at odds with international law. The news frame chosen by NYT painted a very negative picture of the war on terrorism as an extra-legal campaign. They voiced concern over 'the President's imperial visions of his authority' (NYT: 2006-12-17).

Tribunals relate to Guantanamo and the prisons to renditions and detainee mistreatment. Domestic spying was organized under broad surveillance programmes, much of which was conducted by the secretive National Security Agency (NSA). Occasional critical writings on this occurred in 2006, but it was only after contractor Edward Snowden's leaks/whistleblowing in 2013 that this became a focal point of editorials dealing with US counterterrorism measures (Greenwald, 2014).

Making matters worse for the Bush administration, the NYT – while leading the pack – were not alone in developing a news frame on the lawless war on terrorism. The other newspapers also mentioned the war on terrorism's legal grey zones. Here are some examples starting with NYT.

The lawless nature of Mr. Bush's war on terror (NYT: 2006-12-20)

The Bush administration has trampled so many civil liberties in the name of the war on terror (USAT: 2007-01-18)

The justices' decision [on Hamdan vs Rumsfeld] forced Congress finally to take action to create a legal structure for the war on terrorism. (WP: 2006-12-21)

The lack of a legal architecture and regime to control government actions in the war on terrorism was now a tangible image problem for the campaign itself, the NYT stated. The costs were dear to America's global prestige. USAT noted the trampling of civil liberties, and WP criticised the lack of rights for Guantanamo detainees. We conclude that what few words the editorials spent on the master narrative of a war on terrorism, lean towards the negative. One exception on the positive side for the Bush administration is that Gates' new leadership of the war was welcomed.

As in previous periods, WSJ's editorial writers were not particularly concerned about alleged transgressions of civil liberties in the war on terrorism. Their limited usage of the phrase 'war on terror' was not negative. They remained supportive of Bush's wars and the following quote takes us to a new potential geographical theatre in the war on terrorism, **Somalia**. 'The strikes in Somalia are also a reminder that in the war on terror there is no "exit strategy" short of victory' (WSJ: 2007-01-10).

The strikes in question were conducted by the US air force and included 'air strikes by an AC-130 gunship in southern Somalia' (WSJ: 2007-01-10). WP's editorial on the subject underlined the potential for catastrophe in Somalia, and related it to the war on terrorism. It was simply titled 'War in Somalia; Another front in the fight against terrorism has exploded.' (WP: 2006-12-27).

WSJ shared this view, and even quoted al Qaeda's second in command on it, in a rare quoting of al Qaeda's own narratives in period 4. 'Al Qaeda bigwig Ayman al-Zawahiri has called Somalia "the southern garrison of Islam" (WSJ: 2006-12-28). The argument was that if al Qaeda considered Somalia a front in the war on terrorism, then it becomes one per definition.

In the years to come, there would be a few – but not many – American strikes targeting Islamists in Somalia, allegedly with links to al Qaeda (DeYoung, 2009; McCrummen & DeYoung, 2008). Kenya, Ethiopia and other African nations would subsequently bear the brunt of the fighting around the Horn of Africa, through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In period 4, WSJ's writing on Somalia was more extensive than the other newspapers'. A pattern is that since the first days after 9/11 WSJ have been more eager to increase the number of countries targeted by the war on terrorism. WSJ mentioned Iraq during those first days, and it remained a major concern for them. They argued that 'the only exit for us in the war against terrorists -- whether in Somalia, Afghanistan and especially Iraq -- is to make sure there is no exit for them' (WSJ: 2007-01-10).

NYT's writing on Somalia is limited and the title of the only editorial dealing with the topic is telling: 'War in the Horn of Africa'. In it, they contend that 'Somalia is a familiar kind of mess' (NYT: 2006-12-28), but makes no reference to the war on terrorism. The title and their writing suggest that this is a local conflict, and one the US should treat with caution. What leverage America had in the country 'Washington should use that influence to push for a swift cessation of hostilities' (NYT: 2006-12-28). America should not be entering another military conflict, NYT believed, and seemed to advocate a strictly diplomatic solution.

The botched intervention in Somalia in the early '90s would influence the American public's appetite for war for almost a decade (Larson & Savych, 2005). The battle of Mogadishu involved a downed helicopter and mutilated corpses of American troops dragged through the streets. Almost twenty years later, John L. Hirsch starts his article on the topic with, 'We all know what went wrong the last time the international community tried to end a crisis in Somalia' (Hirsch, 2011). WSJ noted this as they argued that 'No outside powers are likely to risk a repeat of the disastrous U.N. mission to Somalia of the early 1990s.' (WSJ: 2006-12-28). The narrative of Somalia as a 'disastrous failure' was well established before the war on terrorism (Entman, 2004, p. 20).

WP presented the same argument in an editorial titled 'Somalia's Chance; An al-Qaeda harbor might be eliminated if the West acts fast' (WP: 2007-01-05). WP sketched out a rationale for limited action. Prior to that, 'Somalia has begun to look a lot like Afghanistan under the Taliban before Sept. 11, 2001' (WP: 2006-12-27). Such a description, with an explicit reference to September 11, can be seen as a call for action, and a conspicuous way of relating the events in Somalia to the broader war on terror. However, WP did not recommend military involvement.

> *The administration appears to recognize the chance for an advance in the global war with al-Qaeda [...] It may be that the prospect of stabilizing Somalia and eliminating it as a harbor for al-Qaeda will prove to be a mirage, but the administration must seize on the possibility that it is real (WP: 2007-01-05)*

WSJ shared WP's opinion that America's involvement should not be armed. Their rhetoric is more confrontational, but they too thought a military intervention was unnecessary. While they listed several grave concerns in the region, 'None of this requires the U.S. to deploy militarily to Somalia' (WSJ: 2007-01-10). WP and WSJ stood for the writing on the emerging importance of Somalia in the war on terrorism, dedicating a couple of editorials entirely to the subject.

Another country that would retain a prominent place on the United States security agenda was **Iran**. In all the newspapers, much of the writing on Iran focused on regional diplomacy to keep Iran out of the Iraq conflict. In addition, some of it was

on 'diplomatic leverage aimed at resolving Iran's nuclear weapons program' (USAT: 2007-01-22). Some saw the two concerns in relation to one another, and Wesley Clark wanted America to 'take the lead with direct diplomacy to resolve the interrelated problems of Iran's push for regional hegemony and nuclear power' (Clark, 2007).

WSJ were the most pro-active in calling for tougher measures towards Iran. The newspaper was highly sceptical of Iran, and we recall their reference the day after 9/11 to 'the usual suspects -- Saddam Hussein, the Taliban, the Iranian mullahs and other dictators' (WSJ: 2001-09-12). On December 5, WSJ wrote a lengthy editorial titled 'Realism and Iran' which went through Iran's internal and external problems in depth. Here are examples from that WSJ editorial, and three subsequent ones on Iran from period 4.

> *Iran's desire to dominate Iraq through the likes of Muqtada al-Sadr, whose Mahdi Army is responsible for some of the worst sectarian violence. (WSJ: 2006-12-05)*

> *Iran's leadership proclaims its satisfaction with the U.S. troubles in Iraq on an almost daily basis. (WSJ: 2006-12-07)*

> *There's also the outside meddling by Iraq's neighbors, particularly Iran and Syria. (WSJ: 2007-01-11)*

> *Syria and Iran are supporting Sunni insurgents and Shiite radicals in Iraq -- support that has taken a heavy toll in American lives. […] One failure of Mr. Bush's war leadership has been to clearly define the enemy in Iraq, which for a long time has included Syria and Iran.' (WSJ: 2007-01-12)*

These excerpts demonstrate how frequently and extensively WSJ wrote about Iran, and at times also Syria. Iran is censured for obstructing progress and helping Iraqi insurgents fight coalition forces. The narrative on Iran is that they meddle, seek to dominate, take satisfaction in American losses in Iraq and actively support America's enemies in the country. This overly negative picture is in line with the confrontational elite rhetoric issued by the Bush administration in its 2006 National Security Strategy (United States Government, 2006, pp. 20–24). In his memoirs, Dick Cheney mentions his disappointment 'with the group's [ISG's] suggestions with respect to Iran and Syria. The group recommended that we open a dialogue' (Cheney, 2011, p. 447).

Taking Entman's cascades into account, it is hard to determine whether the elite rhetoric preceded the editorial writing on Iran. WSJ had its sights on Iran for years, yet the Bush administration's 2006 NSS increased the pressure on Iran. An argument can be made for Entman's cascade flowing both ways in this case. Perhaps the most precise analysis would be to say that the WSJ and the Bush administration stood for the most confrontational line towards Iran at different stages of the war on terrorism.

NYT's writing on Iran is in some ways the opposite of WSJ's. One major recurring theme is their advocacy of 'aggressive regional diplomacy, including talks with Iran and Syria that Mr. Bush has ruled out' (NYT: 2006-12-07). NYT were disappointed that President Bush was 'brushing off suggestions that he talk directly to Iran' (NYT: 2006-12-01). This is conspicuous pro-diplomacy writing, and in accordance with the pattern of NYT having lost confidence in military measures in the war on terrorism by 2007. They did agree with some of the assessments of Iran's role in Iraq. It was especially with regard to the countermeasures where their analysis diverged from WSJ.

> *We have no doubt about Iran's malign intent […] Iran certainly is helping arm and train Shiite militias. But the administration is certainly exaggerating the salutary effect of any cutoff (NYT: 2007-02-01)*

In between NYT's and WSJ's writing on Iran we find WP. They wrote an editorial with the long and telling title 'A Mideast Counteroffensive; Before "engaging" with Syria and Iran, the United States needs to answer their aggression'. They outlined the benefits of confronting Iran, thus getting the upper hand for subsequent negotiations. The final line of the editorial reads 'Syria and Iran won't stop waging war against the United States and its allies unless they are given reasons to fear they might lose' (WP: 2006-12-16).

WP seemed ambivalent when it comes to diplomacy versus military means in relation to Iran and Syria. Iran was the main focus of the aforementioned WP interview with Condi Rice. Iran was the first topic of the interview, and was mentioned 36 times in the back and forth with WP's editorial board. In comparison, Iraq itself

was mentioned around 56 times. The solutions, Rice averred, 'to what is happening in Iraq lie in Baghdad […] not in Iran and not in Syria' (Rice, 2006). Rice effectively attempted to seal Iraq's borders, and actively disregard the regional focus.

WP's subsequent writing on diplomacy and Iran agreed that talks would accomplish little, but assigns the responsibility for that partly on Condi Rice. They argued that in the case of 'Iran and Syria -- it's hard to see how her diplomacy can accomplish much. Indeed, President Bush's military steps have priority in the administration's regional policy' (WP: 2007-01-12). Within this one passage, WP voiced concerns over what results diplomacy and military means could possibly yield in and around Iraq. USAT wrote less about Iran than WP and WSJ, but they did enter the discussion on military versus diplomatic means.

> *It would be dangerously unwise to seek a war with Iran, for instance, but ground forces are stretched so thin now that it's not a viable threat, which weakens diplomatic leverage aimed at resolving Iran's nuclear weapons program. (USAT: 2007-01-22)*

On WP's op-ed page, the diplomacy first view was presented by Brzezinski. He was unimpressed by the Bush administration's unwillingness to pursue a diplomatic course. 'The U.S. refusal to explore the possibility of talks with Iran and Syria is a policy of self-ostracism' (Brzezinski, 2007a). At the time of writing, the prospects of the United States engaging directly with Iran in bilateral talks was among President Obama's main foreign policy priorities (Friedman, 2015). After President Obama addressed the U.N. General Assembly in 2013, the NYT's editorial page contended that 'It is no surprise that Iran was at the top of his agenda' (NYT: 2013-09-24).

In period 4, Afghanistan and Pakistan are seen more as a whole than in earlier periods. The phrase **AfPak** would over time be used by both the media and policy makers (Cordesman, 2009; Fitzgerald & Gould, 2011; Kilcullen, 2009; Rashid, 2008). The porous border between the two countries made both sides less governable. Condi Rice explained to the WP editorial board that the 'area between Pakistan and Afghanistan is just very rough. It's been ungoverned forever' (Rice, 2006). Additionally, the two most serious al Qaeda figures America has ever apprehended,

where found in Pakistan. It speaks volumes of Pakistan's significance that Khalid S. Mohammed and Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda careers both ended there.

WSJ only mentioned Pakistan once in this context, criticising a lack 'of candid cooperation from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf' (WSJ: 2007-01-10). A lack of concern with Afghanistan was close to the Bush administration's view at the time, as stated by Rice. 'Afghanistan has, I would argue, done pretty well. I know that's a contrary view, but I have to say that it's one by one met its problems' (Rice, 2006).

Condi Rice was certainly right on one account. Many would consider her view to be contrary. 'What's the difference between Iraq and Afghanistan? The answer, unfortunately, is: less and less', wrote USAT (2007-01-18). The title of the editorial was 'Troop surge, and more, needed to save Afghanistan.' It presented an alarming narrative of a deteriorating situation in the country, and suggested Obama would indeed initiate an Afghan surge a few years later. USAT believed Musharraf was playing a double game: 'He has not done all he can to crack down on the Taliban presence in Waziristan on his side of the Afghan border' (USAT 2007-01-18).

NYT were also unimpressed and believed 'Pakistani authorities are encouraging and perhaps sponsoring the cross-border insurgency' (NYT: 2007-01-23). Pakistan's President was also here portrayed as unhelpful. 'Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan needs to do a lot more to stanch the torrent of Taliban fighters crossing his border into Afghanistan' (NYT: 2006-12-05). Another dimension was that 'America short-changed Afghanistan's security in its rush to invade Iraq' (NYT: 2007-01-23). Similar concerns – with Iraq as a diversion – were raised in periods 2 and 3 by USAT and NYT.

The contrast to WSJ's and Rice's views was striking as USAT drew the link between Taliban, al Qaeda, and Afpak in the following passage. 'The Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies are making a ferocious comeback, operating from the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area (USAT: 2007-01-18). Similar links were highlighted by WP in an editorial titled 'Al-Qaeda's Sanctuary; Pakistan's tribal areas look a lot like Afghanistan in 2001 -- and the Bush administration is tolerating it.' The following quote is indicative of its content. It also highlights the importance of acting now, before Taliban's yearly spring offensive would be launched.

> *Al-Qaeda is reliably reported to be operating training camps in North Waziristan [...] Taliban cross-border activity "causes serious problems" [...] Action must be taken against Taliban and al-Qaeda forces in Pakistan before spring, when another major offensive against U.S. and NATO forces can be expected. (WP: 2006-12-21)*

The narrative that emerged was that Pakistan and Musharraf did not wholeheartedly participate in the war against Taliban and al Qaeda. WP stated that 'Musharraf's assurances were empty' and it was time the Bush administration stopped 'offering excuses for Gen. Musharraf' (WP: 2002-12-21). The editorial simply reflected the distrust that would only continue to grow in the years ahead, with drone strikes turning into a new point of heightened controversy.

It is worth remembering that Pakistan was put under immense pressure right after 9/11. No nation was more clearly in Bush's crosshairs when he said 'Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.' Pakistan chose to side with America in the war on terrorism. This was done against the will of a sizable fundamentalist domestic opposition.

With WSJ as an exception, the narrative on Afpak is an example of the Bush administration failing to convince the editorial writers about their optimistic prospects. Condi Rice acknowledged Afpak is an unruly region, but nevertheless felt developments there as of 2007 heralded better times in Afghanistan. In hindsight it is fair to say her analysis of the situation was too optimistic, and probably politically motivated. USAT stood for the contrary view voicing grave concerns about the attention Afghanistan was receiving with policymakers. They also shared WP's fears of Taliban's coming spring offensive.

> *With the conflict in Iraq continuing to dominate the news and policymakers' time, the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan requires urgent attention before an expected spring offensive by the Taliban. (USAT: 2007-01-18)*

In late 2009, President Obama decided to surge 33000 extra troops into Afghanistan (Spiegel, Weisman, & Dreazen, 2009). Just like USAT, WP had argued for a surge in Afghanistan three years earlier in an editorial titled 'The Afghanistan

Surge; Iraq is not the only theatre where the Bush administration is belatedly committing more troops and aid' (WP: 2007-02-01).

The Afghanistan surge came to an end in September 21, 2012 with mixed results (Nordland, 2012). There is little doubt that results were nowhere near what is attributed to the Iraqi surge (Brown, 2012). The Iraq surge obviously served as an eponymous model for the operation, but success remained very limited. A USAT columnist wrote at the time, 'Very quietly, the surge of troops into Afghanistan that President Obama announced to such fanfare in late 2009 is now over' (Jackson, 2012). The last combat troops in Afghanistan were withdrawn in 2014. Yet, ISAF remains a mission unaccomplished, for the US and NATO. Even before Obama's Afghan surge was initiated, Peter Bergen believed America was losing the war (Bergen, 2009).

So far in this chapter I have analysed the expanding zones of conflict in the war on terrorism. New narratives emerged about new countries in which this global struggle could take place in, both by military and diplomatic means. The final part of this subchapter will deal with **adversaries** and people inside the borders of the main conflict zones. While the 2006 NSS singled out Iran as an urgent emerging threat, it also has a subchapter titled. 'Afghanistan and Iraq: The Front Lines in the War on Terror'. The strategy states that 'Winning the War on Terror requires winning the battles in Afghanistan and Iraq' (United States Government, 2006, p. 12).

In 2007, there were increasing concerns over 'Shia militias, including Sadr's army' (Bush, 2010, p. 374). The newspapers had warned of this in previous periods. But the Shia insurgency was now considered a major obstacle to progress and reconciliation in the country. Rice portrayed an optimistic view that the administration had to revise. In her memoirs Rice wrote: 'Maybe Zarqawi's demise would deflate the Sunni insurgency and give us a chance to fight on one front – not two – as we dealt with the threat of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army' (Rice, 2011, p. 469).

Rice mentioned Sadr and Zarqawi by name, underscoring the attention they had attracted in America's COIN efforts. While Zarqawi represented al Qaeda in Iraq, America's global enemy, she was hoping to focus more on al-Sadr after Zarqawi was killed by American Special forces in June 2006 (Bergen, 2012, p. 156). Zarqawi's killing was 'the most significant public triumph for the U.S.-led military coalition in

Iraq since the 2003 capture of Saddam Hussein' (Whitlock, 2006). Zarqawi vanished from the editorial pages in period 4. The one exception was when WSJ wrote about the 'onslaught of Abu Musab al- Zarqawi's car bombs and the reaction of the Shiite militias.' (WSJ: 2007-01-11).

Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, received considerable coverage during period 4. This was because he had just received the death penalty, and was subsequently hanged at the gallows. The hanging itself was videotaped and did little to stem sectarian divisions in Iraq. Hoskins & O'Loughlin have analysed the significance of this highly symbolic image of a dead dictator (Hoskins & O'Loughlin, 2010, pp. 32–36). The event was accounted for in the NYT. Rather than re-tell the sequence of events, this NYT passage explains what happened.

> *Saddam Hussein deserves no one's pity. But as anyone who has seen the graphic cellphone video of his hanging can testify, his execution bore little resemblance to dispassionate, state-administered justice. [...] those globally viewed images were a shaming embarrassment. (NYT: 2007-01-04)*

What should have been the end of a lengthy and fair trial turned out to be exactly the opposite. 'Saddam's hanging was handled ineptly, but the dictator received a fair trial' (WSJ: 2007-01-08). The video showed an unruly lynch mob going wild. 'A clandestine video of his hanging captured a taunting mob chanting the name of Muqtada al-Sadr,' (USAT: 2007-01-02). USAT would later refer to 'the bungled executions of Saddam Hussein '(USAT: 2007-01-19). Just like Zarqawi's death did not constitute any major leap towards sectarian reconciliation, the shouting of al-Sadr's name would instil fear and hatred among Shia and Sunnis in Iraq.

WP wrote nothing about Saddam Hussein's execution in its editorials, as far as this study has been able to discover. Apparently, they let one of their columnists provide the opinion writing on Saddam Hussein. The reason was probably that Jim Hoagland had met Saddam Hussein in person. He wrote two columns about Saddam Hussein's hanging pointing out that 'Saddam Hussein refused the offer of a hood to cover his eyes' (Hoagland, 2006). Four days later he picked up on the detrimental effect the manner of the execution might have on progress in Iraq. He concluded that

'the outbursts praising Sadr at Hussein's hanging were so damaging.' He also noted 'that the Iraqis who put Saddam to death made the sadistic dictator look almost noble' (Hoagland, 2007).

WP's editorial page did, however, write about the execution right before it happened. 'Should the world see his end in the coming days, the justice will be imperfect. But it will still be justice' (WP: 2006-12-29). It was indeed a ghastly form of justice, by any standards. WSJ also wrote about his imminent execution in a piece titled 'Saddam Heads to the Gallows' (WSJ: 2006-12-27).

Condi Rice mentions the execution in her memoirs but offers no criticism of the manner in which it was conducted. She saves her criticism for Saddam Hussein himself: 'Saddam Hussein was executed. The political slate had been wiped clean, and the monster of Baghdad had been brought to justice' (Rice, 2011, p. 546). Even after a disgraceful death, Rice would not be drawn out on whether his death was unwanted or happened under sub-optimal circumstances.

Saddam Hussein's death was the end of an era in both Iraq and the region. Interestingly, this study finds no mention of Saddam Hussein's hanging in Bush's or Cheney's memoirs. It may have been omitted, or at least toned down, because of the hanging's disgraceful nature. Bush does, however, write that he 'was heartened by the determination of the Maliki government, and the death of Zarqawi' (Bush, 2010, p. 367). This shows that finding encouragement in the death of a sworn enemy was not something Bush was incapable of.

This chapter has documented how individuals were portrayed in the writing on the demise of Saddam Hussein and Zarqawi, and also with brief mentions of Muqtada al-Sadr, and of Taliban in Waziristan. Sectarian violence was also a growing concern. But how were the newspapers' narratives on **al Qaeda and bin Laden** in 2007?

Bin Laden disappeared completely from NYT and WP editorials in period 4. This study found not a single mention of him in any editorial. NYT mention al Qaeda only once, and then in a context which reflected their overall scepticism of the war on terrorism. It was in an editorial that welcomed more oversight over government surveillance titled 'A Spy Program in From the Cold' (NYT: 2007-01-18).

Al Qaeda was mentioned frequently by WP, but never its leader. This also includes the lengthy interview with Rice, published on WP's web site (Rice, 2006). It is overwhelmingly about Iraq and Iran, and the main culprit of 9/11 is not mentioned at all. Neither was al Qaeda. Afghanistan is only mentioned in the very last question. This is extraordinary, and documents how both Rice and WP's editorial board are completely consumed by Iran, Iraq, and the Surge at this time. Compared to chapter 5.3, we see a clear decline of mentioning bin Laden by name.

Similarly, WSJ only mentioned bin Laden by name in one editorial, titled 'No Exit in Somalia'. It was about how 'Osama bin Laden and his associates left Sudan for Afghanistan' (WSJ: 2007-01-10). The main argument is that Somalia and Africa is essential to the war on terrorism, and that this goes all the way back to 1996 when bin Laden left Sudan. USAT also mention him only once. Expressing concern about developments in Afghanistan they warned that 'The post-9/11 successes in Afghanistan -- toppling the Taliban regime that harbored Osama bin Laden, […] are unravelling' (USAT: 2007-01-18).

The decline in mentions of bin Laden and al Qaeda requires further analysis. As a narrative it receives less attention than before. Iraq has taken over the editorial space. This was arguably not in bin Laden's interest, as he wanted to be America's main enemy and instil fear in the American population. A terrorist needs news coverage to spread fear in populations and influence political leaders. The more interesting question is therefore whether the decline was in the Bush administration's interest.

It is hard to determine whether the decline in coverage benefited the Bush administration or not. On the one hand, in generating support for more troops for the surge in Iraq, the Bush administration needed a focus on Iraq. This arguably resulted in the editorial pages' relative negligence of Afghanistan. This would be in line with Entman's theory of cascading information from elites to the media. On the other hand, the Afghanistan war would not go away, and if the public hears little of it, it could become unwilling to sacrifice for it later. We are dealing with a double-edged sword here, and it is hard to determine whether lack of coverage was good or bad for the Bush administration.

However, failure to track down bin Laden turned into an embarrassment for President Bush personally, and for his administration. Less focus on him, as a person, might have saved the Bush administration having to answer pointed questions on the matter. Indeed, when WP's editorial board had free access to ask Rice about what they wanted, Bin Laden was not mentioned at all and al Qaeda only once.

Al Qaeda was discussed far more often in editorials than bin Laden. Many of the more telling excerpts have already been utilized earlier in the chapter. Al Qaeda was mentioned in connection with Taliban, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Somalia. Inside of Iraq, the lines were drawn between Sunni extremists and the terror network. WP wrote about 'Sunni extremists linked to the Baath Party and al-Qaeda, which continue to inflict more than 70 percent of American casualties' (WP: 2006-12-03).

USAT also linked Iraq with al Qaeda, but not in the way the Bush administration would have preferred. 'Al-Qaeda terrorists weren't in Iraq before the war, but they are now', the paper observed (USAT: 2007-01-12). This was a news frame in which the Bush administration's allegation of links between Iraq and al Qaeda from 2003 were dismissed. While this would call for action in countering them, it also arguably blames Bush for al Qaeda's Iraqi presence. It is important who came first to Iraq, al Qaeda or the US military? USAT, nevertheless, emphasized the necessity to fight al Qaeda in Iraq. 'Anbar province, west of Baghdad, is a haven for al-Qaeda-linked terrorists, the primary U.S. concern' (USAT: 2006-12-21).

Finally in this subchapter, a glance at the narrative of a **civil war** in Iraq is apt. Whether Iraq had already entered a state of civil war, was hotly debated in period 3. Back then, NYT wanted to avert it all cost, and WSJ argued that the civil war had already begun, but that this did not constitute an unforeseen problem. The overall finding is that the phrase civil war is used sparingly. The main reason is that insurgency and the COIN terminology were a more common way to refer to the conflict.

WSJ did not think there was a civil war at the time, whereas WP saw the contours of one. Contrary to this, NYT and USAT believed civil war had been going on for some time. WP wrote about 'the incipient civil war' (WP: 2006-12-07). WSJ, in stark contrast to previous statements on an on-going civil war, warned that 'if we

leave. Instead, it will change into a civil war in Iraq,' (WSJ: 2007-01-11). Both of these quotes make clear that both newspapers believed there was some way to go before the conflict in Iraq deserved to be called an all-out civil war between Shia and Sunni.

A different view was observed in the other two newspapers. USAT were quite confrontational in writing of 'Iraq's escalating civil war' (USAT: 2006-12-15). They also argued that the Bush administration 'was for too long in denial about the insurgency that has plunged the country into civil war' (USAT: 2007-01-05). No politician appreciates a narrative that claims you are in denial. NYT used the exact same phrase lamenting that 'Iraq plunged into civil war' (NYT: 2006-12-13).

NYT wrote more about the civil war than did the other papers. They expressed pessimism about any 'hope for tamping down a spiralling civil war' (NYT: 2007-01-14). They also worried about the potential for spill-over into neighbouring countries. It would be a nightmare scenario having an 'expanding civil war that turns into a regional war' (NYT: 2007-01-09). This writing fits into NYT's highly sceptical outlook on the war on terrorism in all its aspects.

On the first of May 2014, seven and a half years later, WP's editorial page would contend that 'the country is sliding into civil war'. This shows that the debate would continue for years. A quote from Greg Mitchell puts the use of civil war into context and argues that both WP and the Bush administration were out of sync with the American people. In a column from 2006, Mitchell recapitulates:

> *Debate broke out across the media whether to refer to the conflict in Iraq, with sectarian violence still raging, as "civil war." NBC News adopted the "civil war" usage, but the Washington Post and many others, as usual lagged behind public opinion, as polls showed that two in three Americans did believe it was a civil war (Mitchell, 2008, p. 208)*

6.4 Fox news and support for an embattled military

Just like in period 3, Fox News had more content on war support than the other outlets. There is a tangible change in the coverage with regard to making a distinction between supporting the war and supporting the troops. America possessed an embattled and

bruised military fighting two brutal wars in the greater Middle East. The return of coffins and injured veterans had a profound impact on American society at large. USAT pointed out that 'No President can sustain a war without support from the voters' (USAT: 2007-01-24). As pointed out earlier, this is an assessment espoused in the literature (Berinsky, 2009, p. 208).

The ideas of Clausewitz come to mind as the bonds between the American people and its military come to the forefront. Clausewitz's triangle includes a military that will experience bad or good fortune on the battlefield. In 2006, Iraq was bad fortune – really bad fortune – for the US military. A narrative of military overstretch, and problems of morale and war-weariness within the army, surfaced. An army can be compared to an organism, a fighting body, and America's military had taken a series of damaging body blows. Primarily Iraq, but Afghanistan too drained resources.

This resulted in suggestions to expand the ranks of the military. There were also calls to withdraw troops, something the public generally favoured. Some newspapers wanted fewer military engagements and more diplomacy and a shrinking of American involvement in efforts to defeat the Iraqi insurgency, as we have seen. The ISG's recommendations were more embraced by the media and the public than by the Bush administration. The public remained deeply divided along party lines. The likelihood for a Republican to support the war remained at 60%, as it was in period 3. Berinsky notes that 'only the decreased enthusiasm for the war among Republicans prevented this gap from growing larger' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 102).

This is the context in which the editorial writing on war support will be analysed. WP and USAT wrote more about public support for the war than did NYT and WSJ. We will start by briefly presenting NYT's and WSJ's perspectives on support, respectively, and then move on to the outlets that wrote most about it, ending with Fox. The use of polls will then be looked at, before an examination of military fatigue. But first a quote from USAT that sets out the wide-ranging implications of the debate that erupted.

> *With his unpopular decision to add 21,500 troops, Bush sets up an epic clash between the President's ability to wage war as he sees fit and Congress' responsibility to set limits and represent the will of the people. (USAT: 2007-01-12)*

The will of the people was not convincingly on the side of Bush as he ordered the surge, a decision USAT consequently labelled 'unpopular'. WSJ also acknowledged the uphill struggle generating support for the surge would be. 'The public's support for the Iraq campaign is waning, in major part because the casualties and expense have been producing no visible progress' (WSJ: 2007-01-08).

With meagre results on the ground, WSJ argued, war support would be harder to generate. Nevertheless, they still contend that such support should be given to Bush, and engaged actively in garnering it. When Bush announced the surge WSJ wrote, 'We think the American people will support the effort' (WSJ: 2007-01-08). Three days later they reaffirmed this belief, and applauded the persuasive efforts of Bush. 'We think he offered compelling reasons for sceptical Americans of good faith to back him,' (WSJ: 2007-01-11).

NYT were very far from sharing this view. Just like USAT, they inserted elections and Congress into the equation. Their position was stated as follows. 'If the voters sent one clear message to Mr. Bush last November, it was that it is time to start winding down America's involvement in this going-nowhere war.' (NYT: 2007-01-09). They thought Bush was going against the will of the people, and disrespected the message the voters sent him. The premise of this argument, however, considers the 2006 voting results as a resounding call to withdraw from Iraq. Rumsfeld's resignation immediately after the election adds weight to the NYT narrative that the election really was a vote on the course going forward in Iraq.

Denouncing the war as 'going nowhere' is a very strong condemnation, and strips the war of any utility to the nation. Bush had failed to rally the nation, NYT wrote. 'In the wake of 9/11, Mr. Bush had a second chance to rally the nation — and the world — only to squander it on a pointless, catastrophic war in Iraq.' (NYT: 2007-01-24). This is an example of NYT journalistic activism. NYT seemed to have forgotten what they once had written: 'the president rallied Congress, the nation and its allies abroad' (NYT: 2001-09-21), as documented in chapter 3.2.

Nestled in between the supportive and dismissive stances of WSJ and NYT we find USAT and WP. The latter were also concerned about the surge because 'Mr. Bush

appears prepared to embrace this approach despite strong opposition from Congress and the public' (WP: 2007-01-11). WP had previously called for consensus, diplomacy and bipartisanship. When the ISG released their report, they supported it because 'the country desperately needs to build a bipartisan consensus on the war.' (WP: 2006-12-07). WP saw the prospects of achieving unity vanish as the surge was announced. Consequently, they believed 'Mr. Bush will have to work a lot harder than he has before to explain the mission that justifies the risk and to build support in Congress and with the public.' (WP: 2007-01-07). They returned to the topic in the weeks to follow, elaborating on the challenges facing Bush.

> *The White house, however, seems to have undervalued the importance of having broad public support before sending more troops into combat, with the inevitable spike in casualties that will cause. (WP: 2007-01-14)*

> *a public increasingly unhappy about the war in Iraq and disenchanted with his leadership. […] the time to craft a policy with more public support and bipartisan agreement passed with Mr. Bush's speech two weeks ago. (WP: 2007-01-24)*

This cuts to the essence of the necessity of war support. WP were explicit about why it is so crucial to maintain support. You will need it, when the inevitable casualties from the personnel-heavy counterinsurgency operations come in. WP believed the Bush administration had failed to recognize the importance of this, and that the window for achieving bipartisan consensus has passed. They depicted the public as unhappy and disenchanted.

USAT presented the exact same argument. They wrote about 'American casualties, which will at some point wear away what little is left of American support. (USAT: 2007-01-24). However, they displayed ambivalent attitudes towards the surge. They believed it had limited chances of succeeding. One reason was Bush's 'urging a course in Iraq that sails directly in the face of public opinion,' (USAT: 2007-01-24)

Fox were vocal about patriotism requiring 'rooting for America' in any military conflict, and divided the nation between good and bad Americans. As in earlier periods, the Fox news frame is different from those of the newspapers, and they

positioned themselves in opposition to the liberal media and the left side of American politics. Here are examples of the rhetoric applied from TPM.

> *The far left in America is on a jihad to smear FOX News. They hate us. (FOX: 2006-12-01)*

> *I don't respect Americans who want the USA to lose in Iraq because they hate Bush or any other reason. […] Again, dissent about the war, fine. Rooting for America to lose, disloyal. […] It's going to take another 9/11 to mobilize people against the jihad. And even then the far left will not join up. (FOX: 2006-12-05)*

This is quite a different perspective on war support. It amounts to an alternative worldview. TPM considered the mainstream media to be an enemy. Fox claimed to respect dissent, but also reserved the right to brand dissenters as disloyal. Fox reiterated this view a month later explaining that 'You can dissent from the Iraq war and still be a patriot, but if you root against your country, you are disloyal' (FOX: 2007-01-11).

Rooting for the enemy is hardly an honourable thing to do. Nevertheless, the exact line between disloyalty and dissent is not clearly drawn. Common understandings of the word 'patriotism' involve an element of loyalty. Therefore, it is hard to determine the activities that belong to each category. Echoing the phrase 'loyal Americans' from period 3, TPM said: 'all loyal Americans have a decision to make. Should we support one final effort to defeat the enemy in Iraq? I say yes' (FOX: 2007-01-05). The other newspapers did not write much about loyalty and patriotism, but USAT offered what may be seen as a counterargument. 'There is great political peril in challenging a President in time of war, but no one should confuse this with a lack of patriotism' (USAT: 2007-01-12).

A related perspective projected by TPM was that of fixed fronts in America on war support. By 2007, many people had formed their own opinion on the Iraq war and were unlikely to alter it much. 'Those who oppose the war, they'll continue to oppose it. And those who support the Iraqi campaign will continue to support it.' (FOX: 2006-12-29). WSJ voiced a similar concern: 'It hardly matters what President Bush said last night; he still won't get any credit.' (WSJ: 2007-01-24)

One implication of this is that TPM and WSJ seem to have given up on irreparably disloyal le Americans. Another would be that Bush needs to decide what he wants to do, and stick with it, rather than waste too much time on winning already decidedly negative people to his side. This position can be seen as supporting Bush since it is partly what Bush chose. This view also goes against that of USAT, WP, and the Powell Doctrine in arguing that public support is crucial for military campaigns.

The war, Fox acknowledged, 'has brought pain and suffering to the nation and divided the country' (FOX: 2007-01-02). Bill O'Reilly said, 'I don't like the Iraq War. If we could go back in time, we don't do it. We pick another battlefield. But far left thinking is insane.' (FOX: 2007-01-29). O'Reilly supported the rationale for war as it happened, but then later concluded that going to war was wrong. The next day TPM elaborated on the topic. 'Fair minded people can debate Iraq, that's legitimate, because let's face it, there have been too many screw-ups in this war.' (FOX: 2007-01-30).

The bottom line is that Fox News still supported the Iraq war, and still supported Bush. So while Fox continued to be sceptical about dissent, it was not in the vitriolic fashion it had exercised in period 3. This resulted in TPM support for the surge, and favourable commentary over the SotU speech.

> *The president had a pretty good night last night at the state of the union, don't you think? He delivered his speech well. Snap poll showed 78 per cent of Americans liked what he said and he asked us to give his new Iraq strategy a little time. I think that's reasonable. (FOX: 2007-01-24)*

TPM used **polls** to demonstrate the success of Bush's SotU speech. This is a fair measure to employ, at least for the initial reactions. In period 4, editorials continued to use polls to demonstrate the tenor of the American people, but not as frequently as earlier. One reason might be that the levels of dissent and opposition to the Iraq war, in the media and among elites were so high, editorial writers felt no need to reference specific polls to prove it. As the chapter already has shown, much writing about support for the war occurred without referring to polls. One example of this is that USAT wrote that 'Three-quarters of Americans want U.S. troops out of Iraq' (USAT: 2006-12-21).

USAT wrote about the President's 'diminished poll numbers' and described 'a public that expresses increasing restlessness in the polls.' (USAT: 2007-01-24). WSJ noted that 'The Iraq War has been hurting President Bush's poll ratings for a couple of years now' (WSJ: 2007-01-19). Fox agreed, writing that 'President Bush's approval rating stands at 36 percent with 61 percent disapproving. That number is driven dramatically by the chaos in Iraq.' (FOX: 2007-01-23)

On the surge, WP also mentioned polls, pointing out that increasing troop levels 'has the support of less than 20 percent of Americans and maybe even fewer Iraqis' (WP: 2007-01-14). Fox referred to a specific poll. 'In fact, a Gallup poll says only 12 percent of Americans want more troops in Iraq. (FOX: 2007-01-09). This is a very low number and highlights the difficulty facing Bush in ordering the surge. TPM went on to explain why the poll numbers were at such incredibly low levels. They relate it to the prospects of America succeeding in Iraq. 'The reason most Americans aren't supporting Iraq any longer is that the war is not going our way.' (FOX: 2007-01-09). From this we gather that success leads to support and vice versa. It is an argument suggesting score-keeping is the process that triggers falling war support.

However, Fox did not consider the war in Iraq a lost cause. Far from it, they encouraged support, and debated the issue. Several guests went on air with O'Reilly discussing war support and prospects of victory. The following exchange with WP journalist Bob Woodward is indicative of the tone of these war support interviews.

> *O'Reilly: I'm interested in whether you, Bob Woodward, are saying to the American people that Iraq is a lost cause? Are you saying that?*
>
> *Woodward: No, no, no. I'm saying it's been very, very difficult 3 1/2 years. (FOX: 2007-01-09)*

Woodward and O'Reilly discussed the necessity for upbeat rhetoric for the Commander-in-Chief during wartime. Anything else would be discouraging for the nation and for the troops. It's 'because you have people on the line. You've got to rally. And you've got to win it' O'Reilly said. Woodward responded, 'Now you rally with the truth. You rally with the truth' (FOX: 2007-01-09). His point goes to the

discussion of whether the Bush administration could end up disseminating inaccurate information, potentially even wartime propaganda, by being overly optimistic about the situation in Iraq to keep morale high.

While Bush's spirit may have been lower than he displayed publicly, polls were not likely to worry him too much. He met reporters from the WSJ and they could not detect any sense of pessimism in the President. 'He sat down for 45 minutes with a few members of this newspaper's editorial board. If Mr. Bush is beaten down by the polls and his party's loss of Congress, he isn't showing it' (WSJ: 2007-02-01). This is in accordance with Bush's stated view on polls, as documented in chapter 2.4.

When you are presiding over an **embattled military** involved in wars that go below expectations, you need to weigh your words carefully. In earlier periods, support – and concern – for the troops had occasionally been discussed by editorials. But in period 4, coverage of the narrative of an embattled military reached new levels, reflecting the increased losses. The inability to conclude the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan led to military overstretch. Some initial coalition partners also had pulled out leaving a greater share of the burden to American ground forces.

USAT summarized the situation – or crisis – in this way: 'the stress on people and equipment has reached disturbing levels.' (USAT: 2007-01-22). A month prior to that, the newspaper reminded people that 'When the public turned decisively against the Vietnam War, it vented anger on the troops.' (USAT: 2006-12-22). A public angered and distraught at the sight of returning combat troops is a horror scenario. It was important to avoid the post-Vietnam gulf between military and society.

The suffering of combat troops was seen in relation to Bush and Rumsfeld's handling of the wars, and their failure to maintain a sufficiently large military structure. The military fatigue was considered to stem from a discrepancy between military capacities and military engagements Bush chose to engage in. Military overstretch placed a huge burden on America's ground forces. The surge would also lead to more casualties. Cheney recounts, 'if we adopted a counterinsurgency strategy […] this new strategy would likely bring more casualties' (Cheney, 2011, p. 445).

NYT simply stated that America had been 'going to war with less than the Army we needed' (NYT: 2006-12-24). The result of this was that 'the stress on people

and equipment has reached disturbing levels' (USAT: 2007-01-22). Iraq was taking a toll on all fronts, not least in terms of personnel. In this quote, USAT saw the war in Iraq, counterinsurgency and the draining of people in the military together.

> *Iraq has shown at least two things: The United States should not provoke ill-conceived wars of choice. And if U.S. forces are called on for lengthy peacekeeping or counterinsurgency missions, all the high-tech weapons in the U.S. arsenal are no substitute for boots on the ground. (USAT: 2007-01-22)*

This excerpt displays a sceptical tone, and real concern for American GIs. However, even though USAT criticised the invasion of Iraq as ill-conceived, and were vocal opponents of the surge, they still gave their full support to the additional troops who were about to be sent out. 'With the surge already under way, Americans should wish the troops well and hope for success' (USAT: 2007-01-24). USAT demonstrated in saying this that they recognized the difference between supporting the war, and supporting the troops. Using the word 'hope' suggests that they do not necessarily believe this will end well, but that they still hope for the best.

WP also employed the phrase 'hope for success'. This can be seen as a reflection of waning public support for the war on terrorism, war in Iraq, and in particular the surge. WP also related the prospects of success to the drained capacities of the US army, and seemed to hope the surge plan would never come to fruition.

> *If the plan proceeds, we hope U.S. forces succeed without heavy casualties. But even if they do, the victory will be temporary. U.S. forces cannot sustain the planned "surge" for long,' (WP: 2007-01-11)*

WP's argument is that the surge can only be temporary, due to lacking military capacities. If America's enemies realize this, the fight may become even harder, and any gains may be reversed. Bush was aware of these problems, and writes that he assured the Joint Chiefs: '"I share your concern about breaking the military", I said. 'The surest way to break the military would be to lose in Iraq"' (Bush, 2010, p. 376).

WSJ wrote little about these problems. Their more offensive foreign policy agenda, with US military power backing up confrontational diplomacy, would be

impossible if the US military could not endure further deployments. They might stay out of this debate for that reason. It would come across as coherent to threaten Iran or al-Shabaab with military options, if the military is considered to be in disarray. What WSJ did write about in reference to the troops was to commemorate those who had made the ultimate sacrifice. 'The 3,000 Americans who have given their lives in that noble mission have done so in a just cause' (WSJ: 2007-01-02).

The embattled military had a reliable ally in Bill O'Reilly. This is not a new narrative for Fox News, as chapters 4.6 and 5.5 document. In December 2006, Bill O'Reilly himself went to Iraq 'to say thanks to the Americans who are fighting a brutal war.' He went round 'telling each and every military person to their face that I respect their service and that most Americans do as well' (FOX: 2006-12-18). To Bill O'Reilly this was personal, and he uses the first-person pronoun, 'I' consistently, when talking about his journey to Iraq. He brought up the troops, those killed and maimed in the war, while advocating Americans to support the war. 'The window in Iraq is closing. But at this point, for the sake of those who have been killed and wounded, let's give it one more shot' (FOX: 2007-01-09).

A few remarks on **Fox News**' coverage besides offering war support will wrap up this section. Fox applied the phrase 'war on terrorism' regularly. Fox claimed Bush 'believes the war on terror is interconnected. Saddam was a terrorist enabler' (FOX: 2007-01-09). Bush's interconnection here is exactly what was described as a transfer in chapter 4.3. Fox also were worried about Iran. Just like WSJ they might be willing to draw the transfer even further, and expand the war on terrorism to potentially include Iran. TPM mentioned Iran very frequently.

> *Iran is manufacturing many of the bombs that are killing our military people. Iran's also paying terrorists to kill Americans. 70 percent of coalition casualties come from bombs. 70 percent! (FOX: 2006-12-18)*

Fox also escalated the media war. As NYT – and other liberal media outlets – grew more vitriolic and activist in their coverage, Fox counterbalanced this. The TPM stated, 'The media battle between FOX News and the far left outlets is fascinating to

watch from the inside' (FOX: 2007-01-19). Fox also contended that 'if you root against your country, you are disloyal. And unfortunately "Talking Points" believes some media are doing just that' (FOX: 2007-01-11). Evidently, the media wars would linger on, with Fox attacking other media outlets frequently throughout period 4. Senator Kennedy was still a target, too, with the bulk of one TPM devoted to him (FOX: 2007-01-09).

Finally on Fox, TPM's use of comparisons with Nazi Germany and Hitler increased in period 4. It was still limited, but there were more instances than before. The quote also displays coverage of Saddam Hussein. 'There's no difference between Saddam and the Nazis' (FOX: 2006-12-29). Yet O'Reilly was displeased when ABC's Joy Behar had compared Rumsfeld to Hitler.

> *Adolf Hitler was a mass murderer, a man directly responsible for the deaths of 50 million human beings, at least 50 million, and Joy Behar and ABC is comparing Donald Rumsfeld to him? (FOX: 2006-12-19)*

6.5 Firing and hiring: Personnel changes

'Personnel changes occur in every presidential administration. Some are by mutual consent, some are not,' writes Donald Rumsfeld (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 704). Firing and hiring are inevitable in democratic politics. The peaceful change of power through elections defines democracy. The three most important changes in period 4 were the departure of Rumsfeld and the appointments of Robert Gates and General David Petraeus.

The media narratives on these three described two of them as good guys, and Rumsfeld as the bad guy. These changes will be taken in chronological order, followed by a few remarks on changes at the U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and controversial Ambassador John Bolton both left the U.N. during period 4. They were on opposite sides on security policy, not least on Iraq. The front page of *USA Today* concluded: 'Annan has long been a critic of the war in Iraq and other Bush foreign policies' (Slavin, 2006).

In his memoirs Rumsfeld explains that the decision for him to leave after the election loss was not taken quickly. In a chapter titled 'Farewells', he writes.

> *By the summer of 2006, with declining support for the Iraq war and for the administration, I had made up my mind that I definitely would not remain if the Democrats took control of either house of the Congress in the November elections. (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 705)*

The excerpt illustrates important aspects of war support. The lack of support made Rumsfeld consider his job and quit. In a guest blog for Thomas Ricks at *Foreign Policy.com,* Bob Woodward takes issue with Rumsfeld's book and his account of his departure. 'Rumsfeld's memoir is one big clean-up job'. He is especially dismissive of Rumsfeld's chapter on his resignation, 'Farewells'.

> *He [Rumsfeld] launders the whole episode. Because he was willing to resign, he makes it sound almost voluntary [...] It was almost, he subtly and deceptively suggests, as if Bush didn't want to do it. (Woodward, 2011)*

In direct opposition to this, Rumsfeld's friend and ally, Dick Cheney, supports Rumsfeld's account. 'Rumsfeld was a formidable secretary of defence'. He continues by explaining what an election loss implied for Rumsfeld. 'If Democrats won a majority in either house, he would be forced to spend all his time testifying and justifying the decisions' (Cheney, 2011, p. 443). Cheney himself would remain in office throughout Bush's two terms, but his influence took a few hits. Glenn Kessler argues that 'Cheney's influence also began to dwindle, as he was deprived of his former compatriot at the Pentagon, and [...] Scooter Libby' (Kessler, 2007, p. 238).

Back in 2000, Bush writes the following about selecting a Secretary of Defence: 'My top candidate was Fred Smith' for the Pentagon. Apparently, it was Condi Rice who suggested Rumsfeld (Bush, 2010, pp. 83–84). This is quite a paradox, considering the bad chemistry that developed between Rice and Rumsfeld. Bush asked Cheney to bring the bad news to Rumsfeld. Cheney was often the bearer of bad news (Baker, 2013, p. 2). There is little doubt Cheney disagreed with the decision (Bush, 2010, p. 94; Cheney, 2011, p. 442). Condi Rice, on the other hand, was not sad to see her rival

leave, but claims she tried to keep out of the decision. When President Bush asked what she thought of Bob Gates as Secretary of defence, she writes that 'I could barely contain my joy' (Rice, 2011, pp. 540–541).

Some of the media also had problems containing their joy at seeing Rumsfeld replaced. NYT wrote about 'The nearly universal (and bipartisan) relief at the departure of Donald Rumsfeld' (NYT: 2006-12-06). However, much of the coverage was on Gates, not Rumsfeld, and comparisons of the two. NYT wrote an editorial with the telling title 'The Un-Rumsfeld'. 'Mr. Gates played the role of the un-Rumsfeld masterfully yesterday' (NYT: 2006-12-06). Gates recounts how 'my confirmation was not about who I was but rather who I was not' (Gates, 2014, p. 15).

WP quoted at length from Gates' appearance before Congress and labelled him 'a refreshingly candid voice' (WP: 2006-12-06). The narrative on Gates was positive, with variations of the word 'fresh'. WP fronted this narrative through the quoted editorial titled 'A Fresh Old Hand; Robert Gates tries out a new strategy for a Bush Cabinet member: candor.'

WSJ hardly wrote about Gates and Rumsfeld. They wrote much more about Kofi Annan, as we shall soon see. WSJ mentioned Gates only once, quoting him appreciatively on the following: 'There are no new ideas on Iraq' (WSJ: 2006-12-07). The statement was interpreted as bringing realism and sober assessment into the Iraq debate. WP used the exact same quote the day before.

The other most celebrated and quoted sound bite from the hearing was when Gates was asked 'if the United States was winning the war in Iraq. He responded with two words: "No, sir"' (WP: 2006-12-06). Gates also assigns great significance to this quote in his memoirs (Gates, 2014, p. 19). Their extensive use of direct quotes, confirms how important WP considered this hearing to be, and they enforced Bush's narrative about new hands and fresh eyes at the Pentagon. Gates was confirmed with an overwhelming 95 to 2 vote (Gates, 2014, p. 20).

WSJ let Rumsfeld leave quietly, and did not embark on comparisons favouring Gates as the other newspapers did. Condi Rice wrote about 'Bob bringing new credibility to the assessments that we were presenting' (Rice, 2011, p. 594). She is subtly saying that Rumsfeld's assessments were no long longer considered credible.

USAT wrote in the same vein, and were harsh towards Rumsfeld. They too found it 'refreshing' to be rid of 'prickly denials from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld' (USAT: 2006-12-06). They felt his departure was long overdue, 'given Rumsfeld's radioactivity in Washington and around the world (USAT: 2006-12-06). A final parting shot from USAT was testament to the turf wars they felt Rumsfeld had waged, pushing the Pentagon's influence in controversial directions.

> *For him it wasn't enough to have a military that fights the nation's wars. He wanted one that did diplomacy, intelligence gathering and, apparently, domestic law enforcement (USAT: 2006-12-06)*

This reinforces Condi Rice's perspective (see chapter 5.6): that the Pentagon was meddling in matters it should not, and was not interested in the views of others (Gates, 2014, p. 17; Rice, 2011, p. 192). NYT believed 'infighting reached a crescendo during the reign of Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon' (NYT: 2007-01-05). NYT also offered the only mildly critical reporting after Gates's confirmation hearing. 'Mr. Gates's truth-telling did not go much further than acknowledging what is obvious to everyone but this White house' (NYT: 2006-12-06). However, the expression is more criticism of Bush and Cheney, than praise for Gates.

The infighting seemed to decline after Rumsfeld left. Rice and Gates were friends and their common background from leading academic institutions bolstered their cooperation, according to Rice (Rice, 2011, p. 540). Rumsfeld and Cheney managed to push Powell aside, but Rice outlived Rumsfeld's tenure in the Bush administration. She was beyond reach, being very close and dear to Bush.

Bush bluntly admits there were major turf wars going on and he could not stop them. He acknowledged that 'In most administrations, there is natural friction between the diplomats at State and the warriors at Defense' (Bush, 2010, p. 87). But he proceeds with a candid assessment of how intense the infighting was between Powell and Rumsfeld.

They were like a pair of old duellers […] I spoke to Don and Colin individually. I asked Dick and Condi to work behind the scenes. I instructed Condi's skilful deputy, Steve Hadley, to tell the seconds and thirds to cool it. Nothing Worked. (Bush, 2010, pp. 87–88)

The short sentence – 'nothing worked' – really says it all. It gives a good picture of the internal life of the administration. We see 'a president who could not stifle the infighting within his administration' (Leffler, 2013, p. 216). This extraordinary quote also captures another important element. Dick and Condi were working behind the scenes. Reading the Bush administration's memoirs really reveals how close Bush and Condi were. She is present at every critical juncture, and seems involved in every significant policy decision. She was truly *The Confidante* and she survived all eight years of the Bush presidency. In his memoirs, Bush writes that 'I had grown very close to Condi Rice. She could read my mind and moods' (Bush, 2010, p. 90).

The other crucial appointment that took place in period 4 was that of **David Petraeus**. The two confirmation processes bear considerable resemblance as both men sailed through calm waters in the Senate. Both received what bordered to a hero's welcome. In a WSJ op-ed five years later, Hegseth and Zirkle went so far as to advocate *A fifth Star for Petraeus* (Hegseth & Zirkle, 2011). This would have promoted him to the rank of General of the Army, alongside American military icons MacArthur, Eisenhower, and Marshall. Indeed, no fifth star had been awarded since World War II.

Gates and Petraeus were portrayed as sensible, capable people given the task of sorting out the mess Rumsfeld left behind in Iraq. Several books have been written about General Petraeus (Kaplan, 2013; Ricks, 2009; Robinson, 2008). The list also includes a biography whose author Petraeus would later have a career-ending affair with (Broadwell, 2012). The sad affair ended with Petraeus pleading guilty and reaching a settlement in order to avoid serving a two year long sentence, for sharing classified information with Paula Broadwell (Goldman, 2015). The neo-conservative magazine *The Weekly Standard* wrote admiringly of Petraeus on numerous occasions. This is documented by Jack Hunter in 'The Petraeus Saga' (Hunter, 2012).

The appointment of Petraeus to lead the surge has been considered a success by posterity. The result is that former politicians write themselves into the hiring process. Cheney met with Petraeus in January 2006, he writes, and Rumsfeld thought highly of him (Cheney, 2011, p. 441). Rumsfeld himself pretends the surge was simply a continuation of his strategy. 'This was the same sensible and modest strategy we had set out before the war' (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 717). This is to stretch the truth, and is refuted by the other memoirs. The surge is considered a strategy change in the other memoirs, and a successful one too (Kilcullen, 2009, pp. 117, 185).

There are, however, important contextual reasons why the surge worked, other than strategic prudence and good military leadership. Rumsfeld points to these when he writes: 'The 2007 surge coincided with seismic shifts in the Iraq political landscape. The Sunni awakening' (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 716). Peter Bergen agrees that attributing the change in Iraq only to COIN, the Anbar awakening and Petraeus is too simplistic. 'To that list must be added the work of JSOC.' U.S. special operations forces 'killed the leaders of the militant sectarian groups […] at an industrial rate.' (Bergen, 2012, p. 157).

Interestingly, WSJ, which wrote so little about Gates, wrote the most about Petraeus. It was clear they had faith in Bush's choice, or Gates's choice, according to Bush himself. Both Bush's and Rice's memoirs assign the decision to hire Petraeus to Gates (Bush, 2010, p. 377; Rice, 2011, p. 541). Here are examples of what they wrote about the General.

> *As the Petraeus Counterinsurgency Manual puts it, "security is essential to setting the stage for overall progress." (WSJ: 2007-01-11)*

> *In appointing David Petraeus, who will replace General Casey, Mr. Bush has chosen a general with impeccable credentials in this theater (WSJ: 2007-01-08)*

> *Crucial to all of this will be the new U.S. ground commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who not only recruited and trained the Iraqi Army starting in 2004 but also oversaw the drafting of the U.S. Army's latest Counterinsurgency Manual. (WSJ: 2007-01-11)*

WSJ wrote three editorials in which Petraeus figured prominently, and they were very appreciative of the man. 'Impeccable credentials' is a fine way to be described by the media. Quoting from the COIN doctrine Petraeus was involved in writing, is another way of showing confidence in the concept of COIN and the leadership of General Petraeus.

This study has found no mention of Petraeus in NYT editorials in period 4, and USAT only referred to Petraeus once in passing. They quoted him from his Senate hearing where he 'called the situation in Iraq "dire"' (USAT: 2007-01-24). This contributed to his image as a fresh truth-teller. WP devoted one editorial to the new military commander in Iraq, bearing the long title 'Congress's Iraq Quagmire; The Senate would send Gen. Petraeus off with a pat on the back and a vote of no confidence in his mission.' They pointed to the paradox that everyone seemed appreciative of Petraeus, while at the same time lawmakers were saying Iraq was lost.

WP reminded congressional critics of the Iraq war that 'On Tuesday nearly every member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee warmly endorsed Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus' (WP: 2007-01-25). Petraeus's confirmation proves there is little doubt that confirmation votes matter in Washington. Bush himself emphasizes Petraeus as being the correct choice for Commander in Iraq with the following sentence. 'The senate confirmed him 81to 0' (Bush, 2010, p. 380).

Only WSJ seem really to have understood the pivotal – perhaps even historic – role Petraeus would have in the war in Iraq. NYT's editorial page ignored his confirmation hearings, and USAT hardly noticed them. WP's one editorial seems to have covered whatever they wanted to say about this aspect of the change of course in Iraq. Another factor was the civilian leadership, both Iraqi and American.

WSJ continues to occupy centre stage as we turn to personnel changes at the **United Nations**. By late 2006, the WSJ had lost all confidence in the leadership of Kofi Annan, and were also sceptical of the U.N.'s role in the world in general. They provided plenty of negative coverage as Annan left Turtle Bay. WSJ and NYT wrote considerably more on this than the other news outlets. This was a media battle between the right and left leaning newspapers. Bolton's departure was not mentioned in USAT or WP editorials. WSJ's writing focused on Annan rather than his successor Ban Ki

Moon. However, they also engaged in positive coverage, as the controversial US Ambassador to the U.N., John Bolton, was replaced.

WSJ linked 'Mr. Bolton's graceful exit' (WSJ: 2006-12-05) to Annan's departure. Their assessment was that 'Mr. Bolton served with exemplary tact at Turtle Bay, […] despite the leaks and sniping from the office of Secretary General Kofi Annan (WSJ: 2006-12-05). We see praise for Bolton, the opposite for Annan.

In the NYT, the editorializing went in the opposite direction. They had plenty of scorn for Bolton. Their view was that 'John Bolton's decision to resign as America's envoy to the United Nations was a wise move' (NYT: 2006-12-05). Bolton was appointed during a recess, and was considered a hardliner with little chance of confirmation by a Democratic controlled senate (Sammon, 2005). There never was a vote. The reason was that Bush bypassed Congress in appointing John Bolton as U.N. ambassador. NYT devoted a full editorial to the topic titled 'Mr. Bolton Resigns'.

> *This page opposed Mr. Bolton's nomination in the first place, arguing that at the very minimum, an ambassador to the United Nations should be someone who believed the organization deserved to exist. Mr. Bolton has always been hostile to the U.N., and to the whole spirit of consensus-seeking diplomacy (NYT: 2006-12-05)*

Evidently, NYT always felt Bolton was the wrong candidate for the U.N., and he earned himself a reputation for shaking things up. NYT were glad to see him go, and portray him as an obstruction to diplomacy more than a practitioner of it. Bolton was therefore seen as a continuation of the diplomacy sceptical approach the Bush administration had chosen at the U.N. in the lead up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq. A month later they returned to the topic, mentioning 'the destructive presence of the former ambassador, John Bolton.' (NYT: 2007-01-06)

Finally, NYT were not really passionate about Moon or Annan. The editorial on 'A Status Quo Secretary General' referred to Moon as a 'low-key bureaucrat who wouldn't rock the boat' (NYT: 2007-01-06). This description is slightly jaundiced, portraying Moon as an unexciting leader who might lack vision and ambition, yet will not make a mess. USAT were more optimistic, as the heading of their editorial on December 29 acknowledged: 'New chief at U.N. offers new chance for change'.

6.6 Intermittent media frames

This section on intermittent media frames will be shorter than in previous chapters. The main reason is that writings on the U.N., inaccuracy, and on NYT's activism have already been portrayed in this chapter. The themes that constituted intermittent media frames in this period were detainee treatment, international support and image. Diplomacy was now part of the main narrative on the ISG, and is dealt with in chapters 6.1 and 6.3.

There is less change in the intermittent media frames between period 3 and 4, than between earlier periods. Detainee treatment was intermittent in period 1 and 2, but became very important in period 3. Now it ceded place to discussions of strategy in Iraq. Furthermore, propaganda war and intelligence failure remained topics of editorial writing. This news frame was related to a general theme of inaccuracy, and at times sheer incompetence, in Washington. Finally, the Valerie Plame story is gone from the editorials, though some repercussions remained. The Plame affair decreased Dick Cheney's influence within the administration, resulting in a relative gain in power for Condi Rice. This gives us these intermittent news frames.

Table 6.1 Intermittent media frames period 4

Period 1 – post 9/11	Period 2 – leading up to the Iraq War
Detainee treatment and civil liberties Air security Diplomacy and coalitions The Anthrax scare	Detainee treatment and civil liberties International support and France WSJ's journalistic activism Securitization
Period 3 – Bush's re-election	Period 4 – The ISG and the surge
Propaganda war Intelligence failure The U.N. and international support The Valerie Plame affair	Inaccuracies – Intel and propaganda Detainee treatment, the torture narrative NYT Activism The U.N. International support & image

One NYT quote ties several of these news frames together. 'The lawless nature of Mr. Bush's war on terror has already cost the nation dearly in terms of global prestige' (NYT: 2006-12-20). This highlights detainee treatment as costly for international support, and points out that this is Mr. Bush's war. The illegal action this quote highlights departs from the human rights regime enforced by the U.N. The editorial also includes allegations of inaccuracy as NYT dismisses the Bush administration's 'claim that only a few bad apples were brutalizing prisoners' (NYT: 2006-12-20). Later they would highlight intelligence failures and inaccuracies in an activist manner. 'This administration's record of failures in Iraq is matched only by its failures on intelligence' (NYT: 2007-01-04).

USAT were also unconvinced by the Bush administration's 'Rosy scenarios' (USAT: 2006-12-15), on Iraq, and on prisoner treatment. They wrote about 'the sorry mess that is the Guantanamo Bay prison camp […] holding hundreds of prisoners in Kafkaesque legal limbo at the camp' (USAT: 2007-01-15). An editorial, titled 'An appalling threat', occurred right after Charles "Cully" Stimson, Deputy Assistant Secretary Of Defense For Detainee Affairs, derided the lawyers defending Guantanamo detainees. NYT and WP were also shocked at 'Mr. Stimson's appalling behavior' (NYT: 2007-01-19). WP included several verbatim quotes from his statements in its editorial, including the one below.

> *When corporate CEOs see that those firms are representing the very terrorists who hit their bottom line back in 2001, those CEOs are going to make those law firms choose between representing terrorists or representing reputable firms,. (WP: 2007-01-12)*

The newspapers' writing may have contributed to Stimson's resignation on February 2, 2007. His departure also demonstrates the growing personalisation of the war on terrorism. Editorials singled out people for praise occasionally, but more often for criticism. Stimson published an apology in WP, stating that 'those comments do not reflect my core beliefs' (Stimson, 2007). However, his Pentagon position was

beyond rescue. WSJ and Fox chose not to editorialize about Stimson. They instead wrote more about Democrat Congressman Reyes, perhaps due to their conservative nature. 'Mr. Reyes was unable to answer basic questions about the sectarian nature of both al Qaeda and Hezbollah' (WSJ: 2005-12-14).

Stimson's departure illustrates detainee treatment as an intermittent narrative in this period. By now, the controversy surrounding Gonzales had quietened down. He was still mentioned, mostly by NYT, who sought to connect people like Stimson to him. After Stimson's unthoughtful remarks, NYT felt that 'Mr. Gonzales actually expanded the attack on lawyers' (NYT: 2007-01-19). Gonzales would not remain in his position throughout the Bush period. He left the Bush administration in August 2007 (Shenon & Johnston, 2007).

Looking at the overall picture of intermittent narratives, they became more negative in period 4 than before. In period 2, the activism was WSJ's, performing advocacy for the Bush administration's war in Iraq. Now the most activist writing was in the NYT, who were sceptical of practically all aspects of the Bush administration.

6.7 Conclusions and findings in period 4

This chapter evolved into the longest of the study, due to the many findings and varied editorializing in period 4. The pattern observed is that when there is intense fighting abroad, the debates at home will mirror that intensity. This may be an intuitive argument, but it is still important to document how this debate was held. Intensity was a defining characteristic of the strategy debate over Iraq, based on the ISG and the surge supporters' differing visions of the war and prospects of success. It is worth commemorating the research questions the study provides answers to

1. How was the war on terrorism portrayed in American editorials, and how did editorials attempt to influence public support for the war on terrorism?

2. Did American editorial pages develop their own media frames about the war on terrorism, or did they adopt strategic narratives from the elite rhetoric?

The findings are particularly revealing as regards the second research question. Rather than accept optimistic forecasts from the Bush administration, the news outlets now had acquired an independent situational understanding of the events on the ground in Iraq. The findings of this chapter therefore mainly support Baum & Groeling's hypotheses. We recall their hypotheses predicting that 'over time, the marginal influence of elite rhetoric will decline more than the marginal influence of objective indicators of a war's progress' (Baum & Groeling, 2010, p. 40). With NYT in the forefront, the media now forcefully challenged the Bush administration's strategic narratives relying on their self-produced media frames.

A perception was spread of inaccuracy and unwarranted upbeat official communications from the Bush administration on Iraq. This made replacing Rumsfeld a necessity for President Bush. The re-shuffling of the Cabinet paved the way for Gates and Petraeus to establish a public image as truth tellers with "fresh eyes". As Gates recounts about Petraeus, 'Iraq was his battlefield and Washington was mine' (Gates, 2014, p. 49). Rumsfeld's resignation can also be seen as a bargaining chip to forge political unity with a democratically controlled Congress.

The involvement of congressional politics, and the focus on public support makes period 4 an interesting phase of the war on terrorism, highlighting societal interaction during wartime in a democracy. Democracies are prone to indecisiveness when the electorate is confounded by negative developments on the ground, known as score-keeping. One factor bringing this about is war-weariness. As Rupert Smith argues, 'State and people must always be in evidence, even for the smallest military operation, particularly in the case of democracies' (Smith, 2007, p. 216).

It was not only the American public who were fatigued by war. The ground forces of the US military had taken punishing blows. This seems to have had a twofold effect on war support. First, it demonstrated that the war was brutal and victory would crave further sacrifices. This led some citizens to lose faith in the mission. On the other hand, the military's suffering drew some focus away from the war decision itself and over to a question of support for the troops. Fox news displayed particular agency

in that regard. To Fox, questioning the wisdom of going to war, and how it was fought, was ok. But you cannot 'root against your country'.

The ISG projected a narrative of more diplomacy and a regional focus. This was welcomed by many as it appeared to decrease reliance on severely drained military means. The media's attitudes towards the report were closely connected to their attitudes towards the Bush administration. This mechanism worked both ways as Bush was criticised indirectly by editorials writing positively about ISG. This occurred as it became evident that Bush would largely disregard the recommendations of the ISG, calling for regional diplomacy.

However, a new regional dimension was observed during period 4. What occurred was the spread of the war on terrorism to new zones of conflict. Somalia and Pakistan would be dragged into low-intensity conflict, and Iran was increasingly on the radar. Seeing the original theatres of Iraq and Afghanistan as separate fronts would no longer suffice. The original two operational theatres of the war on terrorism were now bleeding into neighbouring countries. Regional solutions were favoured in the editorials, with hopes of burden sharing with neighbouring countries and allies.

In early 2007, WSJ were quite eager to continue to expand the war on terrorism. They saw it as a truly global struggle. NYT wanted to scale down in Iraq and withdraw, whereas USAT tried to maintain focus on Afghanistan and al Qaeda. USAT's al Qaeda focus would prove prudent in the long run. Al Qaeda's own narratives drowned in a political environment over-concerned with Iraq. America's enemies were largely absent from battlefield Washington, as America struggled internally.

USAT's writing on the embattled military framed that topic. Invoking the ideas of Clausewitz, it highlighted the links between a weakened and faltering political leadership, a fatigued military exposed to bad fortune in Iraq, and a disillusioned emotional populace. This contributed to public support being given more attention in period 4 than in period 3. Support for the war was categorized into support for the decision of going to war, support for the troops, and support for the handling of the war. Even TPM offered criticism for the handling of the war. On Iraq, the public had

by 2006 concluded that the 'justifications for the war exceeded the elasticity of reality' (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 57; See also Berinsky, 2009).

The public was therefore naturally against increasing troop levels in 2007, but gradually shifted opinion as score-keeping metrics showed improvements on the ground. Rumsfeld's thinking was by no means in vogue in 2007, but his assessment in his memoir was valid. 'The true genius of the surge was the political effect it had in the United States, where the conflict's true centre of gravity had migrated' (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 716).

This prompts the question: had the centre of gravity ever been elsewhere? Did it ever migrate out of America? The nation's ability to remain steadfast – rather than relinquish its will to fight – proved crucial. The surge as a turning point documents the immense importance of the war at home when America engages in war. One argument to be drawn from Rumsfeld's statement is that by 2007 America was fighting itself. The counterargument again would be: perhaps they were all along?

Finally, these arguments require a caveat. The picture remains incomplete if the developments on the ground in Iraq are decoupled from the war at home. After all, the situation in Iraq made it necessary to make changes in the war at home. Had the war in Iraq progressed smoothly, no surge would have been needed because the toll of the war fighting would not demand such painful sacrifices of America. Moreover, had the surge not worked, the question remains whether America would have lost in Iraq, or if they had lost Iraq at home, much like Vietnam.

7. The Bush legacy and the promise of Obama

In all but the first analytical chapter of this study, the topics of the editorials have been intrinsically intertwined and hard to separate from one another. The hardest choices in separating material into analytically approachable topics were made here in chapter 7. It was a difficult time for Bush. Kilcullen concluded that 'international support for U.S. initiatives has waned substantially since the immediate post-9/11 period'. The reasons were 'unilateralism, perceived human rights abuses and the Iraq war' (Kilcullen, 2009, p. 14). Yet, table 2.5 shows that war support was slightly better during period 5 than before and after rising to 36% for the Iraq war.

In Bush's final days in office, the overall theme of Obama versus Bush transcended most others in the editorial writing. The war on terrorism, and the editorializing about it, centred on the American home front, given the imminent changing of the guard at the White House. Rumsfeld's point, from this study's opening page, on Washington D.C. having become the centre of gravity for the war, was increasingly true.

While the interleaving of topics posed an analytical challenge, the good thing was that the general conduct and presidential leadership of the war on terrorism were written about extensively. In previous periods Afghanistan, Iraq, bin Laden and WMD were at the forefront. Earlier, opinion journalism was more concrete and down to earth, typically focused on specific zones of conflict and enemies. Some of this remains, but those narratives ceded place to comparisons between Bush and Obama, and their national security teams. The one exception was the dominant torture narrative.

In period 5, the torture narrative was inextricably linked to the war on terrorism itself. This is because the answer to what you can do to detainees also provides answers to what the war on terrorism had become, and what it should be. The normative discussion that took place was about democratic rights and freedoms, as well as safety and security for the American people. There is an acknowledgement in the editorial writing that America's conduct in the war on terrorism contributes to

defining what America is, both at home and abroad. The war on terrorism had become more than a war. It was now an existential endeavour explaining what America was to the world, and to Americans themselves.

For NYT, the debate on how the war on terrorism should be conducted was considered 'essential to restoring this country's reputation around the world. And it is essential to restoring Americans' faith in themselves and in their government' (NYT: 2009-01-19). This highlights the fundamentals noted in the introductory chapter, of a Clauswitzean cohesion between people, military and political leadership, in the context of a modern democracy like America.

There was inevitably an opposing view to NYT's scepticism to Bush, especially in the WSJ. The positive mantra of the Bush supporters was, 'he kept us safe' (Zakaria, 2009). This prompted the question: at what cost? The cost was in lives and treasure, but equally importantly, in moral standing through values undermined and unnecessary military campaigns. Had America lost its moral footing by applying too powerful – even draconian – countermeasures in pursuit of security from terrorism?

During periods 2, 3 and 4 Iraq was in America's crosshairs. In 2009, the end was in sight for Iraq, while there were growing concerns over Afghanistan. Both theatres received less attention than detainee treatment – especially inmates of Guantanamo – in period 5. The incoming national security leaders, described as a team of rivals, were given much attention in the editorials. Would they continue the war on terrorism in its many facets as the Bush administration had?

NYT was particularly active and vocal in period 5. Unsurprisingly, NYT wrote about the torture narrative in large volumes. Indeed, Early 2009 was a good time to be a harsh Bush critic, as the prospect of Obama raised hopes of an antidote to Bush. During Bush's two last months in office NYT printed 31editorials about Bush and the war on terrorism, some of which were unusually lengthy.

A few notable incidents actualized the global nature of the war on terrorism in late 2008. The jihadist group Lashkar-e-Taiba's inventive and spectacular terrorist strike in Mumbai stunned the world (Tankel, 2011). LeT's attack underlined the trans-national dimension of the war on terrorism as the attack was staged in India, but planned in Pakistan. Additionally, Israel's Gaza war led to editorials on the need to

fight terrorism, and the urgency of reinvigorating the Middle East process. President Bush's standing in the Middle East was perhaps best symbolized by 'the shoe assault on President Bush by an angry Arab journalist at a Baghdad news conference' (USAT: 2008-12-16).

A more pleasant experience for Bush was the vindication of his decision to order the surge. 'Despite the sectarian meltdown that gripped Iraq in 2006 and 2007, the Petraeus Surge and the Sunni Awakening transformed the war ravaged country' (Scarborough, 2015). It offset some of the scathing criticism he faced over the war's early phases, and the decision to start the Iraq war, as he was leaving office. As Peter Beinart's title suggest, the vocal opponents of the surge were urged to 'Admit it: the surge worked' (Beinart, 2009). This was a theme FOX and WSJ gave extensive attention to.

Before proceeding with Bush, and then Obama, it is worth mentioning the financial crisis of 2008. It stole a lot of media attention in the presidential campaign. It was the other major focal point (in addition to the war on terrorism) in the comparison between Bush and Obama. Some of this writing noted the spiralling war costs, and emphasized the need for both military and economic leadership. USAT sketched out a metric of success addressing security, civil liberties, the image of the US, and the economy.

> *Obama will be measured on his ability to keep America safe without compromising civil liberties or U.S. standing in the world, and by his success at restoring the nation's economic well-being. (USAT: 2009-01-20)*

7.1 President Bush and torture in the war on terrorism

Bush's presidency was a controversial one. He endured heavy criticism along the way, and this intensified at the very end of his second term in office. It seems that the imminent handing over of power to Obama provided the media with new angles and ammunition for criticism. Obama was media savvy, and at times called a media darling (Seelye, 2008). For every positive trait Obama possessed, the liberal side of the

media spectrum seemed to point to Bush's lack of that quality or skill. The two presidents were compared in editorials in a pervasive and elaborate manner.

Bush, Obama, Cheney and the torture narrative were meshed together and written extensively about. This subchapter will analyse these aspects of the editorializing, while trying to untie some of the knots. We shall start with overall leadership and the Bush legacy. Thereafter, we shall gradually be moving towards the controversial aspects of detainee treatment and civil rights in the war on terrorism. This was an angle from which the most scathing criticism of the war on terrorism would be delivered.

A presidential election naturally brings up political differences in America, and the 2008 election was no different. The ideological tenets of the newspapers were conspicuous, with NYT giving Bush a particularly hard time. The pro-Bush argument was presented with less vigour by NYT's ideological counterparts. WSJ and Fox cautioned against letting down the guard by dismantling the Bush/Cheney terror-fighting apparatus. Cheney was more involved in the public debate over the Bush legacy than Bush himself, and was cited in several editorials.

WSJ defended Bush and Cheney's war on terrorism and considered it Bush's greatest accomplishment. Their view was that 'Defining and fighting the war on terror, in Iraq and elsewhere, will be President Bush's most important legacy' (WSJ: 2009-01-13). Defining the war on terrorism – the master narrative – is deemed by WSJ to be as important as actually fighting the war. This demonstrates the real concern of WSJ (shared by FOX) that Obama would expose America to danger by dismantling and terminating the war on terrorism.

Interestingly, WSJ also conspicuously injected 'Iraq' into the quote above, reinforcing that country's transfer into the war on terrorism. This is a way of answering critics who claimed Iraq was Bush's biggest mistake. In an editorial titled 'The 9/11 Presidency, WSJ argued that 'On his own post-9/11 terms, Mr. Bush's biggest failure has been Iran.' (WSJ: 2009-01-16). That editorial quoted Bush's monumental speech on September 20, 2001 at length. In the speech, 'he set the standard for the Bush Presidency: To protect Americans from another 9/11 and hit

Islamist terrorists and their sponsors abroad' (WSJ: 2009-01-16). The quote also underlines the need for international military action.

WP and NYT did not share WSJ's view that Iran was Bush's biggest mistake. In fact, all the newspapers wrote specifically about Bush's mistakes. In an editorial titled 'The Deluder in Chief', NYT dismissively wrote that 'We long ago gave up hope that President Bush would acknowledge his many mistakes' (NYT: 2008-12-07). Yet in the same editorial, a Bush quote does acknowledge mistakes. '"The biggest regret of the presidency has to have been the intelligence failure in Iraq," he said' (NYT: 2008-12-07). Here are examples from all four newspapers writing on Bush's shortcomings, incompetence and mistakes.

> *The biggest mistake of Bush's first term was to suppress dissenting views in a needless rush to invade Iraq. (USAT: 2008-12-02)*
>
> *The Bush administration got so disastrously off-track (WP: 2009-01-26) Obama will not repeat one of President Bush's greatest mistakes -- allowing ideological and political considerations to trump good military judgment. (WP: 2009-01-19)*
>
> *Whatever his mistakes in Iraq, George W. Bush's "surge" was a lonely call that has proven to be right. (WSJ: 2009-01-20)*
>
> *Mr. Bush's incompetent and lawless conduct of the war against terrorism. (NYT: 2008-11-23)*

The media narratives about the Bush legacy focused more on his mistakes than accomplishments. To rephrase the essence of this criticism Bush rushed into Iraq for ideological reasons, dismissing dissenting views and military judgement in the process. *USA Today* owner Al Neuharth also weighed in. Referring to Cheney and Rumsfeld, he stated that Bush 'listened too much to his two worst advisers.' Addressing his readers, Neuharth went on to note that the media too should do some soul searching and apologize 'to Bush -- and to you -- for failing to properly inform of the possible consequences of those major misdeeds' (Neuharth, 2009). With this statement, he is effectively saying the media had fumbled their obligation to prevent Bush from making some of his worst misdeeds.

Mistakes were attributed to Bush across the board, yet WSJ chose to also focus on the success of the surge, which will be analysed more closely in chapter 7.3. What else was positive in the Bush legacy? WSJ pointed out that 'Americans are safer today than on September 10, 2001' (WSJ: 2009-01-16). Despite the lack of terror attacks on US soil, this assessment was disputed, because of the heavy toll the wars took in lives and treasure. Additionally, following Iraq 'most publics abroad held increasingly unfavourable views of the United States' (Holsti, 2006, p. 350).

The safety-first argument was driven home even more forcefully by FOX, who used variants of the phrase 'keep us safe' in six different TPMs. It was even in the title once: 'Can President-elect Obama keep us safe from the terror killers? That is the subject of this evening's Talking Points Memo' (FOX: 2008-12-09). Six days later, O'Reilly also said that 'some historians will hammer the president, but his legacy will be open to debate. After 9/11, his administration has kept the homeland safe. Very big achievement' (FOX: 2008-12-15).[9]

There was a counterargument to the notion that Bush had kept America safe, primarily asking at what price. History, WP wrote, 'may credit him for avoiding a second attack on U.S. soil but not for his handling of Guantanamo or "enhanced interrogation"' (WP: 2009-01-18). Furthermore, this lengthy quote from Zakaria involves the public and Cheney and sums the argument up. In fact, it catches the overall mood around Bush's departure in a good way, and ends with a Cheney quote.

> *That has become the mantra to explain why George W. Bush -- contrary to the view of the American public, people abroad and historians -- is actually a great man. For Dick Cheney, unsurprisingly, Bush will rank "among the most decisive, determined and far-seeing leaders this nation has ever had." And his chief piece of evidence for this claim is, of course, that "he has kept us safe" (Zakaria, 2009)*

Several important constituents of the coverage are included here, not least the argument that history would redeem Bush's presidency. Cheney was actively engaged in this media battle over the Bush legacy. Cheney was quoted in several editorials and

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[9] The other four dates were December 1, 3 and January 6, 14, 2008. Furthermore, Keeping the country safe was also the main theme in O'Reilly's top story on December 16, 2008, and in his interview with Karl Rove on January 7, 2009.

NYT believed 'it must be exhausting to rewrite history as much as Mr. Cheney has done in a series of exit interviews […] Some of Mr. Cheney's comments were self-serving spin' (NYT: 2008-12-18), they argued.

Both WSJ and USAT described how the media battle was fought on television, and brought the incoming President into the debate. They also mentioned influential senator John McCain, who Obama had just defeated in the presidential elections. WSJ, on the other hand, mentioned Khalid Sheik Mohammed, commemorating the most prominent al Qaeda member in American custody, as of 2014.

> *Cheney, on CNN, vigorously defended the use of waterboarding […] waterboarding "is not Torture," Cheney asserted unconvincingly. Barack Obama, on ABC, rebuked Cheney. Waterboarding is indeed Torture, he said, echoing Sen. John McCain. (USAT: 2009-01-12)*

> *Cheney told ABC this week, "There was a time there, three or four years ago, when about half of everything we knew about al Qaeda came from one source [KSM]". (WSJ: 2008-19-12)*

USAT's referring to McCain added an air of bipartisanship to the notion that waterboarding is torture, and that Cheney was wrong. While the language is milder, the quote suggests that USAT were closer to NYT's position than WSJ's. NYT wrote that 'Americans have watched in horror as President Bush has trampled on the Bill of Rights and the balance of power' (NYT: 2008-11-23). That said, USAT were not always mild in their criticism: they were unimpressed by 'the worst excesses of former President George W. Bush, who compromised civil liberties in the name of national security' (USAT: 2009-01-21). Nevertheless, USAT's pro et contra approach was evident as the same editorial called Bush's stepping down a 'Classy departure. […] George W. Bush did himself and the nation proud' (USAT: 2009-01-21).

Many were not proud of 'the horrifying practice of waterboarding' (NYT: 2008-12-18), which was what Cheney defended on ABC. WP wrote dismissively about 'waterboarding -- a simulated drowning technique considered torture since at least the Spanish Inquisition. […] This must never happen again' (WP: 2008-12-23). This was part of the torture narrative that went contrary to the Bush administration's

interests and strategic communication. NYT concluded: 'the real nature of Mr. Bush's grotesque legacy: abuse and torture at an outlaw prison' (NYT: 2009-01-18).

The prison referred to was Guantanamo. In period 5, the 'torture narrative' and civil liberties concerns were multi-faceted. NYT called for the prosecution of Rumsfeld, Gonzales and other officials for 'what happened at Abu Ghraib, in Afghanistan, in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and in secret C.I.A. prisons' (NYT: 2008-12-18). USAT also believed 'Rumsfeld and other top Bush administration officials bear direct responsibility for the abuses that so damaged the American interests' (USAT: 2008-12-15).

There were many calls for 'Closing Guantanamo', the title of NYT's January 18 editorial. Obama promised to do so. Yet history proved this to be a much more difficult task than anyone anticipated. Here is what the newspapers wrote about the matter as Bush was about to be replaced by Obama.

Obama's plan to close the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while symbolically important and necessary, raises hugely complicated issues about what to do with the most dangerous detainees. (USAT: 2009-01-20)

A one-year deadline for closing the Guantanamo detention facility, gives the administration time to review the cases. (WP: 2009-01-22)

Guantanamo may take his entire first term to close down. (WSJ: 2009-01-16)

We hope he sets a target date. […] But we do not agree with critics who insist that date must fall within his first 100 days. This page called early and often for closing Guantánamo. But we recognize that this is going to be very hard work. (NYT: 2009-01-18)

Only WSJ was fairly close to understanding the difficulty of closing Guantanamo, within the suggested time frame. One year was far off the mark; the prison is still operating more than five years later. NYT's suggesting that 100 days would be a little too soon appears slightly embarrassing in hindsight. The statement falls within an activist mentality where the desire to dispose of "all things Bush" may have impeded good judgment. On the positive side, the NYT does have the merit of being the most forceful opponents to what is in hindsight widely considered government sanctioned torture.

Guantanamo prison was at the forefront symbolizing the whole detainee regime put in place by the Bush administration. In NYT's terminology, it represented 'President Bush's reprehensible enemy combatant doctrine. [...] imprisoning people indefinitely' (NYT: 2008-11-25). WP sounded similar concerns, denouncing 'the utter travesty that is holding people with virtually no evidence' (WP: 2008-11-21). They considered indefinite detention without evidence, charge or trial to be the Bush administration's 'latest excess in its conduct of the war on terrorism' (WP: 2008-12-12). The editorials were extremely negative as the Bush administration's war on terrorism was at times reduced to a tale of torture and mistreatment.

Bush's elite rhetoric was not the only verbal sword to be swung in the intense media battle. WSJ and Fox were firmly on Bush and Cheney's side in these matters. WSJ reminded the American people that 'At stake aren't the abstractions of some civil-libertarian seminar, but people's lives' (WSJ: 2008-12-08). National and Homeland security are undeniably about saving people's lives. Providing security for citizens is *a* – if not *the* – most important concern for the state. And 'Mr. Bush made a conscious choice to take no chances with American lives, and to live with the liberal backlash over waterboarding Khalid Sheikh Mohammed' (WSJ: 2009-01-20). This is a plain and open endorsement of the practice of waterboarding for the purpose of saving American lives. Bush kept America safe, in the opinion of WSJ, and it was worth the cost.

On December 19, WSJ published an editorial headed 'The Real 'Torture' Disgrace' in which they provided a clear example of how the editorial pages actively engage in media warfare over strategic narratives in a 'war on terror that has been "strangled by law"' (WSJ: 2009-01-10). Senator Levin had published a scathing report (which was also frequently mentioned by NYT) which put the blame for detainee treatment at the top, with Rumsfeld. WSJ believed this was a 'left wing crusade', and a torture vendetta to smear the Bush administration. Here are two quite forceful quotes on what WSJ dismiss as a misleading 'torture narrative'.

> According to the familiar "torture narrative" that Mr. Levin sanctifies, President Bush and senior officials sanctioned detainee abuse, [...] Nearly every element of this narrative is dishonest. (WSJ: 2008-19-12)

The left-wing crusade to purge their agencies of anyone who had anything to do with "torture." […] The real -- the only -- point of this "truth" exercise is to smear Bush Administration officials […] Drop their "torture" vendetta. (WSJ: 2009-01-06)

Preserving and continuing the war on terrorism as fought by the Bush administration was the most important theme in WSJ in period 6. They wrote incessantly about the 'hypochondria about the Bush Administration's supposed torture program' (WSJ: 2009-01-23). And they believed 'the left-wing attack lines against Bush policies are mostly simplistic illusions' (WSJ: 2009-01-22). As the excerpts above show, they put scare quotes around the word "torture". This was done to counter the fact that WSJ had been misled into using the word torture to describe what they felt strongly was not torture. It was an example of WSJ's journalistic activism. We recall the torture debate in period 4 where WSJ were worried that left-leaning liberals were about 'to rob the word of all meaning' (WSJ: 2004-12-02).

The definitional debate over what constitutes torture was a main theme at Fox news, too. TPM were resoundingly on the Bush administration's side on whether waterboarding was legitimate. On January 6, the Talking Points Memo was titled 'The war on terror takes a turn for the worse and we may all be in danger'. Eight days later, TPM returned to this topic in typical vitriolic fashion. Fox's adversary in the media battle was the far left media, and they called out NYT and NBC News for engaging in disgusting propaganda to damage their own country.

Tearing the country apart over the Bush-Cheney anti-terror policies, that is the subject of this evening's "Talking Points Memo." The far left media has succeeded in convincing the world that the USA is a nation of torture, a country that sadistically inflicts pain on both the innocent and the guilty. Well, these people at "The New York Times" and NBC News should be very proud. They've damaged their own country in a disgusting display of propaganda and outright lies. (FOX: 2009-01-14)

Some of O'Reilly's comments presented in this study are provocative, including those on patriotism. This is one of them, accusing those who disagree with the way the war has been waged of spreading lies and propaganda. Disagreement does not equate with being un-patriotic.

There were some passages in the Fox broadcast that were quite balanced too. One of them is particularly illuminating to the torture definition debate, as TPM replayed excerpts from an earlier interview with Bush. The exchange between O'Reilly and President Bush is an example of opinion journalism challenging the established elite rhetoric through critical questions.

'Talking Points' opposes torture, but not coerced interrogation methods like sleep deprivation and even waterboarding with presidential approval. In my last interview with President Bush, I pushed him to define what interrogation methods should be used to keep us safe. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

O'REILLY: Is waterboarding torture?

GEORGE W. BUSH: I don't want to talk about techniques. And -- but I do assure the American people that we were within the law and we don't torture. We - I've said all along to the American people we won't torture, but we need to be on the position where we can interrogate these people.

O'REILLY: But if the public doesn't know what torture is or is not as defined by the Bush administration, how can the public make a decision on whether your policy is right or wrong? (FOX: 2008-12-01)

This exchange illustrates several aspects of the editorializing in period 6. Note how both Bush and O'Reilly design their sentences in the format of 'America does not torture, but.' This demonstrates a pragmatic attitude towards conduct that borders on torture. It is not a complete reservation against torture, without any ifs or buts.

Note also how 'Talking Points' prefaces the video clip by asking what 'interrogation methods' the President will use to 'keep us safe'. Bush's answer addresses the 'American people' directly, using the phrase twice in one short answer. O'Reilly's follow-up question uses the phrase 'the public' twice. This underlines that the public had a real interest, and a stake, in exactly how the war on their behalf was fought.

Bringing the public into the debate brings us to the final point to be analysed in this section, before moving on to the editorializing on Obama and his security team. Politicians answer to the public, and if they do not live up to expectations, they can be removed from office. The public's expectation that the government must keep them safe carries a very serious side to it. Responsibility carries with it the potential for

serious consequences, such as losing elections, impeachment or even imprisonment. The news media have a role in this equation and should relentlessly work to reveal shortcomings, power abuse, and neglect by the powers that be.

The word 'consequence' was important to conservatives in January 2009. 'With a newly elected liberal president, it will be interesting to see just how the new government will handle the war on terror' (FOX: 2008-12-01), O'Reilly wondered. He felt that 'president-elect Obama has committed himself to an undefined no torture policy' (FOX: 2008-12-03). What would the consequences be to US security?

O'Reilly brought in several perspectives (some outside of TPM) to discuss this. Former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer was asked whether America risked being attacked again. The conservative prediction was that Obama's America would lead to a situation where 'the risk of America being attacked rises dramatically' (FOX: 2009-01-06). Scheuer answered: 'Oh, I think so, sir. I think within the next year, we'll be attacked again' (FOX: 2009-01-06).

Karl Rove and President Bush were also part of the O'Reilly factor's news frame. Below is an interview sequence between Rove and O'Reilly, and after that a clip from President Bush's final press conference, which was shown during the TPM on Fox, meaning it was effectively quoted verbatim.

> O'REILLY: My last question. If we're attacked after he does dismantle all of these things, it's done. His administration is done, is it not?
>
> ROVE: Look, if you've taken techniques and that have kept America safe and discard them, you are putting the country at risk. And you have to bear the consequences of that.
>
> O'REILLY: And the consequences in your opinion would be?
>
> ROVE: It depends on what kind of attack is launched on us. (FOX: 2009-01-07)
>
> BUSH: Do you remember what it was like right after September the 11th around here in press conferences and opinion pieces and in stories? That sometimes were news stories and sometimes opinion pieces? People were saying how come they didn't see it? How come they didn't connect the dots? Do you remember what the environment was like in Washington? I do. When people were hauled up in front of Congress and members of Congress were asking questions. (FOX: 2009-01-12)

Bush's statement can be seen as one of his parting shots at the press. He was, of course, aware of the numerous negative media accounts of his legacy and presidency. He stressed the responsibility and accountability that comes with the office of the president of the United States. He also reminded everyone of 9/11, and that if things go badly on your watch, you may be pummelled in news stories and opinion pieces, and subsequently hauled before Congress to answer tough questions.

With this statement, Bush provides a reminder of an essential dimension of the context in which the war on terrorism was fought. The people, the media and Congress have expectations to how the security of the nation is achieved. For this study, it is particularly interesting to see how news reports and opinion pieces are explicitly written into the equation, impacting the room to manoeuvre for the political leadership.

WSJ also brought up consequences. Dismantling the Bush administration's approach to the war on terror would 'have consequences for U.S. safety, and for the Obama Administration if there is another 9/11' (WSJ: 2009-01-23). This passage, and argument, resembles a veiled threat that goes as follows: If you discard certain counterterrorism practices of the security system of the war on terrorism, then we will hold you accountable if America is attacked again.

As always, analysing Fox has required some lengthy quotes. Some of the earlier have been harsh. Another verbal cannonade will round off chapter 7.1. Bringing connotations to Göring, O'Reilly fumed at disloyal Americans who put the country in danger. He claims that leaders are owed the benefit of doubt in times of war – presumably with few questions asked. Moreover, it arguably undermines the WSJ argument just presented, involving consequences for Obama should America be attacked again.

> *'Talking Points' despises – despises – those who in the name of ideology want to weaken the country, putting us all in danger. As loyal Americans, we owe the benefit of the doubt to leaders in the time of war. And both Bush and Cheney say flat out they did their duty. (FOX: 2009-01-14)*

7.2 A team of rivals: Obama and his national security team

The comparison between Bush and Obama in period 5 is a tale of two extremes. Bush had kept the country safe, shown courage in ordering the surge, but otherwise had little to show for his term in office, according to many media accounts. This is partly due to the natural attrition of governing, and Obama's campaign, with the slogan 'Change we can believe in', seized on this. He even published a book bearing that title as part of the campaign (Obama, 2008). Voters tend to grow tired of politicians. Therefore, the American people – and most of the media – were eagerly anticipating change at the White House.

Most Americans were inspired by the election of their first Afro-American President. WP felt that 'Mr. Obama has impressed, inspired and reassured the nation with his intelligence, steadiness, civility and common sense' (WP: 2009-01-19). USAT described the new leader as possessing 'discipline, purpose and a lack of distracting drama.' (USAT: 2009-01-19). They continued by noting that 'it's hard to find many people -- excepting a few at the edges of both parties -- who don't think Obama is off to an impressive start.' (USAT: 2009-01-19). Interestingly, even though Obama had yet to enter the White house, his efforts were still deemed to be impressive.

WSJ were also cautiously positive and optimistic on Obama's behalf, at this point. However, they did have some concerns about his ability to lead. With the surge in mind, they wrote, 'We know he is intelligent and clever. What we don't know is if he can make a difficult decision in the national interest that is unpopular' (WSJ: 2009-01-20). The day before, they conveyed a similar mixed message, applauding some of Obama's traits, yet raising uneasiness about him.

> *His rhetorical gifts are formidable, no small virtue in a job whose influence depends chiefly on the power to persuade. […] Yet for all of those personal virtues, there remains an elusiveness, an opacity, to Mr. Obama's political character. (WSJ: 2009-01-20)*

Using words like 'elusiveness' and 'opacity', WSJ highlights Obama's lack of transparency as a leader, and needs to be clearer. Opacity can also be interpreted as a word play on another of Obama's published books: *The Audacity of Hope* (Obama, 2006). The pattern observed is that WSJ were cautiously optimistic, and yet carve out the general direction their ensuing criticism of Obama might be taking. NYT's coverage, on the other hand, was supportive of Obama, in an unconditional manner. Quoting from Obama's inauguration speech they wrote the following.

> *'In about 20 minutes, he swept away eight years of President George Bush's false choices and failed policies […] it was exhilarating to hear Mr. Obama reject "as false the choice between our safety and our ideals." (NYT: 2009-01-21)*

Obama's punch line was cascading from the steps of the Capitol and onto the NYT's editorial page, in accordance with Entman's predictions. The 'false choices rhetoric' also highlights another dimension of Obama's leadership that received positive coverage: he was seen as a pragmatist. On January 16, WP published an editorial titled 'Pragmatist-in-Chief'. This was right after Obama's sit-down with WP's editorial board. Their subsequent writings suggest the meeting went very well.

WP's editorial board quoted Obama, as he reassured them that his administration would be 'true to the Geneva Conventions and International norms, that we are true to our Constitution and that [we] keep the American people safe' (WP: 2009-01-16). These last words were a retort to the 'keep us safe' narrative projected forcefully by Fox. WP's editorial was packed with praise, with only a few caveats and cautionary remarks. WP bordered on NYT's optimism on this occasion. The editorial's final clause emphasizes pragmatism, yet contains concern over whether Obama's abstract rhetoric can be transformed into effective policy.

> *Mr. Obama's indications of ideological flexibility are rather abstract at this point; he has not yet been called on to make the kind of difficult choices about which he speaks so eloquently. But his transition has sounded all the right themes, and, if yesterday's session is any guide, his presidency promises to begin on the same hopeful, pragmatic note. (WP: 2009-01-16)*

Key words here are 'pragmatic', 'flexibility', 'eloquent' and 'abstract'. WP struck an interesting chord here that would prove quite prescient of the trajectory the Obama presidency would take. Five years into his presidency, his image was more of a talker than a doer. His accomplishments were not outstanding. One WP columnist considered 2013 to be 'a genuinely disappointing year for Obama', holding 2011 to be Obama's annus horribilis (Dionne Jr., 2013). The liberal *Huffington Post* was also unimpressed. They reproduced an *Associated Press* story titled: 'Obama's 2013 Was Beset By Fits, Fumbles, Failures' (Pace & Benac, 2013). Obama's polling numbers were also low compared to other president's five-year approval ratings (Boyer, 2013).

Obama's warm welcome from the media was partly extended to his national security team. The media narrative on them was that they could be a **Team of rivals**, and this was forcefully communicated. WSJ wrote: 'the transition spin that Mr. Obama's Cabinet choices are inspired by Abraham Lincoln's "Team of Rivals" also suggest more than a little hubris' (WSJ: 2008-12-02). Comparing the incoming administration and the President to Lincoln is, inarguably, setting the bar pretty high.

WP seemed to believe that the talk of a team of rivals had occurred naturally. 'Barack Obama's announcement of his national security team immediately prompted questions about whether he had created a "team of rivals"' (WP: 2008-12-02). If questions like these reflect the talking points of the Obama administration, such coverage would mark a strategic communication success for them. USAT also applied the phrase in a December 2 editorial titled 'Obama's "team of rivals" share big-picture views'. The overall tone of the editorial was very positive insofar as USAT wrote about 'the heavyweights President-elect Barack Obama introduced as his national security team' (USAT: 2008-12-02).

Who were these heavyweights? The cabinet members mentioned in the editorials were Robert Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Attorney General Eric Holder and also Leon Panetta who would serve as Director of the CIA. Michael Chertoff at DHS, National Security Advisor General James Jones and General Petraeus were also mentioned briefly by name in editorials in period 5.

The team as a whole was more celebrated in editorials than the individual members of the team. The one exception was Gates who received extremely positive

coverage across all five news sources studied here. NYT thought 'President-elect Barack Obama's national security team is a relief' (NYT: 2008-12-02). A WP editorial, from the same day, played down the rivalry theme through the title 'Team of Centrists; national security appointees have plenty in common.' As Obama was entering office, WP's opinion was that the President 'has assembled, already, a team rich in experience and pragmatic competence' (WP: 2009-01-19).

Again it was emphasized that Obama was seen as a pragmatist, and keeping Bush's appointee Gates contributed to this perception. Gates already had a favourable public image, as documented in chapter 6.5, so Obama and Gates cross-fertilized one another's pragmatic and positive images. Clinton was seen as the most daring choice, but WP also overtly tried to play down her potential for internal conflict in the Obama administration. 'All of the national security officials Mr. Obama named yesterday are proven pragmatists and team players. Yes, that includes Ms. Clinton' (WP: 2008-12-02).

Also WSJ were positively minded about the overall team Obama had chosen. WSJ wrote an extensive editorial on the team and were particularly encouraged about Obama's keeping Gates on. They thought Gates could 'help Mr. Obama check the worst reflexes of his anti-antiterror base' (WSJ: 2008-11-28). They were hoping Gates would be a significant speed bump in a drive to recast the war on terrorism more in accordance with the positions on the left side of American politics. Note also the introduction of the term 'anti-anti-terror', labelling the opponents of counter-terrorism. This lengthy quote is indicative and representative of WSJ's writing on Obama's team.

> *With these personnel picks, Mr. Obama reveals a bias for competence, experience and continuity. […] The Gates selection is an implicit endorsement of President Bush's "surge" in Iraq and its military architect, General David Petraeus. […] Mr. Gates will also give Mr. Obama some political insulation if events go wrong. (WSJ: 2008-11-28)*

WSJ mentioned President Bush, the surge and Petraeus, reminding both Gates and Obama what they expected from them. WSJ also duly noted that Gates protects

Obama from attacks from the right on matters of national security. This has traditionally been a favoured line of attack of Republicans against Democrats. Democrats have long been perceived as the weaker party on national security and foreign policy (Campbell & O'Hanlon, 2006; Cohen, 2011; See also Power, 2008).

Another reason why Robert Gates was seen as a pragmatic and prudent leader was his view on diplomacy. Gates, in a highly unusual move, called for more funding for the State Department (Barnes, 2007; Tyson, 2007). NYT stressed this point arguing that 'Mr. Gates Champions Diplomacy: Cabinet secretaries rarely go to bat for other departments' (NYT: 2008-12-31). They continued by quoting a line from a recent Gates article in *Foreign Affairs*, putting diplomacy above military means. "Not every outrage, every act of aggression or every crisis can or should elicit a military response" (Gates, 2009). NYT considered this to be a striking contrast to 'Rumsfeld, who fought to control every aspect of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars — and pretty much everything else' (NYT: 2008-12-31). USAT also editorialized to shift the balance away from 'the military force that President Bush has overly relied upon' (USAT: 2008-12-02).

Clinton was more controversial than Gates. WSJ arguably bore a long-standing grudge against the Democrat senator from their home state, whose policies they generally opposed. Their view was that 'Mr. Obama's biggest gamble is associating his Presidency with the Clinton political circus' (WSJ: 2008-12-02). Hiring the former first lady meant getting two politicians for the price of one. Many asked what role Bill Clinton would have, and whether he would interfere in policy-making.

While WP and others applauded Obama for reaching out to former opponents in the primaries, WSJ remained sceptical. Handing yet another a blow to Powell four years after his departure they wrote: 'In choosing Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Obama is also hiring someone he can't easily fire. This is usually a mistake, as President Bush learned with Colin Powell' (WSJ: 2008-12-02).

Despite WSJ raising question marks, Clinton got through the Senate in a dignified manner with a 94-2 vote (Mcauliff, 2009). The concern over involving Clinton was largely put to rest as her four years in the job were considered fairly successful. In 2013, Michael Hirsch noted that Obama's 'Lincolnesque effort to create

a team of rivals had paid off, thanks largely to Clinton's own efforts at reconciliation' (Hirsch, 2013, p. 82).

The most controversial name on Obama's team of rivals was probably Eric Holder. The historical context was the opposition and controversy surrounding Gonzales and other judicial appointees. As WSJ noted, 'One of the media narratives about the Bush Administration has been its "politicization" of the Justice Department.' (WSJ: 2008-12-02).

Now it was payback time, with Eric Holder in the line of fire. The debate over Holder was a reflection of the torture narrative's pre-eminent position in the debate. The media battle over Holder primarily involved WSJ and NYT. Fox remained on the side-lines, saving their ammunition for Panetta. The TPM never mentioned Holder. USAT also did not mention Holder by name in any editorial in period 5.

WP wrote one editorial on this, siding with NYT. Their title suggests they perceived the controversy to be 'Politics as Usual; An unjustified delay on Mr. Holder' (WP: 2009-01-23). NYT were decidedly positive towards nominee Holder noting that Holder would echo Obama's election. 'Mr. Holder, who would be the first African-American attorney general, has a particularly good record of public service for this job' (NYT: 2008-12-03). Around the time of his hearing they noted that 'It was extremely encouraging to hear Eric Holder' (NYT: 2009-01-18). They returned to the subject three days later noting that 'Eric Holder has made a strong case that he is well suited to lead […] He said emphatically that waterboarding […] is torture' (NYT: 2009-01-21).

Holder's statement on torture provoked a rejoinder from the WSJ editorial board. They wrote a piece titled 'Torture Inquisition', arguing that 'If Mr. Holder does undertake a torture inquisition, he'll need more than a personal opinion' (WSJ: 2009-01-23). The question was at this stage not only whether the Bush/Cheney approach to the war would be significantly altered. It was also a debate whether former top officials and interrogators should be prosecuted, hence the use of the word 'inquisition'. Obama enforced new interrogation practices, but backed down from going legally after 'water boarders' and those who ordered and justified the practice.

NYT later expressed their dismay at this in an editorial titled 'The Torturers' Manifesto' on April 18, 2009 (The New York Times, 2009). In their opinion, justice would have been served by 'putting Donald Rumsfeld and Alberto Gonzales on the stand, even Dick Cheney' Three months earlier they had written: 'Gonzales should have considered himself a lucky man when he was allowed to resign in disgrace in August 2007' (NYT: 2009-01-27).

Nevertheless, Holder's appointment as the antidote to the Bush/Cheney legal regime also proved controversial. He faced opposition in the Senate, but was confirmed in a 75–21 vote (Lewis, 2009). Hardly an impressive number, yet the Yea votes surpassed Ashcroft's 58–42 vote, and Gonzales' 75–21 vote. His immediate predecessor, Michael Mukasey, had been roughed up in 2007, receiving the lowest number of votes, 53 versus 40, since 1952 (Eggen & Kane, 2007).

Former ISG member Leon Panetta, did not face a tough confirmation vote. He was confirmed without opposition in a voice vote. Therefore there are no numbers to recount, but there were also no votes against him. The battle over Panetta stood between Fox and NYT. However, this battle was eclipsed by the efforts to stall Holder's appointment. In early 2009, O'Reilly was concerned. He said the following in his TPM.

> *On the security front, big problems are rolling in. Obama will nominate 70-year-old Leon Panetta to run the Central Intelligence Agency. An honest and smart guy, Mr. Panetta is Bill Clinton's former chief of staff and a man of great patriotism. But he has no intel experience, opposes coerced interrogation, and many other anti-terror methods that have kept us safe for more than seven years (FOX: 2009-01-06)*

TPM were sceptical because of Panetta's age, his inexperience with intelligence and his reluctance toward the Bush approach to interrogation in the war on terrorism. Furthermore, he is associated with Clinton, a line of attack Fox shared with WSJ. The final clause again includes the primary Fox phrase from period 5. Will he keep us safe?

NYT's retort actually hailed Panetta's lack of tenure within the intelligence community. Their January 10 editorial titled 'Not a Company Man' was word play on

this fact. In their view, the CIA could do with some fresh perspectives from outside the Agency, following their engagement in waterboarding, secret prisons, extraordinary renditions and other controversial practices.

To the NYT, criticism Panetta for lack of intelligence experience was simply insignificant background noise. 'There has been some grousing in Washington (and a lot more across the river in Langley) about how Leon Panetta, […] is not an intelligence insider' (NYT: 2009-01-10). This was not at all a concern for NYT. To them, this was almost an advantage. He qualified for the job because he 'rejected Mr. Bush's illegal, warrantless eavesdropping on Americans' (NYT: 2009-01-10).

In these two first subchapters of chapter 7, I have presented the dominant themes of period 5. It was demanding to separate the different themes from one another, and some of the topics to follow have briefly been touched upon already. As a consequence, four out of the five remaining subchapters will be shorter than in previous chapters. The exception is subchapter 7.4 on America's enemies and the zones of conflict. It was written about more as a standalone subject.

7.3 The surge redeems Iraq

In period 5, the word 'surge' was applied almost as a compliment, enhancing all who were mentioned in connection with it. This is quite a resurrection compared to the widespread criticism when it was launched. The cabinet member benefitting the most from this was Robert Gates. While Petraeus implemented the surge on the ground militarily, it was 'Gates, who oversaw the successful strategy of surging more troops into Iraq' (USAT: 2008-12-02). WP wrote that 'after consulting with Gen. David H. Petraeus, he [Gates] wisely supported a revision of that timetable in order to sustain the extraordinary success of the "surge"' (WP: 2009-01-28).

WSJ wrote a sentence similar to USAT's, while also inserting COIN into it, a concept they embraced more conspicuously than the other news outlets in previous periods. 'Mr. Gates has supervised the successful new counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq' (WSJ: 2008-11-28). Considering how negatively Iraq was written about before, it

is extraordinary to see the words extraordinary success being used to describe the American military efforts in the country.

However, an important distinction is that it was the surge – not Iraq – that was mostly described as a success. Success here implies saving Iraq from complete disaster, and the success was by no means irreversible. As time progressed, Iraq was far from a quiet place, and a complete loss of control of territory to ISIL forces in the north of the country would occur in 2014.

The perception of success rested on a combination of civilian and military efforts. Yet, Bush's ordering of the surge was of great importance. Peter Beinart considered the surge to be Bush's 'finest hour': 'It's no longer a close call: President Bush was right about the surge' (Beinart, 2009). This is indicative of the triumphant sentiments on the part of those few who stood by the President's controversial decision. WP believed history would 'vindicate his unpopular decision to stabilize Iraq with more U.S. troops rather than abandon it to civil war and possible genocide' (WP: 2009-01-18).

One loyal civil servant who had affected developments in Iraq was Ambassador Ryan Crocker. He was interviewed by WP columnist David Ignatius and was clear about where praise was due.

> *The key to success in Iraq, insists Crocker, was the psychological impact of Bush's decision to add troops. "In the teeth of ferociously negative popular opinion, in the face of a lot of well-reasoned advice to the contrary" (Ignatius, 2009)*

'Bush's brave decision to surge more troops into Iraq in early 2007, in the face of wide disapproval' (USAT: 2009-01-16), was widely praised. Also former officials from the Bush administration, such as Peter Wehner, took part in this exercise. 'Bush -- facing gale-force political winds -- changed strategy in January 2007. Iraq is now on the road to success' (Wehner, 2009). While Wehner puts Iraq on the road to success, Ambassador Crocker goes further and calls Iraq a success.

This grading of success challenges the analytical framework of Johnson & Tierney. There was improvement on the ground, which resembles score-keeping.

However, calling the avoidance of horror scenarios, such as genocide and civil war, a success bears an element of match fixing. It is not setting the bar very high.

How was Obama portrayed on this issue, considering that he had been a vocal opponent of both the war in Iraq and the surge? He came away from it quite unscathed. He was subjected to some mild criticism, but the focus was more on Obama's ability to acknowledge success in a pragmatic manner. WP wrote, 'By now Mr. Obama and most other opponents of the military surge launched by President Bush nearly two years ago have acknowledged its success' (WP: 2009-01-30). USAT were somewhat more critical noting that 'After refusing at first to state the obvious -- that the surge worked -- Obama acknowledged that it had succeeded beyond expectations' (USAT: 2009-01-22).

A final case to be mentioned regarding the surge, also brings us closer to the expansion of zones of conflict. It is WSJ's attempt to include Israel's Gaza war against Hamas in the war on terrorism. WSJ argued that what Israel was doing was also a surge. Unlike the other newspapers, WSJ editorialized a fair amount on this topic. Two editorials on it were titled 'Israel's Gaza Defense' published on December 29, and 'Israel's Gaza Surge' on January 5. In the latter they argued that even 'Though the analogy isn't perfect, in some sense this Hamas exercise can be understood as Israel's version of the U.S.-Iraqi "surge" in Iraq' (WSJ: 2009-01-05).

This comes across as an attempt to transfer the positive connotations of the surge to Israel's highly controversial military operations in Gaza. It is also a prime example of how 'surge' was almost utilized as an adjective with positive connotations. The surge remained an important topic in 2009, but not to the extent it was in 2007. Perhaps it is due to an inclination of the press to write more about strategies and policies that do not work, than to praise what is actually working? However that may be, as stated on this study's opening page, the surge remains Bush's toughest decision. It was taken under the most pressing circumstances, both domestically and abroad.

7.4 America's adversaries and zones of conflict

A prominent feature of the narrative on **Afghanistan and Iraq** was that the latter had overshadowed the former, and that Afghanistan was now headed for turmoil. Warnings had been given earlier, not least by USAT. Afghanistan was increasingly seen in relation to Pakistan, continuing the trend observed in the previous chapter. In an op-ed in WP, the U.N.'s former special representative to Afghanistan, Lahkdar Brahimi, concluded that 'it is a geopolitical reality that peace cannot be sustained in Afghanistan if Pakistan is opposed to it' (Brahimi, 2008). NATO's Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, concurred: 'The challenges faced by Pakistan are organically linked to those of Afghanistan'(Scheffer, 2009).

NYT noted 'Afghanistan's swift unravelling', and expressed concern over 'the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Seven years later, both are back with a vengeance. This is the deadliest year for NATO and Afghan forces in Afghanistan since 2001' (NYT: 2008-11-21). WP were also concerned about 'Afghanistan, where U.S. and other NATO forces struggle to stamp out Taliban and al-Qaeda elements. Resurgent terrorist groups enjoy havens in Pakistan's tribal areas' (WP: 2009-01-29).

The picture painted was bleak, and it is interesting given how the surge was seen as a success, whereas Afghanistan was sliding into chaos. The Afghan surge was on its way, and USAT followed up their extensive writing on a neglected Afghanistan. They foresaw a development in which 'the White house shifts from George W. Bush to Barack Obama, and U.S. military resources shift from Iraq to Afghanistan' (USAT: 2008-12-12). USAT wrote one particularly hard-hitting editorial on Afghanistan at the end of January. Here are some excerpts from it.

> *The most casual flip through recent news stories reveals just how much and how fast the situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating. […] So far this month, 21 U.S. and coalition troops have died in Afghanistan, six more than in Iraq (USAT: 2009-01-28)*

> *[Petraeus] has for months been examining how he might come up with an Afghan equivalent of the plan that helped calm Iraq. […] Petraeus' particular brand of genius lies in getting a grasp of the country from the ground up (USAT: 2009-01-28)*

Petraeus' involvement seemed to be the last and final hope to turn things around in the war-torn central Asian country. The blame for the dire situation was readily assigned to the departing President. 'Bush shortchanged the Afghan war in favor of his disastrous Iraq war. […] For now, the Taliban has all of the momentum.' (NYT: 2008-11-21). They continued later: 'The war in Afghanistan has been so disastrously mismanaged' (NYT: 2009-01-17). WP were not as critical, but presented a milder variant of the same argument. They were looking forwards rather than backwards and hoped for 'a responsible war policy by the Obama administration, one that would gradually shift U.S troops from Iraq to Afghanistan' (WP: 2009-01-28).

NYT foresaw no gradual shift of troops out of Iraq. They wanted a swift withdrawal. They urged Obama to 'extricate the country from an unnecessary war in Iraq so it can focus on a necessary war in Afghanistan' (NYT: 2008-11-23). Along similar lines, USAT wrote about the two wars that 'Afghanistan, originated as a necessary response to the terrorist attacks in 2001. The other, in Iraq, is a misguided war of choice that undermined the first' (USAT: 2009-01-16). The counter-argument to this thinking was presented – less forcefully – by WSJ.

> *Another argument is that the U.S. can't beef up in Afghanistan without quick reductions in Iraq. As a matter of arithmetic, that's broadly correct. But before a larger force can do much good in Afghanistan the U.S. needs a plan for deploying it. Here's the lose-lose scenario: Allow Iraq to deteriorate by withdrawing too soon and push into Afghanistan without a better strategy.' (WSJ: 2009-01-27)*

It is interesting to see the normally quite aggressive and forward leaning WSJ now striking a cautionary note on redistributing US troops in the war on terrorism. Iraq had certainly seen worse phases than when Bush was leaving office. 'U.S. and Iraqi casualties this month are among the lowest since the war began' (WP: 2009-01-27), noted WP one week into the Obama presidency.

On the whole, the two military fronts of the war on terrorism received plenty of coverage in period 5. The two major zones of conflict attracted many more column inches than America's adversaries. Many questions were raised as to whether the war in Iraq was necessary, and whether it had drained resources from the original conflict

theatre in Afghanistan. NYT certainly thought so, and also sided with Obama on the matter. 'We agree with President-elect Barack Obama that Afghanistan is the real front in the war against Al Qaeda' (NYT: 2009-01-17). Interestingly, NYT did not employ the phrase 'war on terrorism', but opted for Obama's favoured line 'war against al Qaeda'.

The question of what the central front actually was, was also debated in a January 29 WP starting thus: 'The Afghan Challenge – Democrats have long called it "the central front." Will they retreat from it?' USAT also weighed in with an interview with Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff. The following exchange from USAT's editorial board's interview addresses zones of conflict, and will also move our discussion on to the topic of America's adversaries.

> *Q: Who is the war on terrorism against? Is it al-Qaeda? Is it the tactic, which seems impossible to eradicate? Or is it Islamic radicalism?*
>
> *Chertoff: What we're confronting is an ideological conflict with an extremist world view [...] It's an ideology that's reflected in al-Qaeda, and it's reflected in Lashkar-e-Taiba*
>
> *Q: For several years, the administration has described Iraq as the central front in the war on terror. Is that still the case?*
>
> *Chertoff: I would look at the whole space from Iraq to the frontier area of Pakistan as the central front.*

An interesting dimension of Chertoff's statement is that the zones of conflict are further expanded. He defines 'the central front' as an entire region, including Iran implicitly and Pakistan explicitly. From this we garner that 'The central front' can then be seen as the Greater Middle East. Another thing to note in the interview is that USAT places the narrative of 'Iraq as the central front' with the Bush administration. This is therefore an example of USAT's rejection of the Bush administration's strategic narrative on Iraq. USAT were quite concerned that Iraq could eclipse Afghanistan.

America's enemies in Iraq were mentioned sparingly. The main theme was the success of the surge. Moqtada al-Sadr was mentioned briefly, and remained a source

of uneasiness. Zarqawi had been killed two years ago, and no subsequent AQI leader ever achieved the notoriety of the Jordanian terrorist. Zarqawi was only ecplipsed when AQI was succeeded by the terror group ISIL, under the leadership of the notorious Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (Beaumont, 2014).

The most interesting development relating to America's enemies in Iraq was that Prime Minister Maliki no longer was considered wholly conducive to benign political progress in Iraq. 'Once dismissed as hopelessly weak, the prime Minister has grown so strong that some accuse him of plotting to construct a new Iraqi autocracy' (WP:2009-01-27), wrote WP. Maliki remained a partner of America, but it was increasingly a reluctant partnership.

Afghanistan's Karzai and Pakistan are examples of other reluctant partners in the war on terrorism. In the passage below, many issues are discussed. WP pointed to Pakistan and Iran, and they praised Obama, lamented Bush and called for more diplomacy, a staple of WP's editorial page.

> *Eager to correct the perceived errors of the Bush administration, Mr. Obama and his appointees are heavily invested in the notion that better diplomacy can answer Iran's drive for a nuclear weapon, ease the threat of terrorism from Pakistan,* *(WP: 2008-12-02)*

Elaborating on these issues three weeks later, WP opined, 'if the war on terrorism is to be won, the excuses for Pakistan must end' (WP: 2008-12-22). They use this statement to point at Pakistan, while also embracing the master narrative of the war on terrorism, emphasizing that it was a conflict that can be won. WSJ were of a similar view. Pointing to Pakistan, they argued that 'The war on terror is far from won, and it is migrating to democracies with weak antiterror defenses' (WSJ: 2008-11-28).

While WSJ warned of treacherous waters ahead, they also took time to note the successes in Bush's war on terrorism. 'Al Qaeda was flushed from safe havens in Afghanistan, then Iraq, and its terrorist network put under siege around the world' (WSJ: 2009-01-16). Otherwise there was limited writing on al Qaeda, and part of the reason may be evident in that WSJ quote, where they describe al Qaeda largely as

being on the defensive. Bin Laden was mentioned by name rarely, too, in fact, not at all by NYT in period 5.

One Islamist group that received more editorial coverage was Lashkar-e-Taiba. Following their extraordinary terrorist attack on Mumbai, NYT mentioned them and their troubling storming of the world stage (Tankel, 2011). It was particularly the links to other groups that were worrying about 'Lashkar-e-Taiba, an Islamist group from the disputed region of Kashmir that is increasingly collaborating with the Taliban and Al Qaeda' (NYT: 2008-12-01).

The Mumbai attack underscored how the war on terrorism was more than battling al Qaeda and the Taliban. USAT put it in such a context, and also underlined Obama's challenges, which were both abroad and domestic. 'The Mumbai massacre underscored that he will have to fight the war on terror simultaneously with the battle to save the U.S. economy' (USAT: 2008-12-01).

The Mumbai attacks piled further pressure on Pakistan, who was seen to do little to stem terrorists emanating from within their own borders. In a surreal attempt to calm tensions, and put such charges to rest, Pakistan's embassy in Washington D.C. wrote an op-ed for the WP. 'The government of Pakistan is committed to the war on terrorism', they stressed in typical diplomatic language. But the following statement defies logic. 'Lashkar-i-Taiba has been banned in Pakistan and does not exist' (Kiani, 2008). It communicates a utopian notion that governments can deal with terrorist groups by simply banning them, and that such a ban would make them magically disappear and cease to exist.

The way forward in the war on terrorism, and the battle with al Qaeda, would change with Obama at the helm. He wanted to scale down America's military presence on the ground and oversee withdrawals in Iraq and Afghanistan. He would make up the loss by leaning heavily on the use of drones in the manhunt for the top echelons of America's terrorist enemies.

This development was not commented much on in editorials. One example is that WSJ were encouraged by what 'the U.S. is doing now with Predator attacks against al Qaeda and Taliban targets.' (WSJ: 2008-12-02). WP also noted the policy changes, and wrote about the 'deployment of the unmanned aircraft that have been

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used to devastating effect against insurgents in Iraq, Afghanistan and western Pakistan' (WP: 2009-01-28). The drone killings would trigger a huge debate on legality and civil rights during Obama's first term (more on this in chapter 7.6.).

All in all, this subchapter has described the evolution from two distinct theatres in Iraq and Afghanistan and the trajectory towards a more borderless, global manhunt. Al Qaeda and bin Laden were written less about as the problems besetting the Af/Pak region increasingly involved Lashkar-e-Taiba and Taliban. Afghanistan was a growing concern, and narratives about it became more frequent.

7.5 Public support for war, and for the military

At the end of Bush's presidency, there was limited editorial writing on war support per se. Such themes were indirectly dealt with by proxy in the debate on torture and other controversial aspects of the war on terror. One can sense an argument which goes like this: if torture and detainee mistreatment defines the war on terrorism, the public should limit its support, and Obama should recast America's counter terrorism efforts. Logically, denouncing current and recent practices is not compatible with calling for public support for the war effort.

War support was dealt with through the lens of torture and legality in the war on terrorism. Explicit calls for the public to support or not support the war, or the surge were largely gone. Even Fox focused less on support in period 5. What remains a topic is polling results reinforcing themselves through editorial coverage. In addition, NYT developed a new news frame on supporting the military and rebuilding it. The frame technically comes across as intermittent, but it echoes the trend seen in period 4 of supporting the embattled military, and is therefore included here.

Starting with NYT's new theme, it was a deliberate and sustained choice of the editorial board. 'In recent weeks,' they stated, 'this page has called for major changes in America's armed forces: more ground forces, less reliance on the Reserves, new equipment and training' (NYT: 2008-12-21). The reason why these changes were deemed necessary was because 'The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have put enormous strains on all of the men and women of the United States military. (NYT: 2008-12-14).

Naturally, there was blame to hand out for not equipping the nation with an adequate armed force. NYT meant that 'The Bush administration badly underestimated the number of ground troops needed to simultaneously wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan' (NYT: 2008-12-14). NYT also offered a remedy. At the end of the series of editorials they concluded, 'We believe it is necessary to expand the Army by 65,000 soldiers to help rebuild the world's best ground force' (NYT: 2008-12-28).

This media frame is hard to grasp. NYT had time and time again, even in period 5, argued against relying too heavily on military means in the war on terrorism. It is a bit difficult to understand the utility of adding 65,000 new soldiers to one branch of the military, when NYT so strongly advocates solving America's problems internationally by diplomacy and negotiations. Furthermore, this expensive expansion is suggested in the wake of a national and international financial disaster. This frame does not fit in very well with the rest of NYT's editorial writing.

Analysing this frame involves an element of speculation. Perhaps NYT's editorial board used the frame to bolster their credentials in criticising Bush and his war on terrorism? The frame identifies NYT as staunch supporters of the US military, in a time when they condemned the torture perpetrated in the nation's wars. One gets the impression that NYT care for the common soldier and the military organism, but roundly criticize their civilian leaders. That criticism stands on more solid footing, with a side argument of bolstering the military. Much like the Democratic party, the NYT may not want to come across as being soft on security.

NYT's frame about expanding the army is natural to relate to Clausewitz's trinity. The embattled military must be reinvigorated, NYT are arguing, due to it being exposed to the hazardous usage of the political leadership, and bad fortune on the battle field in Iraq. The remaining corner of the triangle is the emotional people, what did they think of the war on terrorism and Bush as he was leaving office?

USAT was leading the pack in writing about **support in polls** in period 5. NYT abstained entirely, never mentioning the word poll in any editorial relevant to the war on terrorism, much as they did in period 1. USAT, on the other hand, brought up the theme of history's judgement which might turn out to be kinder on Bush. Referring to its own polls, USAT wondered whether future generations would be 'kinder to George

W. Bush than today's harsh critics. Perhaps. […] a kinder historical assessment than today's 34% approval rating' (USAT: 2009-01-16). The sentence containing only one word, 'perhaps', suggests that USAT have little faith in such a development. The act of mentioning the bad numbers enforce their impact.

The 34 per cent approval rating is very low. Obama's rating was twice that at the time. WSJ mentioned these numbers and were cautious optimists in hoping that 'his confidence doesn't slide into an arrogance that sometimes attends 70% Presidential job approval.' (WSJ: 2009-01-20). The number 70 was also perhaps a bit low. USAT measurements indicated that 'Obama's favorability rating has increased sharply since he was elected, from 68% in early November to 78% now in a USA TODAY/Gallup Poll' (USAT: 2009-01-19).

WP also mentioned polls in their editorials as Obama was entering office. 'Americans are both hugely optimistic about the Obama presidency, polls show, and realistic' (WP: 2009-01-19). This can only mean they felt there was good reason to feel optimistic on Obama and America's behalf. They portray Americans as sharing the new President's goals and visions, yet realistic about what can be achieved.

The main finding here is that editorial writing advocating support explicitly for the war on terrorism dropped significantly in period 5. A main reason is that there was no particular military mission that could force editorial boards to position themselves for or against the military endeavour. Period 1 had Afghanistan, period 2 had Iraq, and period 4 had the surge. In period 5, the surge was considered a success, while editorials conveyed increasing concern for the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, which would eventually require a surge of its own.

Even Fox cut down on support and polls-related writing. They had been very vocal on such issues in earlier periods. TPM seemed more concerned with advocating a continuation of Bush's war on terrorism. These efforts, already documented in chapter 7.2, are an implicit statement of support, as they voiced serious concern over Obama and his team of rivals' ability to 'keep us safe'.

Bush would 'leave with low poll numbers, a chaotic economy, and unfinished war on terror', TPM acknowledged (FOX: 2008-12-15). They also continued to consider polls a newsworthy and reliable assessment of American opinions. One TPM

was titled 'Polling Bush hatred' (FOX: 2009-01-27). O'Reilly was content that few respondents thought pushing war crimes charges against Bush's team was a way to deal with misconduct in the war on terrorism.

> *If President Bush and his administration are brought to trial for war crimes, would that be good or bad for the United States? A whopping 70 percent say bad. Just 19% say good. 11 percent not sure. So once again, the poll proves Americans to be fair minded and level headed, but what about those 19 percent? Well, many of those people are so poisoned by ideology, they hate Mr. Bush (FOX: 2009-01-27)*

While O'Reilly expressed satisfaction with the 70 per cent, attention is quickly turned towards the 19 per cent in favour of indicting the Bush administration for war crimes. This is a finding that rhymes well with earlier periods. TPM are eager to confront those who disagree with them, characterising them sometimes as unpatriotic, un-American or bad Americans. Liberal media had also been targeted in earlier periods, and this was no exception. After the shoe-throwing incident in Iraq, TPM called two liberal websites hateful Bush-haters.

> *There are millions of Bush haters all over the world, including many Americans. Two of the most hateful political web sites in the USA, The DailyKos and The Huffington Post were absolutely gleeful about the shoe thrower. (FOX: 2008-12-15)*

Summing up this section on support, it is fair to say that the editorials were less concerned with war support than before. Implicitly, war support was undermined by very negative writing on the torture narrative. A decade of war had resulted in a great deal of scepticism of America's two wars, and to international military interventions in general. This would be a trend that continued throughout Obama's first term, and well into the second. When calls were made for military action against Syria in 2013 the American public was disenchanted and reluctant (Page, 2013).

Obama's approach to this would be to scale things down, especially the footprint on the ground. In 2014, Peter Baker wrote that 'Mr. Obama has pulled back from Iraq and other global hot spots, so has the American public. The president's decision to withdraw troops from Iraq remains popular in surveys' (Baker, 2014).

7.6 Intermittent media frames

This section in intermittent media frames is shorter than corresponding sections in previous chapters. This is because these subchapters have functioned as antechambers for news frames that could emerge into dominating narratives. The torture narrative, hardly noticeable in 2001, would be the most prominent example. In this final period such a 'preview' is less important. It is still worth noting a few of the additional topics that were written about, if not as extensively as the ones discussed so far. The four intermittent frames I shall be looking at this time deal with Scooter Libby's pardon, Blackwater, *New York Times* activism, and also diplomacy and international image.

We have seen evidence of NYT's activism in earlier sections of this chapter. Yet, the most controversial examples will be provided here. Scooter Libby's potential pardon is a sequel to the Valerie Plame affair described in chapter 5.6. Blackwater was a so-called Private Military Company (PMC). Their employees were responsible for reckless behaviour and unnecessary killings in Iraq.

The U.N. and international support had largely faded out of focus during period 5, whereas America's image problems continued to attract attention. Most of this was related to the torture narrative, and has been covered earlier. The role of diplomacy is also relevant to that frame. This leaves us with this table, a complete overview of what have been categorized as intermittent media frames in this study.

Table 7.1 Intermittent media frames period 5

Period 1 – post 9/11	Period 2 – leading up to the Iraq War
Detainee treatment and civil liberties Air security Diplomacy and coalitions The Anthrax scare	Detainee treatment and civil liberties International support and France WSJ's journalistic activism Securitization

Period 3 – Bush's re-election	Period 4 – The ISG and the surge
Propaganda war	Inaccuracies – Intel and propaganda
Intelligence failure	Detainee treatment, the torture narrative
The U.N. and international support	NYT Activism
The Valerie Plame affair	The U.N. International support & image

Period 5 – Changing Presidents
NYT Activism and propaganda war
Scooter Libby Pardon
International image and diplomacy
Blackwater

WSJ described the media battle over America's image through the following statement. 'In the media telling, America during the Bush years has been an unpopular and insular country' (WSJ: 2008-11-21). They considered allegations of America's unpopularity to be a misleading and factually incorrect media narrative. This stands in stark contrast to NYT's opinion, which is reflected below.

> *The American public and the world have learned about how Mr. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney manipulated Congress, public opinion and anyone else they could bully or lie to (NYT: 2008-12-07)*

> *There's a propaganda component to waging every war, but the Bush administration went to extraordinary lengths to hide the human cost of these conflicts (NYT: 2009-01-15)*

These are scathing remarks, effectively labelling Bush and Cheney propagandists. Still, NYT would go to even further lengths to attack and discredit Bush in an activist manner. In what is one of the most denigrating remarks found in this study NYT suggest that Bush enjoyed talking to the families of fallen soldiers. Referring to one of Bush's departing interviews NYT wrote the following.

It was skin crawling to hear him tell Mr. Gibson that the thing he will really miss when he leaves office is no longer going to see the families of slain soldiers, because they make him feel better about the war (NYT: 2008-12-07)

This comes across as a wilful misreading of Bush's statement in which he said how much he valued the sacrifices of military families, and how meaningful he found meeting with them to be. Another dimension is that portraying the meetings between those left behind and the Commander-in-Chief as phony is something the former could take offence to. Neither corresponds well with NYT's support for the military argument presented in the previous subchapter.

NYT were also hard hitting over the conduct of the PMC **Blackwater**. In their account, Blackwater 'mowed down at least 17 Iraqi civilians in Baghdad last year' (NYT: 2008-12-03). This incident took place on Nisour Square in 2007, and what actually happened is still contested. Blackwater employees were first indicted, but the charges were later pulled. In the fall of 2013 charges were again raised against the four men. This resulted in severe prison sentences (Apuzzo, 2015; Grossman, 2014).

WP's account of the events was more neutral than NYT's 'mowed down'. They wrote that 'the Blackwater crew left 17 Iraqis dead and 20 others wounded.' (WP: 2008-12-09). USAT wrote two editorials on Blackwater, including one titled 'Bar the Mercenaries'. Referring to contractors, it was time, they said 'to get them off the battlefield and introduce greater oversight' (USAT: 2008-12-12). This concern seems warranted as Blackwater 'stressed getting the job done over compliance with every law or rule' (Carter, 2013).

By 2009, a literature had emerged on the consequences of privatization of security and the role of the PMCs. Deborah Avant was clearly right in worrying about 'less stable control over force' (Avant, 2005). Some of the writing became highly critical of the industry in general, and Blackwater, and its founder Erik Prince, in particular (Scahill, 2007; Simons, 2009). This eventually triggered a retort from Erik Prince, underlining the heroic contributions of private contractors in the war on terrorism (Prince, 2013). All the negative coverage contributed to Blackwater's

decision to change its name to Xe in February 2009. In 2011, it changed its name yet again, this time to Academi (Hodge, 2011).

The final intermittent news frame to be looked at here concerns the unsuccessful calls to grant **Scooter Libby pardon**. The incident probably represents the greatest rift between Cheney and Bush throughout their two terms. Peter Baker gives the controversy front running in the prologue to his extensive memoirs of Bush and Cheney (Baker, 2013, pp. 1–11). WSJ got heavily involved in advocating a pardon for Scooter Libby. They devoted one editorial to this issue titled 'Bush and Scooter Libby'. Below are quotes from that editorial.

> *Rarely can Presidents improve their legacy in an Administration's twilight days. But President Bush now has that opportunity, by undoing a measure of the injustice inflicted on I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby. (WSJ: 2008-12-23)*

> *The Plame affair was a proxy for the larger political dispute over Iraq, and Mr. Libby became the Beltway sacrifice. [...] In this dark episode, an honest man became the fall guy in a larger political war over the war. (WSJ: 2008-12-23)*

In choosing words like 'injustice, 'sacrifice' and 'fall guy', WSJ underscored their stance, which was that 'Mr. Libby deserves a full Presidential pardon.' (WSJ: 2008-12-23). Such pardons, issued at the end of a presidency, are always controversial. WP warned that 'President Bush may be contemplating preemptive pardons, including those involving CIA agents' (WP: 2008-11-30). This final intermittent narrative presented in this study, is perhaps the best indication that WSJ not only supported the Bush administration, they sided with Cheney on the one issue that caused the greatest rift between Bush and Cheney over eight years.

On the day Bush did leave office, USAT were pleased to note that 'He eschewed controversial pardons.' (USAT: 2009-01-21). This is a positive statement, yet USAT's writing at the time did point to shortcomings of the Bush presidency. Before the conclusions of chapter 7, it is worth recounting that the primary theme of period 5 was an assessment of the Bush presidency. USAT concluded that 'History isn't likely to regard him as the worst President ever [...] as he departs it is hard to place him anywhere but in the lower tier' (USAT: 2009-01-16).

7.7 Conclusions and findings in period 5

What remains of this study is mostly a variety of conclusions. This one will be short, as main arguments of the study will come to their conclusion in chapter 9. Here, the empirical findings of chapter 7 will be presented in brief form. After that, chapter 8 will analyse the writing around bin Laden's death. His death, at the hands of U.S. Special Forces, can be seen as a conclusion to the war on terrorism.

The Bush legacy remains disputed to this day. His polling numbers were low and his standing questionable as he was leaving office, while war support was slightly up, if only temporarily. America was a war-weary nation and had just elected a president from the opposing party, partly due to his anti-Iraq and anti-torture credentials. The exercise of contrasting the two presidents was a natural and prevalent editorial topic. That it would be so lopsided, in Obama's favour, is perhaps also natural, but certainly worth documenting.

The writing on Bush followed ideological lines, as NYT went particularly hard after the President. They discredited him and his policies, especially on Iraq and detainee treatment. WSJ and FOX defended these policies hard and warned what could happen if America lowered its guard. Bush 'kept us safe' after 9/11, they reasoned. What might not happen if Obama dismantles his counter-terrorism programmes?

The discussion of effective prevention of terrorism was eclipsed by the emergence of the torture narrative. It had been a topic of much debate in period 3 too, but now came to define the war on terrorism, tarnishing the Bush legacy in the process. To the NYT, Obama's message of hope and change was transformed into a call to get rid of the entire Bush legacy. As time evolved, it appeared that Obama would have to keep more of the Bush policies than he had foreseen, including the prison at Guantanamo.

The torture narrative's rise is among the clearest examples of the news media's own frames dominating the elite rhetoric found in this study. Detainee treatment was a topic the Bush administration did not want to talk about. There were few positive effects for them in these discussions, apart perhaps from rising popularity with the hardest of hardliners. The torture narrative again shows Entman's cascades in reverse.

At work are also Baum & Groeling's hypotheses. As time passes and wars linger on, the media will increasingly be able to challenge the elite rhetoric.

Bush's successes – especially the surge – were also mentioned, while going into Iraq in 2003 were mentioned as possibly Bush's most significant blunder. As Bush's abandoning the Oval office 'public opposition to the war ran high' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 207). Nevertheless, Iraq's problems were a smaller concern in editorials than Afghanistan, a conflict sliding in the wrong direction. This was noted across the board, but particularly by USAT, who were concerned about Afghanistan also in previous periods.

The strategy debates of period 4 were now replaced by extensive writing on personnel changes, especially the incoming Team of Rivals. This shows the personalization of the war on terrorism. NYT, USAT and WP wrote positively about the new team, whereas WSJ and FOX were somewhat cautious on this, targeting Clinton and Panetta respectively.

However, Attorney General Eric Holder was the Obama appointee who was under most fire from the conservative news outlets. This was a reflection of the intense debate over the legal justification of detainee treatment. It can also be seen as a sequel to the scathing editorializing over Alberto Gonzales, from NYT. Other than that, WSJ and FOX wanted to give the new administration an opportunity to prove their mettle.

All in all, America's enemies were in the background and the war was indeed on the home front in period 5. Obama would swiftly move to recast the war on terrorism under alternative headings. These efforts will be reviewed briefly in chapter 8, before the final conclusion. The war on terrorism would continue into Obama's first term, whether he appreciated it or not, with drones becoming the primary weapon. One incident in which the drones were not used occurred on a dark night in Abbottabad, when Osama bin Laden's days would end.

8. The end of the war on terrorism and bin Laden

This final chapter of the analysis functions partly as an intermezzo between the conclusions to chapter 7 and the conclusions to the entire study. The war on terrorism, as Bush had fought it, would soon change, but not as fast as Obama wanted it to. As WP pointed out in 2009, President Bush's last day in office was not the final day of the war on terrorism. 'The war against terrorism -- whatever it is now called -- did not end on Jan. 20' (WP: 2009-01-29). This chapter agrees with this assessment, and will argue that the war on terrorism continued two years into Obama's presidency.

The time span studied in this section is just before and after the death of Osama bin laden on May 1, 2011. This event contributed greatly towards ending the war on terrorism, as it was known. The chapter focuses on April 25 to May 25, 2011. This is one week before bin Laden's death, and three weeks after. Time period 6 is therefore a half period, compared to the longer spans of periods 1 to 5.

It was fitting that the final major clash in the war on terrorism was with US Special Forces, deployed in the Af/Pak theatre, after elaborate groundwork and preparations by the CIA. It resembled how America first became engaged militarily in the war on terrorism. The 2001 invasion of Afghanistan relied heavily on CIA and Special Forces preparing the ground (Schroen, 2005; Woodward, 2002). What remained of fighting after Abbottabad was predominantly Obama's global manhunt, which relied heavily on drones.

In earlier periods, the data set included vast troves of material. In 2011 this was no longer the case. In total, 37 editorials were found, from the five news outlets combined, with any real relevance to the war on terrorism. The low number is another token that the war on terrorism, and its corresponding master narrative, was much in decline. If we multiply the number of editorials (37) by 2 we get 74. This number is an indication of the frequency of editorials published comparable to the other five month periods. In comparison, 74 is exactly half of the number of editorials found in period 4. The sheer numbers here show that the editorializing of the war on terrorism was significantly despite the spike resulting from the killing of Osama bin Laden.

The breakdown of the 37 editorials show that WP wrote 8 editorials, whereas WSJ published only 5 during the month studied. USAT's number was 6 and NYT wrote the most with its 11 editorials. Fox News were quite active and had 7 TPMs about the war on terrorism and related topics. Here are 11 of the most telling headlines, indicating how the newspapers positioned themselves around the death of bin Laden. They appear in chronological order, with three from NYT and WP, one from Fox, and two from USAT and WSJ.

A New National Security Team	WP, April 29
SEALs 1, al-Qaeda 0	USAT, May 3
The Myth of Mr. Obama's Weakness	NYT, May 3
The Torture Apologists	NYT, May 4
Asia's Long War on Terror	WSJ, May 4
Our Friends the Pakistanis	WSJ, May 5
If torture led to bin Laden, do ends justify the means?	USAT, May 9
Can President Obama really protect us?	FOX, May 9
The tracking of bin Laden is no vindication of torture	WP, May 10
A Conflict Without End	NYT, May 16
Reauthorize the war on terrorism	WP, May 18

Bin Laden's death brought closure to America. It also made Obama's elite rhetoric designed to limit the master narrative more fitting with the realities of the war. For a couple of years, the war with al Qaeda lingered on while Obama tried to retire the master narrative. From the very start, 'the Obama administration […] had largely stopped using the phrase the war on terror' (Bergen, 2012, p. 255). According to Gates's memoirs, Admiral Mullen, early in his tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, tried 'to eliminate the use of the term "Global War on Terror" by the military' (Gates, 2014, p. 101). This was while Bush was still in office, and he thwarted the attempt promptly.

Other phrases, such as The Long War and the Global Struggle Against Violent Extremism, had come and partly vanished. There are some exceptions to this pattern. Writers such as Emile Simpson use the long war (Simpson, 2013, p. 231). The title of Bergen's book sidesteps the phrase 'war on terrorism', while emphasizing that al Qaeda and America are still at war. 'The Longest War: The enduring conflict between America and al Qaeda (Bergen, 2011). WSJ still applied the concept of a 'Long War' in 2011, as the titles of editorials have already shown.

Despite the Obama administration's avoidance of the phrase the master narrative lived on in a limited manner. While abolished from government, ithe master narrative's usage was maintained, not least by Republicans who wanted to preserve the merits of the Bush administration's primary legacy. This makes sense in a partisan political situation, and adds weight to Berinsky's arguments on increasingly partisan war support (Berinsky, 2009). Democrats would hold that when bin Laden was killed, they had debunked the myth of them being weak on national security (Cohen, 2011), a common line of Republican attacks on Democrats during campaigns.

In March 2009, Obama applied a new phrase to describe the military strand of US counterterrorism. He introduced Overseas Contingency Operations (Wilson & Kamen, 2009), hardly a catchy phrase. WSJ wrote an editorial, on April 4, 2009, titled 'The Haze Administration: "War on terror" is out; "overseas contingency operations" is in.' They were not too concerned, but concluded that 'the euphemisms for war and terrorism sound ridiculous'.

Adam Hodges has observed that, 'as the phrase fades from presidential discourse, it also fades from media discourse' (Hodges, 2011, p. 160). This study provides empirical evidence in support of Hodges argument. This finding is in line with another argument from the literature on how narratives cease to exist. 'A narrative disappears when actors no longer interpret the world in the terms of that narrative' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 103). My argument is that the war on terrorism is today interpreted as a war by too few for it to be an on-going war. It is a historical phase.

So far, we have seen the backdrop and aftermath against which the editorializing around Osama bin Laden's death must be seen. How was the event itself

portrayed? How did Americans take the death of the nation's despised enemy? Thousands took to the streets in jubilation, particularly in New York City and Washington DC, the two cities attacked on 9/11 (Noble & Somers, 2011).

The characterizations of bin Laden were quite harsh on Fox News. They stated that 'The maniac had been shot in the face by the Seals, […] The legacy of Usama bin Laden is, of course, flat out evil. The man was a homicidal maniac (Fox: 2011-05-02). The next day O'Reilly conveyed that Osama Bin Laden had deserved 'a bullet in the head' (Fox: 2011-05-03).

Fox stood out with a highly negative narrative on Osama bin Laden in period 6. The other news outlets were less passionate in their descriptions. WP stated that he deserved to die, and was 'rightly targeted' (WP: 2011-05-05). USAT went further and felt that what happened was 'justice for the mass murder of 9/11, bin Laden deserved to die by any means necessary' (USAT: 2011-05-04). This is a strong message that potentially opens the door towards torture. Any means necessary must also include TPM's 'bullet in the head'. One can sense a populist and Jacksonian flavour to USAT and Fox on this occasion.

The reactions of Americans to bin Laden's death were among the topics discussed in this period. Other dominant topics were the role of Pakistan, and whether there still was a war on terrorism, and if there normatively should be. WSJ said yes, NYT said no. Prior to the death of bin Laden, NYT wrote two pieces in one week about Guantanamo, signalling that detainee mistreatment remained a grave concern for them. The debate over the effect and necessity of enhanced interrogation practices in garnering intelligence leading to Abbottabad made sure the torture narrative also dominated the editorials in all news outlets, alongside Obama's leadership.

In late April 2011, WSJ and WP wrote about Obama's re-shuffling of his national security team. Both were appreciative of how the Obama administration delivered on national security. WSJ believed that 'Obama's first security team has by and large performed ably' (WSJ: 2011-04-29).

This was an adjustment representing a positive improvement to their initial cautionary tone the Team of Rivals, especially Clinton, seen in chapter 7. One reason for the positive WSJ coverage was probably Republican Robert Gates. His standing in

Washington D.C. was formidable when he stepped down in 2011. Controversy would, however, erupt when he published his memoirs in 2014, putting an impeccable legacy somewhat in jeopardy (Woodward, 2014).

Of the new people coming in the spring of 2011, WP rightly predicted that 'Leon Panetta and Gen. David H. Petraeus should win easy confirmation as defense secretary and CIA director' (WP: 2011-04-29). Petraeus' confirmation was overwhelming. He was confirmed as the 20[th] Director of the CIA in a 94 to 0 senate vote (Wheaton, 2011).

As we saw in section 7.2, Panetta's 2009 confirmation as CIA director was unanimous. He would have the extraordinary experience of being voted in as Secretary of defence supported by a full count of 100 senate votes, following Gates at the Pentagon (Hulse, 2011; Sonmez, 2011). His successor Chuck Hagel, however, would end up in dire straits in the Senate, two years later. It seemed an accomplishment simply to be 'surviving his infamously bruising confirmation battle' (Lubold, 2013). Hagel replaced Panetta at the Pentagon, in a shockingly low 58–41 vote (Mak, 2013). As he resigned CNN.com published a story titled 'Was Hagel doomed from the start?' (Collinson & Reston, 2014). It appears he never recovered from the senate hearing.

Three days after WP and WSJ's editorials on Obama's commendable security team, Osama bin Laden was dead. The trust in the Team of Rivals would seem warranted. Obama was on the right track, the newspapers agreed, and took fighting terrorism seriously. His singling out of al Qaeda as America's opponent, instead of terrorism writ large, increased the political value of getting Osama bin Laden. It narrowed the goals of the war, making this salient event an even greater success. NYT now considered it a myth that Obama was weak on security. The opposing view was held by Fox who had a TPM titled 'Can President Obama really protect us? (Fox: 2011-05-09).

The reactions of Americans to the killing were at times passionate. NYT and WP noted as much in the opening lines of their respective editorials. NYT listed the different sentiments on display, whereas WP took a more hardliner approach noting that Americans had 'multiple reasons to celebrate'. WSJ agreed with WP, as the quotes below indicate.

The killing of Osama bin Laden provoked a host of reactions from Americans: celebration, triumph, relief, closure and renewed grief. One reaction, however, was both cynical and disturbing: crowing by the apologists and practitioners of torture that Bin Laden's death vindicated their immoral and illegal behaviour. (NYT: 2011-05-04)

There are multiple reasons to celebrate the death of Osama bin Laden in a U.S. special forces raid Sunday. Al-Qaeda has lost its founder and symbol, if not its operational commander. The prime author of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. (WP: 2011-05-03)

The death of Osama bin Laden at the hand of U.S. special forces doesn't end the war against Islamic terror, but it is a crucial and just victory that is rightfully cause for celebration. (WSJ: 2011-05-03)

After the attack, everyone showered the President with praise. WP thought 'the covert military operation that brought down the most wanted terrorist in the world appears to have been gutsy and well executed.' USAT described the operation as a 'textbook display of military skill […] Elapsed time: 40 minutes. U.S. casualties: none' (USAT: 2011-05-03). Also WSJ praised the sitting President. 'Mr. Obama also deserves credit for ordering a Special Forces mission rather than settling for another attack with drones' (WSJ: 2011-05-03). It sounds as if a drone strike is too weak a measure for WSJ.

There was also plenty of praise for Navy Seal Team VI, and the chain of command. The debates to emerge from the raid were subject to far less consensus. It was an Obama versus Bush theme, involving former Bush administration officials. John Yoo, formerly with the Department of Justice, was particularly active and attributed the Osama bin Laden-success to enhanced interrogation techniques. He wrote judicial opinions for the Department of Justice legitimizing these enhanced interrogation techniques. So he was by no means an impartial commentator.

Yoo first wrote an Op-ed in the WSJ titled 'From Guantanamo to Abbottabad' (Yoo, 2011a). A few days later he wrote an 'Opposing View' column on May 5, berating USAT for not understanding what was at stake. Its title was 'Tough interrogations Worked'. Yoo's start and conclusion are quoted below:

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We should praise the Obama administration, the CIA and especially our armed forces for the operation that killed Osama bin Laden. But we should not forget what made the operation possible: President Bush's counterterrorism policies. [...]USA TODAY's editorial page and other critics of enhanced interrogation do not understand the nature of intelligence [...] USA TODAY has yet to learn this lesson, may our newest President soon begin (Yoo, 2011b)

It was quite daring of Yoo to enter the opinion pages from the side-lines to claim credit for the Bush administration for the tracking down of somebody that had eluded them for more than seven years. Yoo's comments can be seen as a continuation of his combative memoirs defending the Bush/Cheney counterterrorism regime (Yoo, 2006). NYT engaged in the media battle and derided Yoo's defence of tough interrogation. They reminded their readers that Yoo had 'twisted the Constitution and the Geneva Conventions into an unrecognizable mess to excuse torture' (NYT: 2011-05-04).

Yoo also gave a long interview to WSJ's TV show on Fox. The programme has clear links to WSJ's editorial page. It is titled The Journal Editorial Report, and is anchored by Paul Gigot, editor of WSJ's editorial page. In the programme, Yoo underlined how much of Bush's counterterrorism policies Obama had come around to adopting. 'Obama and his administration have been pulled kicking and screaming into the real world that these policies now look similar to the Bush administration', Yoo said (Gigot, 2011).

'The single biggest remaining difference, in your view--policy difference--is interrogation', Gigot summarized (Gigot, 2011). WSJ's editorial page noted the similarities in policy, too, while also condemning the left side of American politics. 'The most striking fact of Mr. Obama's prosecution of the war on terror is how much it resembles Mr. Bush's, to the consternation of America's anti-antiterror left.' (WSJ: 2011-05-03). The 'anti-antiterror' left was singled out for attack, just like in period 5.

As shown above, NYT did not share WSJ's and Yoo's view of rough interrogation as legitimate and necessary. WP sided with NYT: 'the country paid dearly for employing methods that are not only wrongheaded but wrong' (WP: 2011-05-10). USAT again assumed the middle position. USAT challenged Yoo's view, yet showed a pragmatic attitude towards torture. They would not rule it out in a 'ticking

bomb scenario' and concluded that 'It's a safe bet that most people would accept torture if it were the only option for catching the most hunted villain in U.S. history.' (USAT: 2011-05-09).

This proves that USAT did not oppose torture in all its forms, and can be interpreted as saying that if the American people condoned it, so would they. It may sound like outsourcing the question of torture to an imaginary referendum. This is an opportunistic and pragmatic, rather than a principled normative, position. It is also interesting to see USAT applied the term torture, and acknowledge that waterboarding is indeed torture. They supported enhanced interrogation, but not as wholeheartedly as WSJ and Fox did. This challenges Berinsky's argument that many Americans would sacrifice civil liberties and right after 9/11, but that the adherence to law and individual rights increased to pre 9/11 levels by 2004. (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 163–168).

In addition to discussions of torture, period 6 saw a debate of whether the war on terrorism should continue. NYT warned about perpetual war in the editorial titled: 'A Conflict Without End'. WP's title, on the other hand, was a call to 'Reauthorize the war on terrorism'. What was at stake was a renewal of Bush's original AUMF, the Authorization for Use of Military Force granted by Congress on September 18, 2001 (Zenko, 2013, p. 16). WP challenged those who opposed continuing the AUMF and the war on terrorism, including the liberal American Civil Liberties Union. WP asked: 'Where have they been for the past 10 years? […] Congress should back the president's lawful efforts to continue to battle terrorism' (WP: 2011-05-18).

This demonstrates WP's diverse views, as they opposed enhanced interrogation techniques, but condoned celebration of bin Laden's death and authorizing of the use of military force. NYT were vehemently opposed to the AUMF and warned that 'This wildly expansive authorization would, in essence, make the war on terror a permanent and limitless aspect of life on earth' (NYT: 2011-05-16). This is quite a statement, emphasizing the planetary – even universal – scope of the war on terror, and warning against making emergency measures into a perpetual war.

WSJ shared WP's view and fronted it even harder. WSJ also reproduced Bush rhetoric referring to 'what the U.S. military has called this "long war". (WSJ: 2011-05-03). This served to underpin a Bush administration narrative, introduced in early 2006,

especially in the Quadrennial Defense Review (Pernin, Nichiporuk, Stahl, Beck, & Radaelli-Sanchez, 2008, pp. 5–6; Tyson, 2006).

WSJ warned that 'bin Laden's demise will cause some to declare victory in the war on terror […] 'The "long war" on terror has made many Americans tire of the fight' (WSJ: 2011-05-03). The next day they continued by pointing out that 'A "long war" such as this demands more than one victory. Osama bin Laden's death is an important win for America and its allies' (WSJ: 2011-05-04). All the while, they made sure to apply the term 'the long war', while stressing that there is still much left of the war on terrorism.

USAT's writing on this issue can be summed up by one lengthy quote. They were concerned over public opinion and polls leaning towards cutting and running in Afghanistan. They were not too heavily engaged in debating whether a war on terrorism should continue in the same shape as before. They used the master narrative sparingly. USAT followed up their writing in previous periods urging the American public, military, and political leadership to stay the course in Afghanistan. The excerpt also discusses war support and polls showing withdrawal as a popular demand.

> *The United States went to war nearly 10 years ago with a full public support and a specific goal: to catch or kill bin Laden and his al-Qaeda henchmen, demolish the camps where the 9/11 terrorists were trained and remove the Taliban government that hosted them. Now that bin Laden is dead, al-Qaeda severely damaged and the Taliban long-ago ousted from power, many people will say the job is done. In fact, they already are saying that. In a USA TODAY/Gallup poll this week, nearly half of respondents said the U.S. has accomplished its mission and should bring the troops home. But that is precisely the wrong thing to do. (USAT: 2011-05-05)*

This urging of perseverance is not too far away from the conservative view. And here is an example where the folksy USAT advices against following public opinion calling for withdrawal from Afghanistan.

TPM stated that 'Here at home the demise of Usama bin Laden is a major turning point in the war on terror. […] but there are other battles to come' (Fox: 2011-05-02). It is interesting to see that Fox talked about the effects of the war at home. This is another token that the center of gravity of the war on terrorism had become

America, just as Rumsfeld explained in his memoirs quoted in the introductions (Rumsfeld, 2011, p. 716).[10]

Fox also engaged in media battle to uphold the Rumsfeld, Bush and Cheney approach to fighting terrorism. They specifically defended waterboarding, arguing that it led America to bin Laden's hideout. They endorsed such methods stating 'It is effective' (Fox: 2011-05-04). They stressed that they had 'six primary sources, six, that say waterboarding and other tough methods led to vital information that eventually brought bin Laden down' (Fox: 2011-05-05).[11]

> *"The New York Times" and other left-wing vehicles continue to bang the torture drum no matter what the evidence is; no matter what the circumstances, no torture as they define it (Fox: 2011-05-05)*

To the extent that the war on terrorism continued at all beyond bin Laden's death, it was primarily through drone strikes, causing great friction. Drones and US–Pakistani relations were already a problematic issue before bin Laden's death. Obama, WSJ noted, 'gave the CIA an even bigger role in the war on terror by expanding drone strikes in terrorist-infested Pakistan and Yemen' (WSJ: 2011-04-29). WP also mentioned the 'drone strikes against al-Qaeda and Taliban targets in Pakistan that have greatly escalated since Mr. Obama took office.' (WP: 2011-04-29). One result of the many drone strikes was 'a deterioration of U.S. relations with Pakistan. (WP: 2011-04-29).

US–Pakistani relations were a concern across the board. Indeed, as Peter Bergen argues, 'in 2011, the relationship between the United States and Pakistan was at its lowest point ever' (Bergen, 2014). USAT noted that after the Abbottabad raid, 'Pakistani officials, by contrast, seemed to be incompetent or simply lying' (USAT: 2011-05-03). WSJ went with an ironic and sardonic headline of 'Our Friends the Pakistanis' on May 5.

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[11] Bill O'Reilly listed the six sources, and they were very senior officials: Donald Rumsfeld, Stephen Hadley, Leon Panetta, George Tenet, Michael Hayden and Jose Rodriguez. Leon Panetta, from the Obama administration would later backtrack.

Pakistan's leaders, suggested NYT, 'have very tough decisions to make. They need to realize that the days of Washington's unconditional support are over' (NYT: 2011-05-13). Two years later, the relationship between the US and Pakistan was still not good, not least because of the Abbottabad raid. In Obama's major speech on drone policy, he acknowledged that 'we are just now beginning to rebuild this important partnership' (Obama, 2013).

Obama's speech was understandably more about explaining Obama's drone wars, than about his predecessor's war on terrorism. As time passed it became clear that 'Targeted Killing comes to Define War on Terror' (Shane, 2013). The decisions to launch drone strikes would effectively be about life and death, and misfires and civilian casualties caused much distress. Three days before bin Laden was killed, WSJ expressed support for drone strikes labelling them 'an under-appreciated U.S. success' (WSJ: 2011-04-29).

Following in the wake of the torture narrative the media, particularly NYT, would develop a news frame for Obama's warfare as being ungoverned by law, and involving kill lists (Becker & Shane, 2012; Savage, 2012). An in-depth article by WP's Karen DeYoung underlines the untenable nature of the drone programme: '"Do I want this system to last forever?" a senior official said. "No. Do I think it's the best system for now? Yes"' (DeYoung, 2012).

While Obama escalated the drone wars, it was Bush who acquired the drones, and thus equipped Obama with his preferred weapon. WP noted after bin Laden's death that 'Rather than apprehend suspects, this administration has outpaced its predecessor in the use of drone strikes' (WP: 2011-05-10). The number of drones increased significantly during the Bush presidency, but he did not use them much outside of major battlefields. 'The Predator fleet has grown from less than 10 in 2001 to some 180 in 2007 with plans to add another 150 over the next few years'. (Singer, 2009, p. 35).[12]

Among the most important, and controversial, drone attacks was the one that killed a central al Qaeda member in Yemen, Anwar al-Awlaki. Awlaki was a member

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[12] Estimates of the exact numbers of drones ordered and in use is a subject of controversy. Zenko claims Bush ordered around 50 during his presidency, and that Obama had ordered around 350 in his first period alone. The peak year was 2010, with around 120 ordered drone strikes.(Zenko, 2013, pp. 8–13).

of the increasingly lethal and influential group Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (Hegghammer, 2010). 'The death of Awlaki is a major blow to Al Qaeda's most active operational affiliate', Obama stated at the time (Parsons, 2011).

Awlaki had provided the inspiration for many attacks against the West. Among them were three attacks targeting America that were thwarted at the last minute. In 2009 to 2010 there were attempted attacks against New York Times Square, cargo planes bound for Chicago and a passenger jet above Detroit (Bergen, 2012, pp. 118–121). All have been linked to Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula, and the preaching of Awlaki played an inspirational role in the perpetrator's radicalisation process.

Whether Awlaki's involvement in inciting war-like strikes on America meant he had forfeited his constitutional legal rights as a US citizen remains a highly disputed question. What is certain is that President Obama and his administration irrevocably considered him a legitimate victim for a targeted killing, with no trial. This policy remains controversial. In 2014, Republican Senator Rand Paul wanted to ensure that 'citizens not in a battlefield, however despicable, are guaranteed a trial by our Constitution' (Paul, 2014) . Senator Paul also staged a filibuster on the confirmation of CIA Director John Brennan because of drone strike policy (Madison, 2013).

To wrap up this discussion of drone wars and their replacement of ground campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the question beckons; when did the war on terrorism end? Some argue that Obama's May 2013 speech at the National Defense University served as a formal announcement that the war on terror was over, including Peter Bergen (Bergen, 2013). Yet in his 2012 book, he wrote, 'it is hard to imagine two more final endings to the "War on Terror" than [the Arab spring] and the death of bin Laden' (Bergen, 2012, p. 260).

This study sides with Bergen's 2012 assessment. The war on terrorism ended in 2011. Additionally, Bergen's book titles apply the term 'Long war'. With Osama bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, AQI-leader Zarqawi, and Khalid Sheik Mohammed gone, the leading adversaries of America in the war on terrorism were mostly eliminated. Awlaki was also dead, while Zawahiri remained at large at the time of writing.

What of Zawahiri, the current leader of al Qaeda? Compared to bin Laden, Zawahiri 'exhibits little of the talent to inspire or organize' (Bowden, 2012, p. 256).

Bergen's concluding chapter on this topic, titled 'The Twilight of Al Qaeda', underscores the lack of qualifications and many obstacles to Zawahiri resurrecting al Qaeda to again become what it had previously been (Bergen, 2012, pp. 250–261). Zawahiri is more of a polemicist and ideologue than a revered inspirational leader. He was also at times a fire-breathing spokesman (Lacroix, 2008, pp. 161–166). This deviates from the solemn calmness often witnessed in Osama bin Laden's delivery of official communiques.

After 2011, Zawahiri was increasingly isolated as the only international jihadist with truly worldwide notoriety. Other known terrorist leaders were more regional in scope. One such was Taliban leader Mullah Omar who for a long time avoided apprehension by American forces. In 2014 this would change, as the terrorist group ISIL would eclipse al Qaeda establishing a Caliphate engulfing large territories in Syria and Iraq. Their leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi would unseat Zawahiri as the world's most wanted jihadist leader (Beaumont, 2014; See also Zelin, 2015).

This chapter has shown that the torture narrative gained force from 2009 and to 2011. As it became intrinsically associated with torture, the master narrative of the war on terrorism was not of much use to Obama. In fact, Obama contributed to this as he had labelled waterboarding torture. Former officials, especially John Yoo, were active in advocating a continuation of the war on terrorism. NYT warned against perpetual war, while others cautioned against believing the war on terrorism was won. The war on terrorism was not won, but it was over, with an undecided outcome. It may have been a partial victory, or even pyrrhic victory for America. This is not unusual as today's wars typically end up with relative winners in limited conflicts (Johnson & Tierney, 2006, p. 6).

As he was killed, Bin Laden was criticised, but only Fox news got truly passionate and used numerous highly negative adjectives. The American people, on the other hand, were passionate and took to the streets to celebrate. Seal team VI and Obama himself were showered with praise after the raid, while Pakistan was the target of much criticism.

The Abbottabad raid was Obama's finest hour as Commander in-Chief. He both looked the part, and acted decisively. Obama and America would suffer terrorist

attacks from jihadists later in his presidency. Yet the current trend is that such attacks are more sporadic. Al Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula's offensive around 2009 and 2010 served as a mini 9/11 for Obama, when he realized that he could easily end up with major terrorist strikes in America on his watch.

At the time of writing, the 2013 Boston bombings are the most recent. It remains to be seen what the next chapter in the story of terrorism in America will be. Terrorist strikes against Canada in the fall of 2014 served as a reminder that America is also likely to be targeted at home again, sooner rather than later. But in this study, we have reached the end of the analysis, and the concluding chapter now follows.

9. Conclusions

This study has examined and reconstructed media frames and strategic narratives of the war, with particular regard to whether selected editorials sought to influence public support or opposition to the war. Another important question is to what extent the media developed its own terminology and described the conflict in its own terms, rather than adopting the Bush administration's strategic narratives. This chapter will start with an empirical focus and then move on to the theoretical contributions of the study.

America's war on terrorism started in 2001 as an endeavour to counter the 9/11 attacks. It would define America for itself and to others. The fight was initially seen as existential, a war of defence, with undeniably good prospects of success. Since the war on terrorism could only be lost at home, it is particularly interesting to consider the non-kinetic dimensions of the conflict, i.e. the war at home.

After 9/11 'why do they hate us?' was a common question to ask (Zakaria, 2001, 2014). As Bush's 9/11 presidency was closing, and some of America's enemies were defeated, existential questions were again at the forefront. This time they were directed inwards. What had America become? Was America's conduct in the war on terrorism morally justified and sustainable beyond the state of emergency post-9/11? Many, including some editorial boards, would answer those questions negatively. On May 16 2011, NYT warned against 'A Conflict Without End'. Nevertheless, what could not be denied was that the controversial President Bush had sworn to keep America safe from terror after 9/11. In this he succeeded, albeit at tremendous costs.

The costs for America were in lives, treasure and international standing, as well as a changed understanding of what it means to be American. America chose to redefine parts of its societal structure for the purpose of fighting terrorism. There were inevitably trade-offs between liberty and security (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 155–171). Americans also experienced a new sense of vulnerability and insecurity. This was heightened by extensive intrusive new anti-terror efforts, especially in air security, and the emergence of the field of Homeland Security with a department of its own.

The most important findings of this study have been generated through comparative observations of changes in editorial coverage over time. Among them is the WSJ's early advocacy for invading Iraq. It surfaced long before the Bush administration initiated its own campaign – spearheaded by Colin Powell in the UNSC – for war with Iraq.

Linking Iraq to the war on terrorism was also a pivotal decision by Bush. This backfired with the revelations of mistreatment at Abu Ghraib prison, which contributed to the emergence of the torture narrative. The war also became a grisly affair witnessing the hardest drawn-out fighting of America's military since Vietnam, with Fallujah as an example. The sum of these incidents rendered the war on terrorism of little utility for President Obama, who ran a presidential campaign on ending Bush's wars. Obama effectively terminated the war on terrorism and its master narrative.

While reconstructing the narratives about the war on terrorism, one inevitably contributes to the telling of the story of the war on terrorism. While this study of contemporary media warfare is not a historical account of the kind a war historian would produce, it certainly would benefit from being seen in relation to such research. Ideally, the benefits would be mutual. One ambition of this study has been to tell part of the media history of the war on terrorism through a narrative reconstruction.

A historical pattern observed in this study is that the war on terrorism went through a set of overlapping fighting phases. They are fairly straightforward and provide a chronological overview of the settings in which the media war took place. The phases from 2001to 2011 are listed below with approximate years of their initiation.

2001 War of self-defence in Afghanistan

2003 War of pre-emption in Iraq

2004 Al Qaeda strikes in Europe and stabilization efforts in Iraq

2007 COIN and surge in Iraq

2009 COIN and surge in Afghanistan

2010 Manhunt in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen

2011 Bin Laden is killed and The War on Terrorism ends

The war on terrorism started with the 9/11 strikes, followed by coalition warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq. The initial military phase in Iraq proved more manageable than the subsequent period of destabilization – resulting in civil war. The post-invasion phase in Iraq is the hardest time to describe the war on terrorism. The reason for this may be simple. It may be hard for others to understand what America was doing in Iraq between 2004 and 2007 because Americans – and their political and military leaders – did not seem to know themselves.

Iraq was messy up until the surge started to work and the counterinsurgency strategy helped tip the balance in America's favour. Understandably, Obama was aiming for a repeat in Afghanistan of the success of a surging COIN strategy. This did not happen, and the military strategy adopted in the AfPak region gradually evolved into a manhunt relying on drones. With the killing of bin Laden and Awlaki in 2011, the war on terrorism effectively was over. The war in Afghanistan would continue to be just that: a war in Afghanistan (Hodges, 2011, p. 159). Major battle operations were terminated at the end of 2014, with limited success to show for them.

Having presented the historical path of the war on terrorism's phases, it is time to restate the research questions this study provides answers to. Chapter 9.1 follows now and provides the answer to the first research question. Chapter 9.2 goes more into second research question focused on elite rhetoric versus media framing. The research questions of this study are:

1. How was the war on terrorism portrayed in American editorials, and how did editorials attempt to influence public support for the war on terrorism?

2. Did American editorial pages develop their own media frames about the war on terrorism, or did they adopt strategic narratives from the elite rhetoric?

9.1 Chronological narrative reconstruction

Many topics were related to the war on terrorism, and over the next few pages the main topics will be presented. The war started with 'monolithically one-sided elite discourse' (Zaller, 1992, p. 20). To what extent would editorializing follow this lead? What follows is the essence of the reconstructed narrative of the war on terrorism, and some major findings, starting with quoting and polls.

Before the September 11 attacks, there was no war on terrorism. Defining the war and explaining to the American people what it was, was a task for the Bush administration and the news organizations. The Bush administration developed a master narrative, which is the foundation of the entire war on terrorism, in all its facets. This master narrative was forcefully projected in the media, hoping the media would adopt it and spread it further.

Quotes from the Bush administration's official statements were prevalent in the first days of the war on terrorism. Such quotes are overt instances of the media adopting elite rhetoric from strategic narratives, and thus beneficial for the Bush administration. WP did so more than the other news outlets, whereas USAT was not found to quote President Bush on its editorial page in the two months after 9/11.

This finding must not be interpreted as indicating that USAT were not supportive of the war on terrorism. Everyone was. They simply chose a different approach. However, it is argued here, the Bush administration's communication strategy would benefit more from direct quotes, allowing for more unfettered access to the American people's media content, and consequently their beliefs about the war on terrorism.

A related finding concerns the use of polls. NYT chose not to focus on polls, whereas the others treated opinion polls as representations of political realities. Such mentions enhanced the significance of polls. Correspondingly, the editorial boards sometimes reinforced their own war support by pointing to public support ratings from polls. Writing about widespread support shown by the polls, is arguably to help spread support for the war. Conveying to Americans a perception of how much they support the war is an indirect way of legitimizing and generating war support.

The empirical evidence analysed here suggests that the newspapers actively contributed to generating support for the war. I therefore argue that editorials on the topic are likely to have had an impact on public support. This argument is based on the observations of the forceful editorial calls for support, from America's most influential sources of opinion journalism, combined with the premise that media has significant ability to shape audience perceptions (Graber, 2002, p. 18; McQuail, 2005, p. 456).

Adding to this argument is the fact that the core ideology of the studied newspapers mattered less in determining war support and editorial lines in period 1 than later in the war. Early on, ideology mainly served to determine the depth of support for the war, unlike with Iraq. Iraq always divided the news organizations more along party lines. This mirrors Berinsky's findings on the partisan divide in the public, as regards support for the war in Iraq (Berinsky, 2009).

One finding is that when America is attacked, its news organizations and the American people provide loyal support. On the other hand, when it is America who attacks, as was the case with Iraq, unity is frail and easily fractured. WSJ were ready to expand the war on terror to include Saddam Hussein's Iraq already in 2001. It supported invading Iraq before the Bush administration, and even before 9/11.

Al Qaeda was responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and the group's narratives were more in evidence in editorials in period 1 than later. The newspapers were in some respects forced to present Al Qaeda's worldview, to try to explain 9/11. This would make their readers more able to grasp the conflict the nation had been unwittingly thrown into. Such informing of the citizenry about significance events occurring in the world is part of the core mission of journalism in society (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014).

Few segments of American society remained untouched by the response to the 9/11 attacks. The war on terrorism arguably constitutes the largest counterterrorism effort in history. The widespread securitization going on in American politics triggered warnings from editorial boards against unwarranted links between the war on terrorism and national security. Even the uninterrupted growing of peanuts was cast as a matter of national security. The sheer scale of securitization illustrates how devastating al Qaeda had struck America. In such a societal climate, the leadership will find it easier to get the people to make sacrifices and support wars.

The war that would define the war on terrorism from 2003 was a deliberate war of choice. The Iraq war was sold as a war of pre-emption, but should be considered a preventive war, since the threat to America hardly was imminent. Saddam Hussein's Iraq did not come through with any compelling narrative on the editorial pages in 2003. Iraq's leader was a known and "demonized" character in America.

The elite rhetoric on Iraq's WMDs was largely repeated by the editorial boards, even as it departed from objective realities on the ground. This empirical evidence lends support to both Entman's cascading theory, and Baum & Groeling's hypothesis favouring an upper hand for the political leadership early on in conflicts. Unlike the state, the media do not have an intelligence apparatus and a foreign service to rely on in forming their initial understanding of international conflicts.

The media frame WSJ applied to the war with Iraq was more confrontational and forceful than the Bush administration's strategic narratives. At times, it amounted to journalistic activism, as WSJ challenged war opponents. These opponents would be as diverse as France, Colin Powell, New York Times, and the U.N. Fox engaged even more forcefully in the media battle labelling opponents of the war 'un-American', and very directly targeting liberal news outlets.

The emergence of inflammatory rhetoric over Iraq demonstrated the end of the initial sense of unity on the war on terrorism. All the newspapers believed Saddam Hussein had WMDs. Despite this common perception, they disagreed considerably over how to deal with the problem. The most fundamental difference was arguably whether a war with Iraq belonged to the war on terrorism, as the Bush administration's 'transfer narrative' emphasized.

NYT were sceptical of ties postulated between Iraq and al Qaeda, and deserve credit for that in hindsight. As the war came closer, the crisis concerning Iraq's WMD could still be solved, in their opinion, through diplomacy and inspections. USAT also wanted to wait, but they wanted to garner more domestic and international support before launching an invasion. As the war progressed badly, more international support and contributions would certainly have come in handy in Iraq, also to maintain the will to fight in Battlefield Washington. Diplomacy was not the Bush administration's

strongest suit. Its unilateralist dispositions, and go-it-alone mentality, were clearly articulated in the 2002 National Security Strategy.

WP supported the Iraq war and its timing. On the invasion of Iraq they were the closest to an editorial line in line with the Bush administration's policy. They were not content with the results of US diplomacy, but concluded it was right to invade in March 2003 rather than lose momentum trying to persuade the unpersuadable. Their position was closer to that of Fox and WSJ, than that of USAT and NYT.

WP can best be described as being Powellists in the lead up to war with Iraq. They followed his cues. They considered his imperfect evidence, presented to the UNSC, to be irrefutable. It was not. A humbled and embarrassed Powell would later openly admit as much. WP quoted from Powell's presentation and the language of UNSC Resolution 1441 extensively. It is a clear-cut example of Entman's cascading model, even adding an extra layer by placing the UNSC above the US government. An interesting observation is that the frequency of direct quotes peaks during a particularly propaganda-prone period of the war on terrorism.

While Iraq was sliding towards chaos, Bush was sworn in for his second term in 2005. His successful re-election campaign relied heavily on persuading Americans of the need to stay the course in Iraq. The controversies over Iraq had become fiercer as America was experiencing a confusing and directionless phase in a destabilized country, plagued by sectarian strife. The strategy was not working, as the members of the Bush administration – except Rumsfeld – readily admit in their memoirs.

Strategy was not the only thing that was terribly wrong in Iraq. Revelations of detainee mistreatment at Abu Ghraib provoked a major crisis for the war on terrorism. Alongside Guantanamo, it represented a permanent blow to the Bush administration's media war efforts. The torture narrative became important in editorials, especially in the NYT. It undermined the moral integrity of America, and the war it was fighting.

Emile Simpson quotes a fellow Ghurka soldier when describing liberal states in breach of human rights. 'To operate in this way is to make a Faustian pact. […] The moral high ground, once evacuated, is very hard to regain' (Simpson, 2013, p. 209). Berinsky argues that history shows that 'in the heat of war Americans freely sacrificed the basic liberties of their fellow citizens' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 151).

The torture narrative was clearly contrary to the interests of the Bush administration, inasmuch as it highlighted misconduct, contempt and disdain for opponents and the imprisoned in the war on terrorism. Some maintained the atrocities were committed by a few bad apples, yet these apples were so bad that Rumsfeld offered to resign over the scandal, twice. Not accepting his resignation was in all likelihood a mistake by Bush. Rumsfeld's final years in office saw little progress in America's wars.

Rumsfeld's person would attract much critical editorial writing before he was eventually forced out. The media frequently assigned the lack of success to Rumsfeld's alleged misguided and wrongheaded leadership. By January 2005, the war on terrorism was becoming increasingly personalized. At this time, Bush was not as harshly criticised as Rumsfeld and Gonzales in editorials. One reason was that he was newly re-elected with a more decisive result than in 2000. He felt he had earned political capital and intended to spend it.

The opposition to war in NYT triggered counter-attacks in support of the war from Fox. TPM engaged in media war with NYT and other liberal news outlets, and went on the attack on behalf of the Bush administration. They came to the defence of both Rice and Gonzales after both had suffered heavy criticism in editorials and in senate hearings. It remains an open question how helpful this really was. Unlike NYT, USAT and WP were quite supportive of Rice's ascendance to Secretary of State, occasionally complimenting her professionalism and qualifications, at times.

By 2007, the war on terrorism – and especially Iraq – was imposing itself on the home front. Strategy discussions on Iraq, in the wake of the Iraq Study Group's report, overshadowed other topics. There was intense fighting abroad, and the debates at home mirrored that intensity. Two years earlier, NYT was the only newspaper scathing the Bush administration on its editorial page. Now WP and USAT increasingly left the middle ground to offer critical perspectives on the mismanagement of Iraq, detainee treatment and shortcomings in the Bush administration's diplomacy.

After nearly four years of war, the news outlets now had acquired an independent situational understanding of the war in Iraq. In line with Johnson & Tierney and Baum & Groeling's hypotheses, they had developed a substantive

foundation from which to challenge the Bush administration's descriptions of how the war in Iraq was going. There was disagreement on whether the strategic narratives of the Bush administration accurately reflected the conditions on the ground in Iraq. Losing the 2006 midterm elections made replacing Rumsfeld a necessity for President Bush. The re-shuffling of the Cabinet paved the way for Gates and Petraeus to establish a public image as truth tellers with fresh eyes. It was now evident how closely perceptions of the war on terrorism were tied to the personnel in charge. At this stage, a weary congress – and not only Democrats – was blaming the Bush administration for botching the Iraq war.

One way of criticising the leadership was to attack it indirectly by supporting the embattled military. The troops had suffered much. Some would argue needlessly, as the war in Iraq was a war of choice, and not of existential necessity. NYT would claim the war was lost, and thus implicitly that continued support and sacrifices were in vain. The NYT's anti-war activism is the counterpart to WSJ's pro-war activism. NYT's giving up on Iraq entirely was premature, as the surge would later show.

USAT were particularly vocal about the neglect of Afghanistan. The newspaper deserves credit for this, and a finding is that the newspaper got the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan more right than the other news outlets. A staple ingredient of USAT's editorializing of the war on terrorism were warnings against invading Iraq to soon, and an ensuing neglect for the steadily deteriorating conflict in Afghanistan.

As Obama was taking office, Iraq was still considered a mistake by many, but the strategy of counterinsurgency and the surge was deemed at least a partial success. This is an extraordinary development considering the highly critical media frames on Iraq just two years earlier. There were negative news frames as America was changing presidents too, but these took the shape of personal attacks on Bush and his legacy.

What took place was a media battle involving two presidents and two diverging visions of what America's role in the world should be. One president possessed a controversial legacy, the other wooed voter with prospects of hope and change. Obama wanted to terminate much of the war on terrorism and Bush's counterterrorism apparatus. But in the end, this proved much harder than anyone envisioned.

More than six years later, the closing of Guantanamo was undone, and many questioned its feasibility. Obama stated he regretted not having closed the prison camp on his first day in the White House. He elaborated that keeping it open, 'it's not who we are as a country' (Siddiqui, 2015). The prison camp is operative in its fourteenth year, so there is little justification for Obama's claim that this is not what America is.

Detainee treatment was on the forefront of the editorials, as Obama entered office. The searing torture narrative of the past few years was now defining the war on terrorism. The result was greatly at odds with the Bush administration's preferences. The media tended to follow the topics, and often the reasoning, of the Bush administration's strategic narratives, but not on torture and detainee treatment.

The torture narrative was developed by the media, and a topic the Bush administration was forced to respond to, putting them on the defensive and jeopardizing Bush's entire legacy. Interestingly, while WP sided with the Bush administration on invading Iraq in 2003, on this matter they sided with NYT, excoriating the Bush administration for torturing prisoners. This demonstrates WP's ability to side with, and espouse, different political factions on different issues.

The response to the torture narrative was to contend that Bush had 'kept us safe' after 9/11. WSJ and FOX defended Bush's policies especially hard and warned of what could happen if America lowered its guard. Dick Cheney was also quite active in this debate, after leaving office, while Bush mainly remained on the side-lines.

It soon became clear that Obama would move to recast the war on terrorism by pitching it under alternative headings. He was never comfortable with Bush's war on terrorism and wanted to dismantle the master narrative. Such a move would distance Obama from the Bush administration, and its controversial military campaigns. It was a way of moving on. Obama's counterterrorism legacy would lay in getting Osama bin Laden. This was an accomplishment Bush worked incessantly to realize, to little avail. Once Obama had accomplished this, his retiring of the master narrative of a war on terrorism gained legitimacy, as did his personal credentials as tough on terrorism.

So far, this conclusion has provided answers to the first research question on how the war on terrorism was portrayed in the selected editorials. It has also described how editorials attempted to influence public support for the war on terrorism. All news

outlets encouraged support early on, before unity splintered as the war on Iraq dragged on. When the editorials became critical of the war, they focused increasingly on personnel torture and detainee treatment.

Turning to more theory related issues, the question to be given more attention now deals with whether editorial pages developed their own media frames about the war on terrorism, or if they primarily reproduced the elite's rhetoric. This will also lead to broader discussions of modern media war and some of this study's main arguments on the media's impact on contemporary war.

9.2 Elite rhetoric versus editorial independence

Documenting and explaining editorial variation, through comparison, in America's war on terrorism is, at the deepest level, what this thesis is about. An increased level of insight can be reached when several findings are put together into broader arguments and related to established theories and hypotheses. This endeavour can primarily take place towards the very end of a study, as generalization must be informed by the study's full breadth of empirical observations and findings.

There are multiple theories in the literature explaining which factors may determine editorial writing in a positive or negative direction. A main question is who controls and constructs the narrative? Is it the elites, through the media? Or do the media themselves determine their content, and its influence on public opinion? Many of the theories applied here assign much significance to elite rhetoric in influencing media frames early on in conflicts. The empirical evidence presented here mostly confirms these ideas. Yet, among the most interesting findings are the instances when these theories are challenged.

Entman's cascading theory and Baum & Groeling's selected hypotheses explain the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and the ensuing war in Afghanistan well. The Bush administration's strategic narratives were largely accepted. The master narrative of a war on terrorism was established, and support for war was resoundingly written about in editorials, and thus reinforced. Criticism was scant, and an upper hand for the Bush administration in shaping media content and public opinion is a precise description.

On Iraq, the models' are not equally fitting. WP mostly adopted the Bush administration's narrative on invading Iraq, adding a layer of rhetoric from the UNSC on top. WSJ and Fox, on the other hand, were ahead of the curve on invading Iraq. WSJ called for war in 2001 when President Bush took military options for Iraq off the table temporarily. Additionally, Saddam Hussein and Iraq were known commodities, and there was less of an empty media space for the elite rhetoric to fill. The conflict with Iraq was more than a decade old. The editorial boards had formed an opinion of Saddam Hussein long before 2003, and had already adopted an editorial line on him. There existed a narrative with a temporal dimension actors and a plot already.

One interpretation of this is that pre-existing editorializing and the ideological tenets of the editorial boards played a significant role in determining the writing on Iraq. In relation to public opinion, Zaller labels such pre-dispositions considerations, 'defined as any reason that might induce an individual to decide a political issue one way or another' (Zaller, 1992, p. 40). On this basis, it seems that previous coverage and a conservative starting point played a greater role in forming WSJ's position on Iraq than Bush's strategic narratives. Partisan leanings as explanations for political beliefs and public opinion to war are central to Berinsky's argument (Berinsky, 2009).

In some ways, WSJ's media frame prevailed when Iraq was invaded. It was a manifestation that the Bush administration adopted policies long espoused on WSJ's editorial page. It can be considered a policy changing success for WSJ's editorial board. The Bush administration gradually came to adopt a strategy similar to what WSJ and Fox espoused in their media frames. In opposition to this, NYT and USAT would maintain that Iraq was a distraction from the war on terrorism, as the war progressed.

The WMD narrative is a confirmation of Entman and Baum & Groeling's theories. An imprecise narrative, forcefully disseminated through elite rhetoric, was eventually proved to be as inaccurate as it was effective in influencing America's editorial writers. Powell's presentation was a great persuasive success in 2003, but at the same time sowed the seeds of misery in the long run. The narrative success on WMDs proved to be a Pyrrhic victory, resulting in an enduring credibility crisis for the Bush administration.

A decisive factor in avoiding defeat in the war on terror lay in sustaining public support and the will to fight in America. The ordering of the surge was a daring moment that contributed to directing the war in Iraq onto a different trajectory. It was effective because of conditions on the ground, but that does not diminish the surge strategy's success. Strategy should, by definition, identify and exploit conditions on the ground that may be conducive to victory. This holds true for strategic thinking and through the ages.

Clausewitz's notion of 'war as a clash of wills' (Simpson, 2013, p. 35), is highly relevant to the war on terrorism and what came after. Obama acknowledged as much and described his efforts against terrorism as 'a battle of wills, a battle of ideas' (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 186). The centre of gravity migrated to Washington as the wars abroad lingered on.

With the surge, the military's fortune on the battlefield in Iraq changed. America's political leadership was split and the emotions and opinions of the population had soured on the war in Iraq. The role the media played in reaching this outcome was crucial. If the media loses faith in the leadership and the mission, it can reverberate and diminish the will to fight in Congress and the population at large. As the literature suggests, divided elites make for a divided public (Berinsky, 2009, pp. 209–211; Zaller, 1992, p. 9). One contribution of this study is to document how this fragmentation of consensus unfolded in major editorials – year by year – in the case of the war on terrorism.

Editorial support can be a useful asset for politicians, and is obviously preferable to criticism. One reason for this is that different types of support may cross-fertilize one another. Support from either media, public or political leadership is a good start for convincing the other two entities to support the war. The paradox is that you need public support to succeed, and you need prospects of success to garner public support. The argument operates both ways. Success leads to support, and support leads to success, and the main arena where war support can be generated is in the media.

The editorial boards chose to aid the Bush administration by supporting the war on terrorism early on. This early editorializing on polls reinforced those polls as accurate measurements of public support for the war. That was good fortune for the

Bush administration, but it would not last. The media, unquestionably, had every right to withdraw this support as some of them lost faith in the mission, and the military leadership.

With Petraeus in Iraq, and Gates and Rice fighting the war at home, the downward spiral was reversed. Faith in the mission was reinstated, if only temporarily. Polling presented in chapter 2.4 a show a temporary spike in war support around 2007 and 2008. There had been a discrepancy between newspapers' forewarnings of disaster and defeat in Iraq and the upbeat diagnosis from the Bush administration. Robert Gates and David Petraeus came across as truth-tellers fit to turn bad fortune into good on the battlefield.

Taking all the study's findings into account, where does this leave Entman and Baum & Groeling's theories and hypotheses? In a good shape, I would argue. Explaining much – not everything – is the realistic expectation and ambition of any academic theory. No one theory can explain all cases, and determining limitations and caveats is therefore an important task. This study has proved the usefulness of some of these models, yet also identified theoretical limitations of these models.

A limitation of the models is that they do not explain the role of pre-existing ideology and policy preferences very well. Zaller's considerations and Berinsky's parallel to the partisan formation of domestic politics illuminates those cases better. On Iraq, WSJ were stronger supporters of invading Iraq, and argued for it earlier, than the Bush administration. In wars against known enemies, previous coverage and ideology may be more decisive than elite rhetoric, with WSJ on Iraq as a case in point. This is not explained particularly well by the models, and was a counterintuitive finding going against the grain of the hypotheses applied.

To be perfectly clear, I do not argue that these scholars are not aware of these limitations and qualifications of their models. Baum & Groeling discuss media partisanship at length, and conclude it was important for Iraq (Baum & Potter, 2008, p. 179). The object here is simply to point out cases that these models do not explain very well. Expanding the theoretical frameworks to include such cases as WSJ on Iraq could be an object of further theory development.

Taking all the study's findings into account, it is worth reflecting on why USAT seem to be more on the mark than the other newspapers. USAT is known for its colourful sections and for being an "easier read" than the heavyweights from the East Coast. Perhaps their uncomplicated style yielded a voice not as easily driven off course by political winds? They seem to have heeded Lawrence Freedman's advice in telling its story 'with consistency and clarity, and that again requires avoiding complexity' (Freedman, 2015, p. 33).

Finally, right after 9/11 the media battle involved al Qaeda to a greater extent. Al Qaeda was later almost gone from the editorials, whereas the Bush administration figured increasingly, as targets of critical media coverage. As time passed, and the torture narrative grew, the original adversaries were replaced by the media organizations themselves. Fox news, WSJ and NYT were particularly active combatants in this intra-media battle. This leads us onto the study's final section.

9.3 America beyond the war on terror

The war on terrorism ended in 2011. America has been attacked by Islamist terrorists after that, and will be attacked again. But that does not mean the war on terrorism will be re-constituted. The 2013 Boston marathon attack – tragic as it was – did not resurrect the 'war on terrorism' master narrative. One reason is that the death tolls of the tragic Boston attack were modest compared to 9/11. Whether 3 or close to 3000 people die in a terror attack will impact the state response greatly.

After Boston, Michael Mukasey, Bush's final Attorney General, was quick to criticize Obama. In the WSJ he lamented: 'the president's reluctance, soon after the Boston bombing, even to use the "t" word – terrorism' (Mukasey, 2013). This criticism was hardly surprising as Mukasey had previously published a book titled *How Obama has Mishandled the War on Terror* (Mukasey, 2010). *Fox News* and Republicans sided with Mukasey after Boston, arguing the 'war on terror is not over' (Miller, 2013).

Another instance of not using the "t" word would also create problems for Obama. His reluctance to characterize the 2012 Benghazi Embassy attack as terror would lead to much controversy (Larson, 2014). Republicans would even establish a

committee to investigate the handling of Benghazi, illustrating the politicised state of American counterterrorism efforts (Cohen, 2014).

When Obama demonstrably is hesitant to even use the word 'terrorism', it suggests that any war against terrorism can be going on. The emergence of ISIL in Syria and Iraq has not resulted in a resurrection for a war on terrorism 2.0, under the leadership of President Obama. It is hard to say whether the American people would have supported a re-launched war on terrorism. Like so many other political endeavours, the war on terrorism became personalized party politics. It is easier for a Republican president to resurrect the master narrative than for a Democrat.

Obama would be very reluctant to restore politically his predecessor's signature legacy, even if Islamists inside America's borders were to unleash a major terrorist campaign. The war on terrorism became a Republican war, just like 'the Iraq war has been a Republican war' (Berinsky, 2009, p. 218). This is one of Berinsky's main arguments that have been reinforced throughout this study. It seems that partisan leanings trump other concerns when people form their political preferences on politics, both domestic and foreign (Berinsky, 2009, p. 210). He also points to a very important development in his closing arguments on public opinion and Iraq:

> *The Iraq war has taken place in a greatly changed political climate. With polarization among elites at an all-time high, it could be that the factors that sustained support for war among the general public are a thing of the past. (Berinsky, 2009, p. 220)*

On May 3 2014, the NYT editorial page wrote about 'a public that is tired of war'. The mood seems to be shared by Obama, who chose not to send troops to Syria after chemical weapons had been used in 2013. With the rise of ISIL, China and Russia increasingly challenging the American-led Western order, going after the al Qaeda organization is understandably no longer the top foreign policy priority of the United States.

One way of looking at it is that drone strikes and the below par leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri, alleviates the need for a full-blown war on terrorism. America's yearly official assessments of terrorism, espouses this view. As time passed, 'al-

Zawahiri experienced difficulty in maintaining influence throughout the AQ organization' (United States Department of State, 2014, p. 5).

When Zawahiri eventually is captured or killed, there will be new claims that – at last – the war on terror is over. But I argue that it already is. This is because the war on terrorism was never primarily al Qaeda's war. Their war was against the 'Zionist-crusader alliance', and continues in a weakened form beyond the end of America's war on terrorism. The war on terrorism was Bush's war, and Obama inherited it. It was declared by one president, therefore it was within the powers of the next President of the United States to call the war off, or redefine it.

Obama's strike on Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen demarcates either the final blow of the war on terrorism, or the first military strike beyond it. It can be seen as belonging to both the war on terrorism, and Obama's subsequent drone wars. The global manhunt with drones had gradually replaced the war on terrorism. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is the 'drone war that has come to define the nation's battle with Al Qaeda' (Baker, 2015). The Awlaki-strike is an overlapping event. It opens the post-war on terrorism period. The killing of Awlaki in Yemen also demonstrates that the manhunt is global, and not confined to Iraq and the Af/Pak region.

The Awlaki-strike also illustrates that America ended up fighting itself in the war on terrorism. Awlaki was himself a US citizen. His 16 year son was also killed, something causing Awlaki's father to write a NYT op-ed titled 'The drone that killed my grandson' (al-Awlaki, 2013). These deaths became a matter of great controversy with influential Senator Rand Paul questioning Obama's drone wars. 'Anwar al-Awlaki was an American citizen who was subject to a kill order from Mr. Obama', he explained in the NYT (Paul, 2014).

The significance of Awlaki's death is further enhanced by the fact that his sermons remain the primary recruiting tool of al Qaeda in the West. He influenced the Tsaranaev brothers, who were behind the Boston bombings. 'Even in death, al-Awlaki is the key cleric in the English-speaking world of radical Islam' (Bergen & Sterman, 2014). The other significant known English speaking recruiter of al Qaeda was Adam

Gadahn, also referred to as Azzam the American. He was killed by a drone strike in April 2015 (Baker, 2015).

With al Qaeda's primary recruiters in the West is dead, and Al Qaeda's best operational manager, Khalid Sheik Mohammed imprisoned, it is abundantly clear that the state of al Qaeda is not great. Al Qaeda lacks its founder and jihadist icon, and the group faces an existential challenge from the rising Islamic State (ISIL) (Zelin, 2015). President Bush survived the war on terrorism, unlike Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein.

The war on terrorism is over and al Qaeda did not win it. To reverse their current trajectory toward defeat, al Qaeda need a media war victory. Otherwise they risk being permanently eclipsed by ISIL, and will descend on the list over America's primary security concerns. For the war on terrorism to be reconstituted, America and its people must again consider themselves to be at war with al Qaeda. Sadly, this can only be achieved through a spectacular terror strike in America.

In the introduction to this study, Edmund Burke was quoted as saying 'no war can be long carried on against the will of the people' (Burke, 1999, p. 104). This insight has been a fundamental tenet for this study. In a less known quote, Burke offers additional advice about consulting the people in decisions of war. He argues that the crown and ministers should:

> *secure us against popular rashness in plunging into wars, and against the effects of popular dismay, disgust, or lassitude in getting out of them as imprudently as we might first engage in them (Burke, 1999, p. 147)*

The message is: be careful not to get in too fast, but be equally aware of withdrawing prematurely. The will and emotions of the people are ill-disposed towards both fallacies. President Bush may have plunged America into a war with Iraq in 2003. But Burke's wise words clearly apply to Bush's surge. As the opening chapter of this thesis states, Bush considers ordering the surge his toughest decision (Bush, 2010, pp. 340–341). Yet, his legacy is stained by representatives of the US government

preforming acts of torture on prisoners in its custody, based on the directives and doctrines laid out by President Bush and his national security team.

By sticking to his unpopular Surge decision, Bush proved that he could prevail both in turning the tables in Iraq, and in going against public opinion in the War at Home. On this account, Bush enjoyed at least partial success during the most demanding of conditions (Kilcullen, 2009, p. 185). It was part of making good on his promise to keep Americans safe after 9/11. This he deserves credit for. Whether the costs and manner of achieving this outcome was warranted is a truly demanding question; one I shall leave the readers to contemplate on their own.

Appendices

Appendix I: Chronological listing of Editorials

Washington Post

Period 1, 109 Editorials

The Washington Post, September 11, 2001, War, A26.

The Washington Post, September 12, 2001, Washington's Response, A30.

The Washington Post, September 12, 2001, September 11, 2001, A30.

The Washington Post, September 13, 2001, The Horror and the Heroes, A30.

The Washington Post, September 13, 2001, The Road Ahead, A30.

The Washington Post, September 14, 2001, Adding Shame to Grief, A36.

The Washington Post, September 14, 2001, Security Aloft, A36.

The Washington Post, September 14, 2001, New Rules, A36.

The Washington Post, September 15, 2001, A New Sense of 'Normal', A26.

The Washington Post, September 15, 2001, Afghanistan, A26.

The Washington Post, September 15, 2001, Why Was There No Warning?, A26.

The Washington Post, September 16, 2001, Death of the City's Innocents, B06.

The Washington Post, September 16, 2001, To Give, B06.

The Washington Post, September 16, 2001, Steadfast, B06.

The Washington Post, September 17, 2001, A Chance in the Middle East, A26.

The Washington Post, September 17, 2001, Wall Street Reopens, A26.

The Washington Post, September 17, 2001, A New Week, A26.

The Washington Post, September 18, 2001, The Airline Bailout, A30.

The Washington Post, September 18, 2001, Not Ready, A30.

The Washington Post, September 18, 2001, Preparing the Blow, A30.

The Washington Post, September 19, 2001, No Hitchhikers, A32.

The Washington Post, September 19, 2001, The Pakistan Connection, A32.

The Washington Post, September 20, 2001, A Wise Decision, A34.

The Washington Post, September 20, 2001, Helping a Muslim Democracy, A34.

The Washington Post, September 20, 2001, No Rush on Rights, A34.

The Washington Post, September 21, 2001, Resuming the Campaign, A36.

The Washington Post, September 21, 2001, Fueling Bigotry, A36.

The Washington Post, September 21, 2001, A Call to War, A36.

The Washington Post, September 22, 2001, That Monstrous Commute, A28.

The Washington Post, September 22, 2001, The Money Trail, A28.

The Washington Post, September 23, 2001, Taking Bio-Warfare Seriously, B06.

The Washington Post, September 23, 2001, Rules of Engagement, B06.

The Washington Post, September 24, 2001, A Boost for Whom?, A20.

The Washington Post, September 24, 2001, What to Fight for, A20.

The Washington Post, September 25, 2001, The Other Twilight Struggle, A22.

The Washington Post, September 25, 2001, D.C.'s Trouble in the House, A22.

The Washington Post, September 25, 2001, Spies and Cops, A22.

The Washington Post, September 26, 2001, Resisting the Censor's Impulse, A24.

The Washington Post, September 26, 2001, Two Weeks Later, A24.

The Washington Post, September 26, 2001, Mideast Progress?, A24.

The Washington Post, September 27, 2001, Mr. Putin's Choice, A26.

The Washington Post, September 27, 2001, To War Without a Vote, A26.

The Washington Post, September 27, 2001, Dragnet, A26.

The Washington Post, September 28, 2001, Defending the Homeland, A38.

The Washington Post, September 28, 2001, And Now, the Unemployed, A38.

The Washington Post, September 28, 2001, National: Security, Insecurity, A38.

The Washington Post, September 29, 2001, Free Speech in Wartime, A26.

The Washington Post, September 29, 2001, Land Grab in Security's Name, A26.

The Washington Post, September 30, 2001, Off Base, B06.

The Washington Post, September 30, 2001, The Case for Force, B06.

The Washington Post, October 1, 2001, Italy Humiliated, A20.

The Washington Post, October 1, 2001, The Public's Business, A20.

The Washington Post, October 1, 2001, Fearing the Pumpkin Patch, A20.

The Washington Post, October 2, 2001, A Chance for Trade, A24.

The Washington Post, October 2, 2001, Unlikely Allies, A24.

The Washington Post, October 3, 2001, Progress in the Balkans, A30.

The Washington Post, October 3, 2001, An Improving Anti-Terror Bill, A30.

The Washington Post, October 4, 2001, Back in Business at National, A30.

The Washington Post, October 4, 2001, Why Chechnya Is Different, A30.

The Washington Post, October 5, 2001, Poverty and Terror, A36.

The Washington Post, October 7, 2001, First Results, B06.

The Washington Post, October 8, 2001, Mr. Blair's Vision, A22.

The Washington Post, October 8, 2001, Clearing the Way, A22.

The Washington Post, October 9, 2001, The Task for Tom Ridge, A28.

The Washington Post, October 9, 2001, The War of Ideas, A28.

The Washington Post, October 10, 2001, Home-Front Arsenals, A22.

The Washington Post, October 10, 2001, Mr. Arafat's Decision, A22.

The Washington Post, October 10, 2001, When Care Beats Haste, A22.

The Washington Post, October 11, 2001, An Ugly Appeal, A32.

The Washington Post, October 11, 2001, Who Deserves a Bailout?, A32.

The Washington Post, October 11, 2001, The Arab Paradox, A32.

The Washington Post, October 12, 2001, Disaster Aid -- and Other Needs, A32.

The Washington Post, October 12, 2001, The Anthrax Alarm, A32.

The Washington Post, October 13, 2001, The Sudan Test, A26.

The Washington Post, October 13, 2001, The Limits of Reassurance, A26.

The Washington Post, October 14, 2001, Guarding the Borders, B06.

The Washington Post, October 16, 2001, Anti-American Backlash, A22.

The Washington Post, October 16, 2001, Rolling Over the District, A22.

The Washington Post, October 16, 2001, Stampeded in the House, A22.

The Washington Post, October 17, 2001, Sputtering Car-Tax Math, A34.

The Washington Post, October 17, 2001, Feeding Afghanistan, A34.

The Washington Post, October 17, 2001, A Need for Sunlight, A34.

The Washington Post, October 17, 2001, Spore War, A34.

The Washington Post, October 18, 2001, The FBI Can't Do It All, A38.

The Washington Post, October 18, 2001, An Opportunistic Sortie, A38.

The Washington Post, October 18, 2001, China and Counterterrorism, A38.

The Washington Post, October 19, 2001, The Need to Carry On, A28.

The Washington Post, October 21, 2001, The Coalition and the Mission, B06.

The Washington Post, October 23, 2001, Navigating by Sight, A22.

The Washington Post, October 24, 2001, Toward a Strategic Framework, A24.

The Washington Post, October 24, 2001, The Spreading Anthrax Toll, A24.

The Washington Post, October 25, 2001, The Second Front, A30.

The Washington Post, October 26, 2001, Playing Games With Air Safety, A34.

The Washington Post, October 26, 2001, A Panicky Bill, A34.

The Washington Post, October 27, 2001, ...And Preparing for Worse, A26.

The Washington Post, October 28, 2001, The Approach to Doha, B06.

The Washington Post, October 28, 2001, Long and Difficult, B06.

The Washington Post, October 30, 2001, Words From Egypt, A20.

The Washington Post, October 31, 2001, Airport Safety: Help Wanted, A26.

The Washington Post, October 31, 2001, Open Up to Pakistan, A26.

The Washington Post, October 31, 2001, Why Not Disclose?, A26.

The Washington Post, November 1, 2001, Saving Civilians, A34.

The Washington Post, November 4, 2001, The Necessary Force , B06.

The Washington Post, November 6, 2001, How to Insure Terror, A22.

The Washington Post, November 7, 2001, 'Fully Satisfied' How? , A28.

The Washington Post, November 11, 2001, Veterans' Day, B06.

The Washington Post, November 11, 2001, The War So Far, B06.

The Washington Post, November 11, 2001, Reconsidering Saudi Arabia, B06.

The Washington Post, November 11, 2001, The Irony of Iran, B06.

Washington Post, Period 2, 47 editorials

The Washington Post, Jan 26, 2003, Follow the Resolution, B06.

The Washington Post, Jan 27, 2003, The Moussaoui Experiment, A18.

The Washington Post, Jan 28, 2003, No More Last Chances, A20.

The Washington Post, Jan 29, 2003, 'Decisive Days', A20.

The Washington Post, Jan 31, 2003, Test Mr. Sharon,A26.

The Washington Post, Feb 5, 2003, The Case for Action, A22.

The Washington Post, Feb 6, 2003, Irrefutable, A36.

The Washington Post, Feb 9, 2003, More to Do, B06.

The Washington Post, Feb 11, 2003, Standing With Saddam, A20.

The Washington Post, Feb 12, 2003, Patriot Act: The Sequel, A28.

The Washington Post, Feb 13, 2003, The Perils of Passivity, A30.

The Washington Post, Feb 14, 2003, No Easy Way, A30.

The Washington Post, Feb 15, 2003, Sound and Fury, A32.

The Washington Post, Feb 23, 2003, Democracy's Choices, B06.

The Washington Post, Feb 24, 2003, The Al-Arian Defense, A20.

The Washington Post, Feb 24, 2003, Be Ready, A20.

The Washington Post, Feb 25, 2003, Out of Pakistan, A22.

The Washington Post, Feb 26, 2003, The Second Resolution, A22.

The Washington Post, Feb 27, 2003, 'Drumbeat' on Iraq? A Response to Readers, A26.

The Washington Post, Mar 2, 2003, Words and Deeds, B06.

The Washington Post, Mar 3, 2003, War Games, A18.

The Washington Post, Mar 4, 2003, An Enemy Seized, A22.

The Washington Post, Mar 5, 2003, Paying for Preparedness, A20.

The Washington Post, Mar 6, 2003, Help Soldiers, Not Gamblers, A22.

The Washington Post, Mar 9, 2003, Another Question, Mr. President?, B06.

The Washington Post, Mar 9, 2003, Moment of Decision, B06.

The Washington Post, Mar 11, 2003, Are Inspections Working?, A22.

The Washington Post, Mar 12, 2003, Get the Message, A20.

The Washington Post, Mar 12, 2003, Blaming the Jews, A20.

The Washington Post, Mar 14, 2003, Watching Guantanamo, A26.

The Washington Post, Mar 16, 2003, Damage Control, B06.

The Washington Post, Mar 16, 2003, Answers About Torture, B06.

The Washington Post, Mar 17, 2003, Final Days, A18.

The Washington Post, Mar 18, 2003, 'A Question of Will', A28.

The Washington Post, Mar 19, 2003, The Man on the Mall, A30.

The Washington Post, Mar 19, 2003, Fantasy Budget, A30.

The Washington Post, Mar 20, 2003, Putting Patriotism to the Test, A28.

The Washington Post, Mar 20, 2003, First Strike, A28.

The Washington Post, Mar 21, 2003, Speaking Out in Wartime, A36.

The Washington Post, Mar 21, 2003, Bipartisan Logic, A36.

The Washington Post, Mar 22, 2003, War, Live, A16.

The Washington Post, Mar 22, 2003, The Mall: Lessons Learned, A16.

The Washington Post, Mar 23, 2003, Toward Liberation, B06.

The Washington Post, Mar 24, 2003, Grievous Losses, A12.

The Washington Post, Mar 25, 2003, Now They Tell Us, A08.

The Washington Post, Mar 25, 2003, Mothers at War, A08.

The Washington Post, Mar 25, 2003, Day Five, A08.

Washington Post, Period 3, 27 editorials

The Washington Post, Dec 5, 2004, The System Endures, B06.

The Washington Post, Dec 6, 2004, Facing Iran, A20.

The Washington Post, Dec 10, 2004, Don't Blame Me, A36.

The Washington Post, Dec 15, 2004, Straight Talk, A32.

The Washington Post, Dec 15, 2004, Anthrax Killer at Large, A32.

The Washington Post, Dec 20, 2004, Saudi Subcontractors, A22.

The Washington Post, Dec 22, 2004, Explosion in Mosul, A26.

The Washington Post, Dec 23, 2004, War Crimes, A22.

The Washington Post, Dec 30, 2004, Europe and Turkey, A26.

The Washington Post, Dec 31, 2004, Another Pass for Pakistan, A28.

The Washington Post, Jan 5, 2005, Palliatives for Prisoners, A16.

The Washington Post, Jan 6, 2005, The Gonzales Record, A18.

The Washington Post, Jan 7, 2005, Mr. Gonzales's Testimony, A18.

The Washington Post, Jan 8, 2005, Post-9/11 Inauguration, A18.

The Washington Post, Jan 10, 2005, The Pentagon's Cuts, A16.

The Washington Post, Jan 11, 2005, The Power of Elections, A14.

The Washington Post, Jan 12, 2005, The President's Choice, A20.

The Washington Post, Jan 19, 2005, The Second Term Abroad, A18.

The Washington Post, Jan 20, 2005, Inauguration Day, A24.

The Washington Post, Jan 21, 2005, The Rhetoric of Freedom, A16.

The Washington Post, Jan 21, 2005, A Semi-Private Parade, A16.

The Washington Post, Jan 24, 2005, FBI Accountability, A14.

The Washington Post, Jan 26, 2005, A Degrading Policy, A20.

The Washington Post, Jan 27, 2005, Day of Loss, A18.

The Washington Post, Jan 29, 2005, 'For the Triumph of Evil', A24.

The Washington Post, Jan 30, 2005, Iraq's Election, B06.

The Washington Post, Jan 31, 2005, A Vote to Persevere, A20.

Washington Post, Period 4, 30 editorials

The Washington Post, December 3, 2006, And Now, Plan B, B06.

The Washington Post, December 6, 2006, A Fresh Old Hand, A24.

The Washington Post, December 7, 2006, The Study Group Reports, A30.

The Washington Post, December 10, 2006, An Unlikely Offensive, B06.

The Washington Post, December 15, 2006, Pentagon Papers Revisited, A34.

The Washington Post, December 15, 2006, When Disaster Strikes, A34.

The Washington Post, December 16, 2006, A Mideast Counteroffensive.

The Washington Post, December 17, 2006, Intelligence Ignorance, B06.

The Washington Post, December 19, 2006, The Army We Need, A28.

The Washington Post, December 21, 2006, Fix Needed, A28.

The Washington Post, December 21, 2006, Al-Qaeda's Sanctuary, A28.

The Washington Post, December 25, 2006, Tracking Failure, A28.

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FOX TPM, December 30, 2008, What I learned in 2008.

FOX TPM, January 6, 2009, War on terror takes a turn for the worse and we may all be in danger.

FOX TPM, January 7, 2009, America's defense strategy is going to change big time.

FOX TPM, January 12, 2009, The far left wanting criminal charges lodged against members of the Bush administration.

FOX TPM, January 14, 2009, Tearing the country apart over the Bush-Cheney anti-terror policies.

FOX TPM, January 20, 2009, The inauguration of the 44th president of the United States.

FOX TPM, January 21, 2009, "The Factor" and Barack Obama.

FOX TPM, January 22, 2009, Why the left wing media is collapsing right before our eyes.

FOX TPM, January 27, 2009, Polling Bush hatred.

FOX TPM, Talking Points Memo, Period 6, 7 memos

FOX TPM, May 2, 2011, Great day for the USA; not so great for Pakistan.

FOX TPM, May 3, 2011, The world without bin Laden.

FOX TPM, May 4, 2011, The truth and ideology.

FOX TPM, May 5, 2011, President Obama and the aftermath of the bin Laden raid.

FOX TPM, May 6, 2011, Confronting evil.

FOX TPM, May 9, 2011, Can President Obama really protect us?.

FOX TPM, May 10, 2011, President Obama launches his immigration campaign.

Appendix II: Polling numbers on Iraq

The polling numbers are provided by CNN and polling agency ORC International.
They were available online, as of 2015, from:

http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2011/images/12/22/rel20d.pdf

12. Do you favor or oppose the U.S. war in Iraq?

		Favor	Oppose	No Opinion	
1.	December 16–18, 2011	31%	66%	2%	
2.	November 18–20, 2011	29%	68%	3%	Period 6
3.	January 21–23, 2011	33%	66%	1%	Period 6
4.	September 1–2, 2010	34%	65%	2%	
5.	Aug. 6–10, 2010	31%	69%	1%	
6.	May 21–23, 2010	36%	62%	1%	
7.	January 22–24, 2010	39%	60%	1%	
8.	November 13–15, 2009	36%	62%	2%	
9.	June 26–28, 2009	34%	64%	2%	
10.	May 14–17, 2009	34%	65%	1%	
11.	April 3–5, 2009	35%	63%	1%	
12.	Feb. 18–19, 2009	31%	67%	2%	Period 5
13.	Dec. 1–2, 2008	36%	63%	1%	Period 5
14.	Oct. 30–Nov. 1, 2008	33%	64%	3%	
15.	October 17–19, 2008	32%	66%	1%	
16.	October 3–5, 2008	34%	65%	1%	
17.	September 5–7, 2008	37%	61%	2%	
18.	Aug. 29–31, 2008	35%	64%	1%	
19.	Aug. 23–24, 2008	33%	66%	1%	
20.	July 27–29, 2008	33%	66%	1%	
21.	June 26–29, 2008	30%	68%	2%	
22.	June 4–5, 2008	30%	68%	1%	
23.	April 28–30, 2008	30%	68%	3%	
24.	Mar. 14–16, 2008	32%	66%	2%	
25.	Feb. 1–3, 2008	34%	64%	2%	
26.	Jan. 14–17, 2008	34%	63%	3%	
27.	Jan. 9–10, 2008	33%	65%	3%	
28.	Dec. 6–9, 2007	31%	68%	1%	
29.	Nov. 2–4, 2007	31%	68%	1%	
30.	Oct. 12–14, 2007	34%	65%	2%	
31.	September 7–9, 2007	34%	63%	4%	
32.	August 6–8, 2007	33%	64%	3%	
33.	June 23–24, 2007	30%	67%	3%	
34.	May 4–6, 2007	34%	65%	1%	
35.	April 10–12, 2007	32%	66%	2%	
36.	March 9–11, 2007	32%	63%	4%	
37.	January 11, 2007	31%	67%	2%	Period 4
38.	December 15–17, 2006	31%	67%	2%	Period 4
39.	November 17–19, 2006	33%	63%	4%	

40.	November 3–5, 2006	33%	61%	6%	
41.	October 27–29, 2006	38%	59%	3%	
42.	October 20–22, 2006	34%	64%	3%	
43.	October 13–15, 2006	34%	64%	2%	
44.	October 6–8, 2006	32%	62%	7%	
45.	Sep. 29–October 2, 2006	38%	61%	1%	
46.	September 23–24, 2006	40%	59%	1%	
47.	August 30–Sep. 2, 2006	39%	58%	2%	
48.	August 18–20, 2006	35%	61%	3%	
49.	August 2–3, 2006	36%	60%	3%	
50.	June 14–15, 2006	38%	54%	8%	
51.	Feb 9–12, 2006	40%	56%	4%	
52.	Jun 16–19, 2005	39%	59%	2%	
53.	Mar 18–20, 2005	47%	47%	6%	
54.	Nov 19–21, 2004	48%	46%	6%	Period 3
55.	Oct 24–26, 2003	54%	43%	3%	
56.	Apr 22–23, 2003	71%	26%	3%	
57.	Apr 10, 2003	72%	22%	6%	Period 2
58.	Apr 7–8, 2003	68%	28%	4%	Period 2
59.	Apr 5–6, 2003	70%	27%	3%	Period 2
60.	Mar 29–30, 2003	70%	27%	3%	Period 2
61.	Mar 24–25, 2003	71%	27%	2%	Period 2
62.	Mar 22–23, 2003	72%	25%	3%	Period 2

Appendix III: Example of not included NYT editorial

One More Round on Iran's Nukes

The compromise resolution thrashed out this week on Iranian nuclear programs is not enormously satisfying, but it represents the best available alternative. Whether it actually stops Tehran's long-running drive to build nuclear weapons will be clearer when it's time to clarify and tighten this set of temporary and conditional agreements sometime next year. Success will depend on whether Washington and Europe can overcome their mutual suspicions and pursue a common strategy including explicit incentives and explicit threats.

Although Iran has now agreed to a temporary suspension of all work on uranium enrichment while it discusses a possible trade agreement with Europe, it has by no means renounced its two-decade-long effort to acquire the capacity to make nuclear bomb fuel. Its many known uranium enrichment centrifuges remain in place, and there may also be other centrifuges, not yet disclosed or discovered, on which work has not been suspended. Meanwhile, Iran has not agreed to stop building a plutonium separation plant that would provide a second route to nuclear weapons production.

But the most pressing known problem, the ready-to-use centrifuges, has been addressed, delaying the date Iran can build bombs and buying time for a more definitive solution. The last-minute maneuvering in which Iran sought to water down its agreement to suspend centrifuge work suggests that it is forgoing an important element of its nuclear program to fend off, for now at least, Washington's drive to refer its activities to the United Nations Security Council.

That would be an empty gesture without some possibility of the Council's imposing punitive sanctions. And that cannot happen as long as two veto-wielding members, Britain and France, believe that diplomacy has not been exhausted. Two other veto-wielding members, Russia and China, are also believed to be against imposing sanctions at this time.

That could and should change, however, if Iran proves unwilling to turn its temporary suspension of centrifuge work into a complete and verifiable renunciation of all uranium and plutonium enrichment programs capable of producing nuclear bomb fuel. To secure such an agreement, Washington should be willing to join Europe in guaranteeing Iran's access to imported reactor fuel. It should also be willing to declare that despite President Bush's "axis of evil" speech three years ago, it has no intention of attacking Iran. Further, it should make clear that once Iran's nuclear disarmament has been verified, the United States will be willing to discuss normal diplomatic and trade relations.

Holding out incentives is not enough. Without a corresponding set of threats, Iran will simply try to get what gains it can without giving up its nuclear ambitions. The incentive strategy can work only if it is accompanied by an explicit and unambiguous threat. If Iran refuses to give up on nuclear weapons, Europe must be prepared to join Washington in voting for Security Council sanctions. A united trans-Atlantic front may persuade Russia and China to go along as well.

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