“Just War, National Interest, and the Iraq War”

Analyzing the Strategic Rhetoric used to mobilize the American Public for War.

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Do presidents use more national interest rhetoric or just war theory rhetoric when mobilizing the public for military intervention? Specifically, what type of rhetoric did President George W. Bush use when speaking to the American public and international community prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003?

In this paper, we find that the specific strategic rhetoric used by President George W. Bush varied depending on the audience he was speaking to. While President Bush was speaking to the American public, he used more national interest rhetoric than just war rhetoric. Conversely, while President Bush was speaking to a primarily international audience, he used more just war rhetoric than national interest rhetoric. This is due to our assumption that the American public will be more likely to be attentive to domestic issues. On the other hand, we assume that the international community is more likely to be persuaded by just war rationale. Should these hypotheses be supported through our research, it may shed light on the types of strategic rhetoric our presidents, and President George W. Bush in particular, use when trying to mobilize the American public and international community for war. Our research does not allow us to answer the important question of what strategic rhetoric is more effective; it simply enables us to analyze what types of strategic rhetoric President George W. Bush used.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, we will provide a brief history of relevant literature on the topic. We will show where there are gaps in the literature and how our study provides a unique perspective on the issue. Second we will include a description of our theory when approaching our research question. Then we will explain the methods used to explore which rhetorical strategy President Bush used in mobilizing the American public and international community for war in Iraq. We will display the results of our research and how they interact with
our stated hypotheses. Lastly, we will discuss the positive and normative implications of the
research in our conclusion.

**Review of Relevant Literature:**

In order to properly identify what type of strategic rhetoric President Bush used, we must
define what is commonly understood as national interest and just war theory. We turn first to
national interest. National interest is a highly politicized and cryptic notion that is often subject
to interpretation (Weldes 1996). Some scholars argue that national interest solely consists of the
interests of the state as a whole, while others argue that national interests should take into
account various domestic groups and minorities (Acharya 2003). However for this study, we will
use a definition of national interest articulated by Condoleezza Rice who later became an
Assistant to the President on National Security Affairs and then Secretary of State. In an article
in Foreign Affairs during the 2000 campaign, Condoleezza Rice described their understanding of
national interest in a post-Cold War world as being five-fold:

“(1) to ensure that America’s military can deter war, project power, and fight in defense
of its interests if deterrence fails; (2) to promote economic growth and political openness
by extending free trade and a stable international monetary system to all committed to
these principles, including in the western hemisphere, which has too often been neglected
as a vital area of U.S. national interest; (3) to renew strong and intimate relationships
with allies who share American values and can thus share the burden of promoting peace,
prosperity, and freedom; (4) to focus U.S. energies on comprehensive relationships with
the big powers, particularly Russia and China, that can and will mold the character of the
international political system; (5) and to deal decisively with the threat of rogue regimes
and hostile powers, which is increasingly taking the forms of the potential for terrorism and the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)” (Rice 2000: 46-47).

After the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, these priorities were not discarded. They were simply reorganized. The fifth prong of Rice’s definition of national security became a top priority for the Bush Administration, while other prongs, notably the third, became less of a priority. It is interesting to note that dealing “decisively with the threat of rogue regimes and hostile powers” was still a priority for the administration before the terrorist attacks. Despite the order being rearranged, these five objectives for the Bush administration are still important for our research when we try to separate national interest rhetoric and just war rhetoric.

In contrast to a definition of national interest, a definition of just war theory must be synthesized from multiple sources and from multiple time periods. Within just war theory, there are three sub-categories: Jus Ad Bellum (regarding pre-war actions), Jus In Bello (regarding actions within war), and Jus Post Bellum (regarding post-war actions). In this study we will focus our attention on and define just war theory along the lines of the first sub-category, jus ad bellum, which outlines the necessary justifications needed to go to war. Jus ad bellum is the essence of our definition of just war in this paper because our study focuses on the time prior to the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces. Jus ad bellum contains six benchmarks that must be met in order for war to be justifiable: having a just cause, being a last resort, being declared by a proper authority, possessing right intention, having a reasonable chance of success, and the ends being proportional to the means (Moseley 2009). In our content analysis, references to these six principles of jus ad bellum will be classified as just war rhetoric. Just war rhetoric in this study is understood as anything referring to just war principles as reasons why military action is
necessary (Walzer 1977). Any strategic rhetoric used by President Bush referencing the killing of innocent people, anything concerning non-compliance of a leader, anything concerning justice, and anything concerning the protection of civilian lives falls under the modern theory of just war as articulated by Walzer and will be considered just war in this study (Walzer 1977).

Over the past few decades there has been an abundance of literature on the concept of framing as it pertains to political decision making. The concept of framing can be defined in many different ways. Two divergent definitions of framing can be found in Chong & Druckman (2004) and Riker (1986). Chong and Druckman define framing as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue” (Chong & Druckman 2004, 104). Alternatively, Riker defines framing as “the central process by which government officials and journalists exercise political influence over each other and over the public” (Riker 1986). The differences in the two definitions highlight an important characteristic of framing. Chong and Druckman argue that framing is a way in which the public takes a position on an issue. Riker, on the other hand, identifies framing as a tool employed by political elites to influence or sway the public and other political elites in order to garner more support for a specific policy position. Our study accepts and is conducted under the definition of framing as put forth by Riker (1986).

A major factor in estimating how effective a frame will be in influencing the opinions of the public is how popular or effective the person using the frame is perceived to be (Edwards 1990; Entman 1989). Political elites, such as U.S. presidents, can make more effective use of a desired frame if they have a high public approval rating, or if they are seen as effective leaders. (Edwards 1990; Entman 1989) In crisis situations, the president is looked to for leadership and is able to use the informal power of influence to persuade the American public of a right course of
action through a specific frame (Kernell 2007). In addition to a president’s popularity and perceived effectiveness, the public’s trust in the president also plays heavily into the effectiveness of a frame. If the public trusts that the president has knowledge of the most relevant issues at hand and can be trusted to tell what they actually know, then the use of a specific frame will be more effective (Lodge and Taber 2000).

Not all citizens accept a frame based upon the popularity or perceived effectiveness of the elite providing it. Many other theories exist concerning the acceptance of a frame by the public. There is evidence that citizens judge the merits of a frame and the frame’s architect on something as simple as the heuristic of party identification (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). Another theory of how citizens receive frames is that they do so communally, intelligibly, and change their opinions in response to changing conditions (Page and Shapiro 1982).

There is a competing view along the same lines when it comes to the impact of elite cues on the decision-making of the public. Scholars holding this view argue that if the public is attentive to alternate sources of information, such as news media, then the impact of elite cues and elite opinion is limited. (Popkin 1991; Huckfeldt et al. 1999; Huckfeldt et al. 2005). However, others disagree and argue that the public relies on elite cues and cues from informed sources in order to make educated choices that reflect their interests. Even without previous knowledge of the issue, the public is able to form policy opinions based on cues from more informed sources, namely policy elites (Mondak 1993; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Boudreau 2006a, 2006b; Miller and Krosnick 2000).

Similarly, some scholars contend that the public is completely reliant on elite cues when forming the opinions, and not reliant on news events (Zaller and Feldman 1992; Bartels 2002). This research leads to the implication that elite framing is very important and can change the
public’s views on different conflicts. According to Zaller, “Evidence from half a century of polling in the United States supports the proposition that the more citizens know about politics and public affairs, the more they are wedded to elite and media perspectives on foreign policy issues” (Zaller 1992, 190).

The study of the effects of framing on the American public goes far beyond political science research. Researchers across many disciplines have sought to explain the psychological mechanisms behind framing effects (Iyengar 1991; Zaller 1992; Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Nelson et al. 1997a,b; Price and Tewksbury 1997; Gross 2000; Brewer 2001). According to Chong and Druckman (2007), “Either the public has no attitudes on many political issues, or it holds so many fragmentary and conflicting attitudes that it cannot reconcile or resolve them.” If opinions are at the mercy of how issues are framed, there can be no legitimate representation of public interests (Riker 1986; Zaller 1992; Entman 1993; Bartels 2003). In addition to the effects of framing, studies of priming effects have shown that elites can significantly influence individual citizens by predisposing them to favor one policy or another (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Krosnick and Kinder 1990; Mendelberg 2001; Druckman and Holmes 2004).

In addition to the literature on framing, there has been significant work on how the public views military intervention. Early research shows that the attitude of the public with regards to the use of military force tends to be idiosyncratic and unstructured (Almond 1950; Lippman 1955; Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964). Mueller brought a fresh look on the subject with his seminal work on casualties and support for the Vietnam and Korean Wars (see also Milstein and Mitchell 1968; Milstein 1973; Mueller 1971, 1973, 2005). Mueller found that the public was able to and did form coherent and systematic opinions about foreign policy.
Much of the growing literature on military intervention has adopted the view that the public engages in a cost-benefit analysis. The public weighs the benefits of intervening with the expected costs (E. Larson 2000; Gartner 2008; Mueller 1971, 1973, 2005; Gartner and Segura 1998). One example is American attentiveness to information concerning casualties (Mueller 1971, 1973, 2005; Gartner and Segura 1998; Gartner 2008). Another example exhibiting how the public engages in a surface level cost-benefit analysis for intervention is how the public responds to information about mission objectives (the public is very often displeased) (Jentleson 1992; Jentleson and Britton 1998; Eichenberg 2005). Other scholars focus on incoming information about the success of the mission and how this affects public approval or disapproval for intervention (Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2005/2006, 2009; Gelpi, Reifler, and Feaver 2007). There is broad research suggesting that the public responds to information about foreign affairs in systematic ways and as a result, is consistent in its application of a cost-benefit analysis to determine its opinion of military intervention (Nincic 1988, 1992; Page and Shapiro 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992; Aldrich et al. 2006).

While the above theories are important, what is more informative for our paper are the theories focusing on policy objective frames. Policy objective theories argue that public approval of military action is highest when the action is framed through specific policy objectives that the public views as legitimate (Jentleson and Britton 1998; Perla 2011). When studying the rhetoric used by President George W. Bush to mobilize the American public for war, it is beneficial to look at his use of just war and national interest rhetoric as a reflection of the implied policy objective. Just war rhetoric is commonly interpreted as reflecting a policy objective of human rights and international peace. National interest rhetoric on the other hand, is often interpreted as reflecting a policy objective of national security and preservation of American freedoms.
However, strategic rhetoric can also be used to disguise a policy objective. A president may disguise a national interest objective in just war rhetoric in order to persuade the public.

Kull and Destler (1999) show that the public responds to the participation of allied states and international organizations as if to weigh multilateral action as less costly than unilateral action. These findings fit well with our hypothesis that President Bush uses both national interest rhetoric and just war rhetoric when speaking to the American public. If Kull and Destler are correct, then it would be wise for a president to use just war rhetoric and not just national interest when attempting to mobilize the American public to support military intervention.

Numerous studies on framing effects indicate that individual attitudes toward the use of military force can be altered through the use of narrative frames (Iyengar and Simon 1993; Allen, O’Laughlin, and Sullivan 1994; Aday, Cluverius, and Livingston 2005; Boettcher and Cobb 2006). Framing a crisis as a story affects what people remember, how they remember it, and what opinions they hold about the justification for military action (Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999; Berinsky and Kinder 2006). This is important to our research because we focus on the elite cues and frames used by President Bush in the run up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq on March 20th, 2003. If narrative frames can sway the belief of the public, then it is very important to discover if and how elites use narrative frames. Our study, in one way or another, seeks to determine how President Bush used the narrative frames of national interest and just war before March 20th, 2003.

In addition to research about the effect of framing on public perceptions, the research of the effects of public opinion on a president’s use of framing is also important. It has been argued that the effect of public opinion on American foreign policy varies by president (Foyle 1999). Foyle also argues that the decisions made in foreign policy are more a result of the individual
than the public. In the specific instance of a terrorist attack, when the American public feels threatened by an outside force (terrorist threat), they are more inclined to follow the plan laid out before them by the president (Davis and Silver 2004). After an attack on their own country, the public is much more receptive of their leader’s decisions because they look to the president as a figure to rally around. Rising approval ratings often grant the president more leverage to initiate military action (Stimson 2004). After the attack on September 11, 2001, President Bush was seen to have a clear opportunity to mobilize the public for a retaliatory strike against al-Qaeda. However, in his initiative for Iraq, President Bush did not have the luxury of a “clear and present danger” like he did immediately after September 11th, 2001. Because he lacked this luxury, President Bush had to convince the American public that military intervention in Iraq was necessary and prudent.

**Theory**

Just war rhetoric and national interest rhetoric are two commonly used strategies for encouraging the public and the international community to support the use of military force. We refer to just war rhetoric and national interest rhetoric both as being “strategic rhetoric.” Our research is focused on these two strategies and how President George W. Bush may or may not have implemented them in the months leading up to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. It is plausible that President Bush used both just war rhetoric and national interest rhetoric when approaching entry into a conflict with Iraq. It appears highly unlikely that President Bush would use only one of the two types of strategic rhetoric mentioned above when mobilizing the public and international audiences for armed conflict in Iraq. While the American public is concerned with the interests for America in going to war, the international community focuses on the
justification of a sovereign nation making war on another sovereign nation. Our first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: President George W. Bush used both national interest and just war rhetoric when mobilizing the American public for military intervention in Iraq.

The second hypothesis poses the possibility that President Bush may have used specific types of rhetoric when addressing either national or international audiences. Using national interest rhetoric while speaking to the American people may allow President Bush to garner more support for military action in Iraq. The American people may feel more inclined to lend their support if the war had a direct link to the future and interests of the United States. Just war theory might be more advantageous in the eye of the international audience because they may be more affected by the statistical reasons for going to war rather than being swayed by pandering to their emotions. However, it is also true that Americans respond well to just war theory conditions. Americans, for example, are more willing to engage in military conflict if the aggressor has nuclear capabilities than if it does not (Herrman, Tetlock, and Visser 1999). Therefore, Americans respond well to portions of both types of rhetoric. It seems apparent that President Bush needed to make a distinct difference in the ways he appealed to his own people and in the ways he needed to justify, to the international community, the war in Iraq. For this reason our second hypothesis explains a connection between audience and rhetoric used:

H2: President George W. Bush used national interest rhetoric when addressing a domestic audience and just war rhetoric when addressing an international audience.
Our third hypothesis suggests that in order to gain the support of the American public, President Bush needed to focus on national interests to appeal to the people of the United States. The domestic audience may have been more approving of national interest rhetoric and President Bush would have known that. The presence of United States interests is strongly and consistently related to support for military intervention (Herrman, Tetlock, and Visser 1999). The resulting possibility is that rather than relying only on just cause, the president more frequently used national interest rhetoric while addressing the public to encourage support for military intervention in Iraq.

H3: President George W. Bush used more national interest rhetoric than just war rhetoric when mobilizing the American public for war in Iraq.

We assume that the international community is concerned with norms and Just War Theory concepts such as right intention, proper authority, proportionality, and just cause (Moseley 2009). If President Bush was trying to garner support from the international community before entering the conflict, then he most likely used Just War Theory to appeal to them. The international community needed to know that President Bush was entering into this conflict because it was a just cause. Our fourth hypothesis explains a connection between an international audience and the use of just war theory rhetoric by the president:

H4: President George W. Bush used more just war than national interest rhetoric when mobilizing the international community to support American intervention in Iraq.
Methodology

We used content analysis to determine the specific rhetoric used by President George W. Bush when mobilizing the American public and international community for war in Iraq. Looking at the actual words President Bush used provides the substantive material needed to analyze the president’s rhetoric. Each of our hypotheses put forth a claim concerning the president’s choice of frame, national interest or just war, when addressing the American public or when addressing an international audience.

Operationalization of Independent and Dependent Variables

We operationalized the independent and dependent variables by constructing the codes and codebook used to analyze President Bush’s public statements. Our initial codebook was constructed by using two speeches with different audiences and different themes. Each speech was examined sentence by sentence and a code was created so that the content of every sentence could be coded. The two speeches used in the construction of the codebook were President Bush’s “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union,” January 29, 2002 and his “Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City,” September 12, 2002.

In order to determine whether or not President Bush used national interest rhetoric or Just War Theory rhetoric, codes were divided into three distinct categories: “National Interest Rhetoric,” “Just War Theory Rhetoric,” and a “General Foreign Policy”. The “general foreign policy” category was used for references by the president that did not fit into the two main categories. As the titles suggest, the categories contained codes that specifically fell in one form of rhetoric or the other. “National Interest Rhetoric” codes included references to anything regarding the safety of U.S. citizens, property, freedom, or ideals. A few examples of national
interest codes that we used are “safety of the United States,” “safety of allies,” and “WMD in relation to national security”. For “Just War Theory Rhetoric” we included any statement that included any of the six principles concerning Jus ad Bello (just cause, last resort, proper authority, right of intent, reasonable success, and proportional means). Some of these codes included “murder” for just cause, “non-compliance with international norms” for last resort, “congressional action” for proper authority, “liberating the Iraqi people” for right of intent, and so on. There were also separate codes for each of the Jus ad Bellum principles individually.

We also added an “options” and “actions” category. The purpose of these categories was to show and differences in what the president was referring to as a possible outcome as opposed to what was actually taking place. An example of these codes might be the difference between the president considering taking military action and him taking that action. We also used the option/action codes while referring to congressional action, United Nations action, and action regarding foreign aid.

*Acquisition of Sources*

We used the American Presidency Project (APP) database to find our sources (American Presidency Project 2012). The APP database is an archive of over one hundred thousand documents related to the study of the presidency put together by University of California, Santa Barbara. The date range we set for our data was September 11, 2001 through March 20, 2003. President Bush began using retaliation rhetoric just a few hours after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. This rhetoric and mobilization tactic continued until March 20, 2003 when the United States led the coalition that invaded Iraq. We narrowed down our data to only include public remarks of President George W. Bush. Public remarks include official speeches as well as press conferences and other public statements. We did not need to analyze any remarks
past the March 20, 2003 invasion because the president’s rhetoric for mobilizing the American public and international community into military conflict had concluded. In this paper, we are only concerned with Jus Ad Bellum (pre-war) rhetoric and not Jus In Bello (within war) rhetoric.

Our manual coding approach required us to narrow down the amount of speeches to analyze, and we had to select one or more keywords that would produce an adequate amount of related remarks without overreaching into the war in Afghanistan or other foreign policy areas. After trying multiple terms, “Iraq” was chosen as the best keyword for a number of reasons. First, the term was broad, yet not overreaching like “terrorism.” We correctly assumed that almost every source with the keyword of “Iraq” would be important for our study. Keywords such as “terror” would include numerous speeches not important to our research. Second, terms such as “Saddam Hussein” or “weapons of mass destruction” would have been too narrow and may have caused us to overlook important statements made by the president. Throughout our research, we noticed a great deal of repetition in President Bush’s speeches. It is clear to us that the president had a fixed amount of talking points used to mobilize either the American public or international community around military intervention in Iraq. Within these talking points, the president almost always mentioned “weapons of mass destruction” and “Saddam Hussein.” We are confident that “Iraq” was a broad enough keyword to encompass these and other more narrow keywords.

**Testing the hypotheses**

After we settled on our keywords, sources and codebook, we practiced coding as a group of five researchers together, then apart, to improve our inter-coder reliability. After this practice, we had an intercoder reliability of over 70%.

**Threats to Validity**
In contrast to computer or machine coding, manual coding is examining each sample in context instead of exact terminology. This is the approach to content analysis that was utilized in this study. A manual approach allows for flexibility if new frames are discovered in the midst of data that were not part of the initial prototype. Manual coding is also beneficial because humans can read for context, whereas computers have a difficult time coding context. One drawback to manual coding is the time it takes to read through articles. This drawback limits the sample size of the study. When multiple coders is being used, intercoder reliability is an obvious concern.

Checks of intercoder reliability are crucial when doing manual content analysis. Limiting the scope of our research to the 205 public statements of the president can be seen as a threat to internal validity, because significant data could remain unnoticed. However, we were limited by time restrictions and could not code every speech made by the president between September 11, 2001 and March 20, 2003, which would have been several thousand.

In order to manage the 205 selected speeches that President George W. Bush made between September 2001 and March 2003, we had to have multiple people work on coding each of the speeches. This could be viewed as a threat to our internal validity as each of the coders would have slightly varying interpretations of each of the statements. To address this issue we had to test what is called our “inter-coder reliability.” We each coded the same speech, “Address to the nation on Iraq” March 19, 2003. In this first test we fell just short of that mark, so we consulted with each other, adjusted our codebook accordingly and proceeded to separately code a second speech, “Radio Address” September 28, 2002. In this test we were well above the targeted 70% accuracy.

Again due to time and resource constraints, we had to limit our research to the single case of President George W. Bush’s statements leading up to the beginning of military engagement in
Iraq. As a result, the generalizability of our results is highly suspect. Any study with a sample size of one cannot legitimately claim to be generalizable, and thus we do not do so here. We hope that our findings will spur further research in the realm of strategic rhetoric used by other presidents when mobilizing the public for intervention in other crisis situations, as well as non-crisis situations.

**Results**

The data, although not always supportive of the hypotheses, revealed several pieces of surprising information. Our first hypothesis, “President George W. Bush used both national interest and just war rhetoric when mobilizing the American public for military intervention in Iraq” was confirmed because both types of rhetoric were present in his statements made to domestic audiences.

The president used just war rhetoric in his speeches regardless of audience. The president used both just war rhetoric and national interest rhetoric when addressing the American public. However, when he addressed international audiences, President George W. Bush overwhelmingly used just war rhetoric, and for the most part, left out any national interest rhetoric. The second hypothesis, “President George W. Bush used different types of rhetoric depending on the audience he was addressing,” was also supported along with H1 since the president adjusted his statements to the international community so that any national interest rhetoric would be omitted.
In order to test our hypotheses, we combined all of the codes in the codebook representing just war rhetoric into a single variable. We also combined all of the national interest codes in the codebook into a single variable. After creating two separate additive variables, one for just war and one for national interest, we ran a crosstab with the audience President Bush was addressing. Figure 2 shows the total percentage of national interest and just war rhetoric used when speaking to domestic audiences. There is an insignificant relationship between domestic audience and the type of rhetoric used ($p > .05$). These findings oppose our third hypothesis, which states that the president used more national interest rhetoric when addressing a domestic audience.
According to Figure 3, our fourth hypothesis, that George W. Bush used more just war rhetoric than national interest rhetoric when addressing international audiences, was supported by our data. A significantly greater percentage of strategic rhetoric used by President Bush was just war rhetoric. 87.94% of the president’s addresses to an international audience employed just war rhetoric versus only 12.06% employing national interest rhetoric. The president clearly preferred just war rhetoric when addressing international audiences.
Next, we are interested in whether President Bush’s mention of specific issues changed over times. Although the research design did not include a study of specific talking points and how they were used differently at certain times, the data gleaned from the content analysis was used to observe several interesting characteristics of President Bush’s rhetoric. The speeches were divided into six different chronological groups. Crosstabs were performed using the chronological group variable and variables representing different talking points or themes. Figure 4 and Table 1 show how the number of references to WMDs did not significantly increase as a percentage of overall strategic rhetoric from late September 2001 to March 20th, 2003 (p > .05). Even in the few weeks before the United States deployment of troops to Iraq, the president’s use of WMD references dropped as a percentage of overall strategic rhetoric, but the drop is not significant.
In contrast to his use of rhetoric referring to WMDs, President Bush’s use of humanitarian rhetoric or Iraqi interest reasoning increased significantly from September 2001 to March 20th, 2003 (p < .001). Use of humanitarian interests in the president’s rhetoric increased from a mean of 4.6% of total strategic rhetoric in the first five time periods to 19.4% of total strategic rhetoric in the month before the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Humanitarian interests in Bush’s public statements are exemplified by specific rhetoric relating to liberating the Iraqi people or providing the Iraqi people with basic human liberties and representative government. Figure 5 below shows that as the date of invasion came closer and closer, the president began to increase his use of humanitarian rhetoric when making public statements relating to Iraq. The significant increase in the president’s use of humanitarian rhetoric possibly indicates that he intended to use the just cause of humanitarian intervention to justify the invasion of Iraq to the public.
Conclusion

When we decided to conduct a study determining how a president uses national interest rhetoric and Just War Theory rhetoric, we chose to focus on only one president and only one case. It is our hope that our research will stimulate future studies on the topic. There are opportunities for our research to be expanded to other conflicts to determine if other presidents behaved in similar ways. The type of conflict - crisis or non-crisis - was not accounted for in our study, but may have affected the type of rhetoric used. George W. Bush had a large amount of time to mobilize the public, and arguably only pushed for the invasion of Iraq within a small window of time just prior to March 20, 2003. It would be expected for the type of rhetoric used by a president to be stronger or weaker depending on the time frame before conflict. It may be seen that presidents use stronger rhetoric, more national interest rhetoric, or even more just war rhetoric if they feel the need for more immediate action. It would also be safe to hypothesize that
presidents may use less national interest rhetoric if they do not feel that the situation is as dire or if national interests are not explicitly at stake in the conflict. National interest plays a large role in the reasoning of a president, and it would be expected to be a large part of any leaders argument for action in a conflict situation.

It is our hope that the above research will guide future research on presidents and other heads of state. We believe that this type of research can lead to interesting realizations of the mindsets of leaders as they approach the need for military action in any type of conflict. It will also give good insight as to whether leaders focus more on national interests or on Just War Theory. We believe this research could stimulate a further analysis about the strategic use of national interest and just war rhetoric. One possible study would be looking in the past and analyzing how this strategy has evolved and the origins of national interest and just war rhetoric. It will be interesting to compare these finding with what was said internally, once those documents are declassified. A case study would be effective in comparing the rhetoric President Bush used, as discovered in this paper, with the internal rationale of the Bush administration.

**Works Cited**


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