

*Cry Havoc:
Rhetorical Mobilization and Foreign Policy Decision Making
During War-threatening Crises*

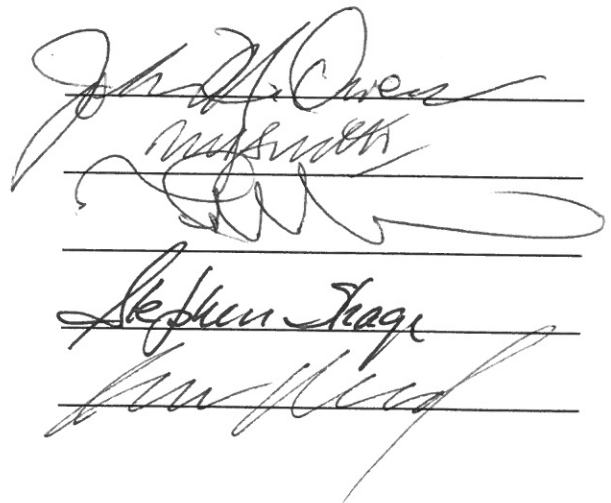
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A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Politics

University of Virginia
December 5, 2016


The block contains three handwritten signatures, each written over a horizontal line. The first signature is 'John M. Owen', the second is 'Matthew Smith', and the third is 'Stephen Trapp'. Below the third signature, there is another horizontal line with a handwritten signature that appears to be 'Sam Hurd'.

Abstract

When leaders choose to threaten or use military force, how do they overcome the average citizen's rational presumption against war and mobilize their populations for the collective action and sacrifice that modern war demands? Why are some efforts to mobilize populations for war more successful than others? Does this variation affect foreign policy decisions?

I argue that the chief instrument for mobilizing domestic support for war is rhetoric. I further argue that the efficacy, or *resonance*, of rhetorical mobilization campaigns that leaders orchestrate to "sell" their wars is variable. Following social movement scholarship, I contend that two observable and measurable factors determine resonance. The *salience* of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is the degree to which a leader rhetorically links international events with national values, cultural myths, and the everyday concerns of their citizens. The second factor, *credibility*, measures the foreign policy reputation of leaders relative to their political opponents and the consistency of their rhetoric with observable facts. During a war-threatening crisis, the likelihood that a leader's preference for the use of force will become the manifest policy of the state depends on the resonance (i.e., salience and credibility) of the leader's rhetorical mobilization campaign. High resonance rhetorical mobilization campaigns build domestic consensus, reduce the political and military risks of war, and create for leaders *permissive* decision-making environments in which domestic opinion has little sway over foreign policy decisions. When, however, rhetorical mobilization campaigns fail to resonate, leaders face *constrained* decision-making environments in which domestic opinion is likely to be a major determinant of foreign policy outcomes. Because taking the state to war without a stable public commitment incurs a high risk of domestic sanction, constrained leaders are more likely to amend or abandon their policy preferences for the threat or use of force.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Of course the people don't want war. But after all, it's the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it's always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it's a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy.

—Herman Goering

It's a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead—and to find no one there.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

All governments intent on war, or policies that increase the likelihood of war, share a common task during the intervening period between policy preference formulation and policy implementation: mobilizing their populations for collective action and collective sacrifice. How do they accomplish this task? When geopolitical facts and events prompt leaders to choose war, how do they overcome the public's rational presumption against war and secure the domestic support that modern war demands? Why are some leaders able to generate broad domestic consensus, even enthusiasm, for the use of military force while others fail to inspire? How does this variation affect the likelihood that a leader's preference for war will become the manifest policy of the state?

My dissertation argues that the fundamental means by which leaders marshal domestic support for war is *rhetoric*. During war-threatening crises, leaders use rhetoric strategically to construct a shared meaning around international facts and events, forward their plan for collective action, mobilize domestic support around that vision, and isolate

likely opposition to their policy preference. Examples are abundant. During the annual public funeral at the dawn of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles described Athens, “the school of Hellas,” as worthy of the sacrifices made by the glorious war dead in whose honor they had assembled. He exhorted the gathered Athenians to “be ready to suffer in her cause” (Thucydides 1998, 2.41). In 2002, after paying tribute to the men and women who had given their lives in Afghanistan, George W. Bush advised the West Point Corps of Cadets—and the television audience that had tuned in—that history has “issued its call to your generation.” He also reminded them of America’s exceptional worthiness of the sacrifices that call would demand. Although nearly 2,500 years separate these orations, they are comparable—virtually indistinguishable—in purpose and political effect.

Yet despite the ubiquity of this species of political communication over time and space, international relations scholarship has generally been inattentive to the role of executive rhetoric in mobilizing populations for war. The absence of international relations scholarship would be entirely appropriate if rhetoric had no bearing on international outcomes. If, in other words, a leader’s preference for or against the use of military force were sufficient to explain his or her ultimate war decision, then this species of rhetoric would have no international implications; its analysis would belong to other disciplines and subfields. If, however, there is variation in the efficacy of the rhetorical strategies that statesmen employ to mobilize domestic support for their wars (as certainly there must be), and if that variation influences the war decisions that leaders ultimately make (as I shall argue), then the rhetorical process through which executive preference for war becomes state policy demands our attention as students of international politics.

A leader's preference for war, I argue, is a necessary but insufficient cause of his or her ultimate *war decision*, the outcome variable that my dissertation seeks to explain. In order to understand when a leader's preference for war is likely to become the manifest policy of the state, we must first consider the leader's capacity to extract from society the moral and material instruments required to employ military force effectively (Taliaferro, Lobell & Ripsman 2009; Zakaria 1998). My dissertation explores why and how leaders who are intent on war employ rhetoric to mobilize that support, and how the efficacy of the rhetorical campaigns they orchestrate, the primary explanatory variable of this project, influences the war decisions they ultimately make.

1.1 The Motivating Puzzle

It is primarily an empirical puzzle that motivates this project. When the George W. Bush administration concluded that the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq justified a policy of forcible regime change, war planners in Washington, Tampa, and Doha went immediately to work. But long before the Pentagon had settled on a *military* strategy for toppling Saddam, public affairs and public diplomacy planners at the White House, the State Department, and the Pentagon had planned, coordinated, and initiated a comprehensive *rhetorical* strategy. Their objective was to shape domestic and foreign attitudes regarding the nature of the Iraqi threat and the available options for dealing with it.

Although foreign audiences were generally unimpressed, White House rhetoric resonated domestically. Prior to the September 2002 rollout of the administration's

campaign to “sell” its policy preference,¹ few Americans considered Iraq among the nation’s chief concerns. Yet by February of 2003, the premise that Saddam was an *intolerable* threat to American public safety that justified the use of military force, with or without UN sanction, was widely embraced. In polls taken shortly after Secretary of State Colin Powell’s UN address in which he detailed the Iraqi WMD threat, 63% of Americans supported Bush’s call for forcible regime change.² As the administration continued to rollout its projections of grave consequences in the absence of bold action, the Democratic opposition chose not to advance a competing narrative. On the eve of the war, Bush’s domestic political opponents could muster little more than grudging silence or subdued support.

Bismarck famously characterized preventive war³ as “committing suicide from fear of death.”⁴ Schweller (1992) argues that democracies do not fight preventive wars. Yet in March 2003, the Bush administration launched a preventive war with strong public backing and the imprimatur of a joint resolution in Congress.

While both the breadth of public support for and the dearth of domestic opposition to this radical shift in American defense policy are puzzles unto themselves, the Iraq case is especially perplexing when compared with US foreign policy behavior in

¹ Although President Bush’s commencement address at West Point (June 1, 2002) provides the doctrinal framework (the so-called “Bush Doctrine”) from which the Iraq strategy emerged, I mark Bush’s September 11, 2002 address from Ellis Island as the official start date of the Bush administration’s rhetorical campaign to justify publicly its preferred policy. I discuss this choice further in Chapter 3.

² See Jeffrey M. Jones, “Public Support for Iraq Invasion Inches Upward,” Accessed April 10, 2014 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/7990/public-support-iraq-invasion-inches-upward.aspx>.

³ I make the distinction here and in the chapters that follow between the two types of anticipatory war: preemptive and preventive. Preemptive wars are waged in anticipation of *imminent* attack or aggression. Preemptive wars have a long history and standing in international law and just war doctrine. Preventive wars are waged to eliminate or mitigate *potential* threats, threats that could hypothetically emerge in the future if not addressed. Preventive wars have long been treated as wars of aggression. For a discussion of anticipatory war, see Walzer (2006, Chapter 5). See also Schweller (1992) who attempts to explain democracies *do not* fight preventive war.

⁴ Quoted in Jervis (1976).

the face of far more menacing international threats. The American response to the rise of the Nazi Germany, for example, stands in stark contrast to the case sketched above. Certainly by 1937, and arguably earlier, the Roosevelt administration recognized Hitler's Germany as an imminent danger that unambiguously threatened America's vital strategic interests.⁵ By the spring of 1940, it was clear to Roosevelt and his advisers that Britain's survival as an independent democratic state and the security of the Atlantic sea lines of communication upon which America's economy and security rests, depended on America's entry into the war. Accordingly, the administration orchestrated a rhetorical campaign to generate domestic support for America's entry into the war as a belligerent. Yet despite Roosevelt's celebrated powers of persuasion, Germany's conquest of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, and Norway, the fall of France, Luftwaffe raids over London, and pleas for help from foreign governments and foreign peoples, America seemed perfectly satisfied to spectate from the bleachers. In the face of entrenched domestic opposition to a second war in Europe, Roosevelt amended his policy preference, making America the "arsenal of democracy" rather than its champion.

Both Roosevelt and Bush had determined that international dangers warranted aggressive foreign policies that included, if necessary, war. Roosevelt's German policy preference, despite the unambiguous German threat to core US interests, enjoyed little domestic support until the actions of America's adversaries rendered the debate moot. By contrast, Bush's policy preference for invasion and forcible regime change in Iraq,

⁵ In 1937, shortly after Japan's invasion of China, Roosevelt launched a campaign to warn the American public of the growing dangers posed by Germany and Japan. In a major speech in Chicago in October 1937, Roosevelt spoke of the need to "quarantine" the "epidemic of world lawlessness" (see Engel, Lawrence, & Preston 2014, 116-18). The speech was broadly criticized and prompted an aggressive non-interventionist response. As a result, a wary Roosevelt largely avoided the growing crisis in Europe in his public addresses until the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

despite the ambiguous and indirect nature of the Iraqi threat, became US foreign policy and was subsequently executed essentially as the administration had scripted it, unadulterated by various domestic interests. What accounts for these divergent outcomes?

Easy solutions to this puzzle are unsatisfying. One such solution emphasizes the imminence of the threat. The Nazis were an ocean away, Europe's problem. By contrast, the American public in 2003 had witnessed—in the literal sense of that word—a physical attack on American soil. The American public in 2003 saw Saddam as a direct threat. Hitler did not inspire the same degree of public angst.

The problem with this explanation is not that it is inaccurate, but that it is incomplete. It fails to account for *how* the public reached these improbable conclusions. It fails to explain how, during the prelude to the Second World War, Americans were able to sustain the conviction that the German threat was *not* imminent, that the US could safely stand aloof while major European capitals fell. The American public and Roosevelt's domestic opponents witnessed the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the annexation of Austria, the invasion of Poland, the Battle of Britain, and the fall of France, and yet still preserved the belief—absurd in retrospect—that the Atlantic Ocean was sufficient to render Hitler's Germany unthreatening to US interests. What caused this belief and what accounts for its durability in the face of the *overwhelming* evidence that the Nazi threat was direct and unprecedented?

Likewise, the argument that the 2001 al Qaeda attacks on the US homeland *caused* domestic support for forcible regime change in Iraq in 2003, while plausible, as far as it goes, is logically incoherent on its own. The difficulty, of course, lies in the fact

that the Saddam regime had nothing to do with the 2001 al Qaeda attacks, and, significantly, the US intelligence community knew this categorically. The premise that the American public supported the invasion of Iraq as a response to the al Qaeda attacks fails to account for how the American public came to associate these two discrete events.

Another simple but ultimately unsatisfying solution is the divergent degrees of anticipated costs during these two war-threatening crises. Recent memories of war with Germany had justifiably dulled the American public's appetite for a second round, while Iraq's pitiable performance in the 1990-91 Gulf War should have provided the average American citizen ample reason to expect another relatively swift and cheap war.

The *anticipated cost* explanation does not pass muster for two reasons. First, there is insufficient variation in the explanatory variable. Certainly in 1940, the American people understood that joining the fight in Europe would cost America dearly. But, as Gershkoff & Kushner (2005) observe, Americans in 2003 generally believed that a war with Iraq would also be long and costly. On average across various polls taken during the period of interest, the authors found that 55 percent of those surveyed expected the war to be long, 44 percent expected large casualties, 50 percent believed a war with Iraq would affect the economy badly, and 62 percent responded that war would increase the short-term risk of terrorism at home. A significant percentage of respondents over this period (35 percent) believed that war with Iraq would result in reinstatement of the draft. In short, few Americans expected a repeat of the low-cost Gulf War. Unlike 1991, Saddam—who allegedly had access to stockpiles of WMD and a means of delivering them to the American homeland through terrorist allies—would be fighting for his life.

A cursory survey of the historic record suggests a second reason to dismiss the anticipated cost explanation: it is an unreliable predictor of domestic attitudes toward the use of force. By the eve of the Gulf War, the George H. W. Bush administration had won broad public support for the liberation of Kuwait despite *sobering* casualty projections that were well publicized prior to the war.⁶ By contrast, in the early 1980s the American public (and the Democratic Party) remained intransigent despite Ronald Reagan's insistence that Contra "freedom fighters," not American troops, would fight his war in Nicaragua. Likewise, Barack Obama faced stubborn public opposition in 2013 despite his pledge that military action to punish the Assad government for crossing the chemical weapons "red line" during the Syrian Civil War would entail no American boots on the ground. With American casualty projections of essentially zero, domestic opposition forced both Reagan and Obama to revise down their already low-risk preferences. An anticipated costs hypothesis, by itself, would predict little public support in advance of the Gulf War and significant support for Reagan and Obama's policy preferences. Although the effects of anticipated costs on US public support for war is undertheorized,⁷ these cases suggest that expectations of costs in advance of a possible conflict are unreliable markers of domestic support for war.

⁶ In a summary of various casualty projections, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that official Bush administration projections estimated between 20,000 and 30,000 casualties (see Reuters, 1990). The same report cited a military historian who estimated of up to 100,000 casualties, a figure that the paper cited in both its headline and the opening paragraph of the article. Despite these dire projections (which proved to be radically off base), 72% of the American public supported the Gulf war at its initiation (from polling data cited in Jentleson & Britton (1998)).

⁷ Few scholars consider public attitudes during the debate *prior to* a war decision, so the affect of anticipated casualties on public support for war during war-threatening crises is undertheorized. There is, however, a rich literature that addresses public opinion once war is imminent or has already been initiated. Mueller (1973) introduces two hypotheses that continue to attract scholarly attention: the casualties hypothesis (critics and contributors include Berinsky 2007; Gartner & Segura 1998; Gelpi, Feaver & Reifler 2005; Kull & Ramsay 2001; Slantchev 2004) and the rally-'round-the-flag effect (critics and contributors include: Baum and Potter 2008; Groeling & Baum 2008; Oneal, Lian, & Joyner 1996; Stoll 1984).

In short, we observe sweeping and largely unexplained variation in the complex relationship between geopolitics, executive preferences, domestic interests and opinions, and foreign policy decision making during war-threatening crises. What is lacking is a satisfactory accounting of the process by which executive preferences for the use of force become state policies, or fail to. The *rhetorical mobilization model* theorizes this process and attempts to explain the conditions under which democratic leaders are likely to implement their policy preference for war and when they are more likely to amend or abandon that preference.

1.2 My Argument in Summary

A foundational assertion of neorealism is that structures “limit and mold agents and agencies and point them in ways that tend toward a common quality of outcomes even though the efforts and aims of agents and agencies vary” (Waltz 1979, 74). It is widely acknowledged, and hardly contestable, that the anarchic structure of the international system creates conditions that point states and statesmen in ways that tend toward international competition and conflict. Daily intelligence briefings serve as daily reminders to leaders around the world that international politics are, as realist scholars remind us, fraught with competition, conflict, and danger. For many scholars, the structure of the international system is sufficient to predict, explain, and indeed determine

foreign policy decisions.⁸ What these scholars generally disregard, however, is the effect of other social structures on the behavior of states and statesmen.⁹

A foundational assertion of the rhetorical mobilization model is that *contending* structures—not just the anarchic structure of the international system—“limit and mold agents” and their decisions during war-threatening crises. While the structure of the international system inclines decision makers toward policies of competition and conflict, the *structure of modern warfare* imposes severe constraints on aggressive foreign policy. Whole societies fight modern wars, not just the prince and his or her hired guns. Indeed, it is one of the defining qualities of modern warfare that if the state wants war, it must first mobilize a stable public commitment to the enterprise or risk disaster. A second defining feature of modern warfare further complicates the task of mobilizing societies for war: the costs of war are more evident and more widely distributed than the benefits. As Immanuel Kant observed, war’s most devastating costs converge on the citizenry, not the elites, of warring states (Doyle 1986; Kant 1983 [1795]). Ordinary citizens, therefore, rationally embrace a *presumption against war*.

So while the structure of the international system may indeed produce incentives for leaders to pursue perceived national interests through the application of military force, the structure of modern warfare produces incentives for average citizens to resist their leaders’ calls to arms. For any state, but particularly for a democratic state that enjoys

⁸ Neorealism and its several variants are theories of international politics, not foreign policy decision making (Waltz 1979). But if states act in accordance with the logic of the international structure, then presumably leaders are making foreign policy decisions according to this logic.

⁹ Waltz’s (1979) definition of structure (and mine) is consistent with that of the *Annales* School, a group of 20th century French historians whose approach to historiography stresses structural influences on agency. For an excellent explanation of the *Annales* School understanding of structure see Roberts (1996, 134-159).

reasonable freedoms of expression and holds regular elections, this second social structure imposes a formidable barrier to executive autonomy on issues of war and peace.

How do societies resolve this structural tension between the interests of states *qua* states and the interests of the ordinary citizens upon whose collective action and sacrifice states depend during times of war? The rhetorical mobilization model theorizes a process by which the interests and preferences of domestic actors and, ultimately, war decisions themselves, are socially constructed. The decision-making process that I model takes into account both the systemic pressure on leaders “to think and act offensively” (Mearsheimer 2001, 32) and the constraining influence of every private citizen’s rational presumption against war.

Faced with an international threat, the executive constructs policy options and decides upon an *unconstrained policy preference*, a notional course of action that the leader would take in the absence of domestic considerations. As the executive’s unconstrained policy preference moves along the continuum from status quo to total war, it places an increased demand for positive societal contributions and sacrifice, increasing, therefore, the likelihood of polarizing politics. Although the executive may have statutory authority to pursue its policy preference regardless of domestic attitudes, an executive who initiates hostilities with a foreign power without attempting to revise an unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences assumes heightened risks of domestic sanction and will, therefore, perceive the decision-making environment as *constrained*.

Any leader confronted with a constrained decision-making environment, I argue, will take positive measures to neutralize that constraint. This is an abundantly rational response. Not only do leaders have access to privileged information regarding the nature

of international threats and the state's capacity to address those threats, but also they are held accountable for national security outcomes, by voters at the polls in democratic states and by the judgment of history regardless of regime type. No executive, therefore, will happily accept the public's unstudied opinion as authoritative and final.¹⁰ Instead, the executive will plan and execute a campaign—henceforth a *rhetorical mobilization campaign*—in order to construct a shared understanding of a given international event or crisis, articulate its preferred solution, mobilize domestic enthusiasm for collective action, and demobilize domestic opposition (Snow & Benford 1988, 198; see also Benford & Snow 2000). The purpose of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign is to revise the *pre-campaign* distribution of domestic preferences in favor of a more unified *pre-decisional* distribution in which the executive enjoys more decision-making autonomy.

I further argue that the efficacy of rhetorical mobilization campaigns is variable. Leveraging social movement scholarship—a decision I defend in the next chapter—I conceptualize a *resonance* variable comprised of two observable and measureable factors: *salience* and *credibility*. Adapting Snow & Benford's (2000) conceptualization of “collective action framing” for an international relations application, the salience of executive rhetoric is the degree to which leaders rhetorically link international events with the values, beliefs, and everyday concerns of their target audiences. The second factor, credibility, measures the consistency of executive rhetoric with readily observable facts as well as the foreign policy reputation of the leader relative to that of domestic opponents to the leader's policy preference.

¹⁰ Foyle (1999, 2004) argues that the degree to which US presidents are willing to base their foreign policy decisions on public opinion is variable based on individual perspectives on the proper role of public opinion in foreign policy deliberation. I discuss Foyle's argument in detail in Chapter 7.

Rhetorical mobilization campaigns with a high degree of resonance—that is, campaigns that are salient and credible—reduce the risk of domestic sanction, creating for leaders a *permissive* decision-making environment. With the typically constraining influence of domestic preferences neutralized, the executive is free to make its policy decision in a manner that approximates the unitary rational actor assumption that systemic models assert. Under these conditions, the likelihood that the executive will adopt its unconstrained preference as its ultimate policy choice is, all else equal, increased. If, however, the rhetorical mobilization campaign fails to resonate with the domestic audience, the likelihood that the executive's unconstrained preference will prevail as the ultimate policy decision is diminished. Under these circumstances, the executive is more likely to update its own preferences rather than commit its population to an unpopular war.

In sum, the executive, unlike most domestic actors, is in direct and daily contact with the anarchic international system. Not only does it interact with counterparts in other states, but also it is privy to sensitive information about the capabilities and intentions of interstate actors. The executive, therefore, has powerful incentives to fear other states, seize opportunities to enhance relative power, and attend to imbalances of power and perceived threats by all means available to it, including coercive diplomacy and military force. But there is a second structural force, generally ignored or assumed away by international relations theory, that shapes foreign policy decision making during war-threatening crises. The structure of modern warfare creates powerful incentives for leaders to seek alternatives to war. The rhetorical mobilization model argues that variation in the resonance of rhetorical mobilization campaigns—the rhetorical

campaigns that leaders construct to maximize their decision-making autonomy during war-threatening crises—explains which of these typically opposing social structures will most powerfully influence the executive’s ultimate war decision.

While efficacious rhetorical mobilization campaigns do not cause wars or make them inevitable, they do render wars politically and militarily feasible. Indeed, I maintain that a resonant rhetorical mobilization campaign is a *necessary* condition to make war a realistic policy option and, therefore, a profoundly important variable in determining the likelihood of war.

With the basic intuition of the rhetorical mobilization model in hand, I turn now to consider how other scholars have theorized the interaction between elite preferences, domestic attitudes, and foreign policy behavior. Given the complexity of this relationship, it should be unsurprising that this scholarship straddles multiple literatures and even multiple disciplines.

1.3 Literature Review

Any international political outcome is ultimately the result of discrete foreign policy decisions aggregating and interacting at the international level. Any attempt, therefore, to explain the causes of war, interstate cooperation, alliance formation, or any other international political outcome, must be grounded—explicitly or implicitly—in a theory of *why* and *how* leaders make those decisions. This is the aim of the foreign policy analysis research program. Scholarship in this field “takes as its starting point the dependent variable—a specific foreign-policy choice by an international actor—and then seeks to explain how this choice was arrived at by the agents (individuals, groups,

organizations) involved in the decisional process” (Stuart 2008, 576). Foreign policy analysis, in short, is distinguishable from other research programs by its set of dependent variables (foreign policy decisions or decision making processes) and its agent orientation (human decision makers) (Hudson 2005, 2013). What distinguishes various approaches *within* the foreign policy analysis subfield is the spectrum of independent and intervening variables that scholars draw upon to explain foreign policy decisions, decision processes, and decision makers (Hudson 2013, 4; Stuart 2008, 584-88).

Given these defining statements, I propose that the rhetorical mobilization model is best understood as a theory within the foreign policy analysis research agenda. The rhetorical mobilization model “takes as its starting point the dependent variable”: decisions by democratic leaders regarding the use military force (*war decisions*). Distinguishing the rhetorical mobilization model from other theories within this subfield is the principal explanatory variable I examine: the rhetorical campaigns that executives orchestrate to marshal domestic support for their unconstrained foreign policy preferences (*rhetorical mobilization campaigns*).

In making this argument, I will engage two distinct literatures. First, the rhetorical mobilization model draws from, and potentially contributes to, the political communication literature, the growing body of international relations scholarship that theorizes the influence of rhetoric, argumentation, issue framing, and strategic narrative in international politics. Since Thomas Risse’s (2000) provocative analysis of the role of political communication in determining international outcomes, there has been a conspicuous increase in international relations research focused on the explanatory power of rhetoric in all of its various constructions. While this body of literature has contributed

to our understanding of how foreign policy preferences emerge, few scholars have leveraged political communication theory to explain foreign policy decision making. By contrast, the public opinion literature, the second body of scholarship my dissertation engages, has been a mainstay in the field of foreign policy analysis since its emergence as a distinct research program in the late 1950s.¹¹ Yet the most basic question in public opinion research remains contested: does public opinion *matter* in the realm of international politics? Scholars have made—and continue to make—compelling cases on both sides of the debate. I turn to this debate in the next section and return to my review of the political communication literature in section 1.3.2.

1.3.1 Public Opinion: Does It Matter?

The rhetorical mobilization model makes two fundamental claims about the relationship between domestic attitudes and foreign policy decisions.¹² First, because modern war requires the efforts and sacrifice of ordinary citizens, the general public will seek to punish—by whatever means are available—leaders who commit them to fighting wars they deem to be illegitimate or imprudent. Second, because leaders recognize this, prevailing and anticipated domestic attitudes weigh heavily in war decisions. In short, the rhetorical mobilization model asserts that the policy preferences of ordinary citizens genuinely matter during war-threatening crises.

¹¹ In her excellent survey and meta-analysis, Hudson (2013) cites the following as the foundational works of the foreign policy analysis research program: Rosenau (1966), Snyder, Bruck, & Sapin (2002[1954], 75), and Sprout & Sprout (1957).

¹² I describe these as assumptions because, although my dissertation attempts to discover why and how public opinion influences war decisions, it does not investigate the more basic question “does public opinion matter.”

Extant theories on the influence of public opinion on foreign policy decision making would offer mixed reviews of these assumptions. While few scholars assert that the general public is utterly powerless vis-à-vis the state in matters of foreign policy, several have made compelling cases that public opinion is incapable of bearing the causal weight that the rhetorical mobilization model theorizes. This section reviews these arguments as well as those that assign a more prominent foreign policy role to public opinion. The rhetorical mobilization model does not attempt to refute either side of this debate. Instead, it argues that the influence of public opinion on war decisions is contingent on the resonance of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign. Public opinion, in other words, may be entirely epiphenomenal, as many scholars have asserted. A perfectly resonant rhetorical mobilization campaign would create a perfectly unified distribution of domestic preferences, eliminating public opinion as a relevant consideration in the executive's decision-making process. Likewise, if a rhetorical mobilization campaign perfectly fails to resonate, public opinion may be the decisive factor in the executive's war decision. As my empirical chapters suggest, the influence of public opinion on foreign policy decision making, in most cases, lies between these extremes.

1.3.1.1 Why Public Opinion Does *Not* Matter: The “Almond-Lippmann Thesis”

From the end of the Second World War through much of the Cold War, a consensus emerged that public opinion has no systematic influence on foreign policy decisions. The “Almond-Lippmann consensus,” as Holsti (1992, 2009) brands it, maintains that because

the average citizen pays scant attention to foreign policy, public opinion in matters of foreign affairs is fickle, unreasoned, and, most importantly for this inquiry, causally inert.

Although Holsti grants Walter Lippmann and Gabriel Almond naming rights, the logic of the Almond-Lippmann thesis enjoyed a privileged position in American political thought long before Lippmann's (1922) seminal polemic, *Public Opinion*. In *Federalist* 63, for example, James Madison rationalizes the decision to invest the Senate, rather than the House, with primary responsibility over foreign policy. The House, Madison argues, is too close to the people, and the people are too susceptible "to the infection of violent passions" (Madison 2009 [1788], 320). Likewise, Alexander Hamilton in *Federalist* 71 warns against the "unbounded complaisance in the Executive to the inclinations of the people," because the people are dangerously subject to "the wiles of parasites and sycophants" (Hamilton 2009 [1788], 362). Sounding a similar warning, Alexis de Tocqueville observes that democracies are disadvantaged in international politics because the "mass of the people can be seduced by their ignorance or their passions," creating an inherent "inclination that brings democracy to obey sentiment rather than reasoning in politics" (Tocqueville 2000 [1835], 219-20).

Holsti is correct, however, in crediting Lippmann and Almond with framing the prevailing conceptualization of foreign policy decision making as a top-down process in which public opinion has no causal relevance. Lippmann (1997 [1922]) argues that the public lacks the time and attention to concern itself with public policy, a tendency especially conspicuous in *foreign* policy, which may appear to the average citizen as having little relevance to his or her daily concerns. In language reminiscent of Hamilton, Lippmann warns that because of "the obscurity and complexity of the facts" the

American public lacks “adequate checks upon those who consciously strive to mislead” (Lippmann 1997 [1922], 76). Like Tocqueville, Almond rejects the democratic myth of an aggregate public wisdom. Because issues of foreign policy are “especially complex and remote,” the response of most Americans to a given foreign policy issue is better described as a *mood* than a coherent public opinion, “a superficial and fluctuating response,” lacking in “intellectual structure and factual content” (Almond 1977 [1950], 5, 53-4).

The Almond-Lippmann thesis acknowledges that there is such a thing as an “attentive public,” people who are “informed and interested in foreign policy” (1977 [1950], 138). But scholars in the Almond-Lippmann camp make consistently pessimistic estimates regarding the extent and political salience of the attentive public. Using a theater analogy, Rosenau (1961, 34) suggests that only a tiny percentage of the public enjoys seats that are decent enough for them to comprehend what’s happening on stage. Furthermore, the knowledge gap between the attentive public and ordinary citizens, observes Converse (1962, 212), is “simply staggering,” with “very little information ‘trickl[ing] down’ very far.” The result is that only a fraction of the public is capable of forming “high-quality” opinions, judgments that are “stable, consistent, informed, and connected to abstract principles and values” (Chong & Druckman 2007). Instead, the average citizen holds “a series of considerations” that lack coherence and are easily redirected (Zaller 1992, 308).

In addition to its analytic conclusions, the Almond-Lippmann tradition also contains an implicit (and sometimes explicit) normative claim. “The prevailing public opinion,” warns Lippmann (1955, 20), “has been destructively wrong at the critical

junctures.” Because of the public’s radical lack of both information and interest in foreign affairs, public opinion “can be easily led astray into areas of emotionalism and subjectivity,” making it a “poor and inadequate guide to national action” (Kennan 1951, 73). The foreign policy prescription, therefore, is for prudent leaders to be indifferent to the caprice of the public will in matters of foreign policy and rely purely on calculations of national interest (Almond 1960 [1950]; Converse 1962; Jacobs & Shapiro 1994; Kennan 1951; Lippmann 1955; Morgenthau 1960 [1948]; Mearsheimer 2001). “The rational requirements of good foreign policy,” asserts Morgenthau (1960 [1948], 147), demand that wise statesmen disregard the foreign policy opinions of the public “whose preferences are emotional rather than rational.” Statesmen are morally obliged, for the safety of the societies they lead, to stand above the “legalistic-moralistic” (Kennan 1951) constraints that govern ordinary lives and anchor foreign policy decisions upon “interest defined in terms of power” (Morgenthau 1960 [1948], 5).

Jacobs & Page (2005) offer compelling quantitative evidence that statesmen tend to heed Morgenthau’s counsel. In an excellent analysis that compares public opinion with other sources of domestic influence on foreign policy—business leaders, labor groups, and epistemic communities—the authors find, to their admitted surprise, that public opinion trailed the field by a substantial margin. Public opinion, they find, is a relatively *unimportant* factor for most foreign policy decision makers. “The very strong bivariate relationship between public opinion and the preferences of policy makers crumbled away almost completely” when analyzed in multivariate models (Jacobs & Page 2005, 121, emphasis added). Public opinion, the authors conclude, appears to exert

no “substantial, consistent influence on the makers of foreign policy” (Jacobs & Page 2005, 117).

A variation of the Almond-Lippmann thesis derives not from the executive’s readiness to ignore its fickle public but from its capacity to manipulate it. The malleable public explanation (Berkowitz, Bock & Fuccillo 1977; Cantril 1980; Cohen 1973; Herman & Chomsky 1988; Holsti & Rosenau 1984; Kull & Ramsay 2002; Lippmann 1922; Margolis & Mauser 1989; Mueller 1973, 1994; Schuessler 2010, 2015; Zaller 1992, 1994) maintains that the observed correlation between foreign policy decisions and public preferences results not from the general public’s capacity to influence policy decisions, but rather from the executive’s capacity to “manufacture consent” (Herman & Chomsky 1988). Having determined its policy preference, the executive’s subsequent engagement with the public is designed not to discover a compromise policy acceptable to both public and state interests, but to align the public’s preferences perfectly with its own. While leaders may indeed pay close attention to opinion polls, they do so *only* for the purpose of crafting campaigns to win public support for policy decisions *that have already been made* (Chong & Druckman 2007; Entman 2004; Jacobs & Shapiro 2000). In other words, the executive analyzes public opinion in order to *change* public opinion (Jacobs & Shapiro 2000, xiii). James Fallows, a speechwriter for President Carter, confirms this intuition. According to Fallows, the administration spent considerable time analyzing polling data, but not for the purpose of developing policies. They studied public opinion in order better to *sell* their policies. “Polling data are useful to the extent that they tell you how to do things you have already decided to do for other reasons” (quoted in Russett 1990, 108).

For most of the scholars cited above, manipulation is synonymous with “spin” or, pejoratively, as “propaganda.” Some scholars, however, have turned their attention to a seemingly more pernicious form of public manipulation in which the leader is cast not as Mark Antony working the Roman crowd, but as Iago whispering lies into Othello’s ear. Reiter (2012, writing as a critic of this argument) designates this line of inquiry the “deception thesis”: leaders deliberately deceive their populations in order to render tough-minded, interest-driven foreign policies palatable to the average citizen. Schuessler (2010), for example, argues that Roosevelt’s policies in the Atlantic and its oil embargo on Japan “should be understood as designed, at least in part, to invite an incident that could be used to justify hostilities” (see also Reiter & Schuessler 2010). Mearsheimer (2011) distinguishes this type of manipulation from “spinning” and “concealment.” He calls it, simply, “lying.” For Mearsheimer, however, the lies that leaders routinely tell their populations do not carry the same moral baggage typically associated with lying. Because the average citizen cannot be trusted to comprehend the complexities of power politics, lying is an indispensable tool of statecraft, perhaps even a moral duty for a responsible statesman (Mearsheimer 2011, 7). As in Plato’s *Republic* (Book 3, 414e–15c), leaders must tell an occasional “noble lie” for the health of the polis. While Mearsheimer acknowledges the potential dangers to society of duplicitous leaders, he is also sympathetic.

The rhetorical mobilization model accepts the assertion of the Almond-Lippmann thesis that the executive has both ample incentives to protect its national security policy-making autonomy from interference from domestic actors and significant informational advantages over its domestic audience to preserve that autonomy. However, the

proposition that public opinion is merely a dial that the executive can turn to any position favorable to its policy preference has critical implications for the rhetorical mobilization model. Indeed, it would render my principal explanatory variable, the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign, *invariable*, stuck forever at "perfectly resonant."

But a cursory examination of US foreign policy history suggests that the executive's readiness to ignore and capacity to manipulate the public is far from absolute. When "the great communicator" himself, Ronald Reagan, failed to win public support for his Central American policy preferences, he chose to revise his policy preference rather than disregard the public. And despite Roosevelt's clear-sighted recognition that Germany posed a threat to US interests that was unprecedented in the history of the Republic, the American public's resolute preference to stay out of European affairs constrained Roosevelt's ambitions to support more aggressively America's European allies. "Roosevelt's experience," explains Krebs (2015a, 132), "suggests that the US president's 'bully pulpit' is neither all-powerful, as students of presidential rhetoric sometimes suggest, nor uniformly powerless, as scholars of political communications conclude."

Several scholars have offered explanations for the observed limitations to elite manipulation. "The government of an objectively liberal state," writes Owen (1997, 46), "cannot wholly manipulate its public because it does not have a monopoly over the dissemination and discussion of information." Zaller (1992, 328-9) acknowledges that executives seek to control, suppress, or spin information to their benefit, but, because too much information exists within "expert communities" outside of government control, he concludes that the "top-down" model of opinion formation is "exaggerated" (see also

Zaller 1994). Similarly, Reiter (2012) argues that the many sources of potential exposure (particularly the political opposition, the professional military, and the free press) deter elected leaders from attempting to deceive their publics. Rottinghaus (2008) astutely observes that because leaders shape their “crafted talk” (Jacobs & Shapiro 2000) around themes and messages that will be acceptable to the public, the public has effectively limited the executive’s policy options. Additionally, several studies have suggested that an executive’s manipulative capacity is severely limited by its popularity (Andrade & Young 1996; Page, Shapiro & Dempsey 1987; Powlick & Katz 1998).

A final critique of the top-down literature is its insistence that the public is inattentive to foreign policy. Scholars who make this claim tend to conflate public inattention to the quotidian tasks of foreign relations (treaty negotiations, trade deals, etc.) with public inattention to the debate on the eve of war. The public may indeed be inattentive to the ordinary interstate interactions, decisions that are unlikely to touch their lives directly. But because war has the potential to affect every household, the American public pays *riveted* attention when their leader is bidding for its support for war (Downs 1957; Owen 1997). Nacos, Bloch-Elkon & Shapiro (2011) reveal that the Bush administration’s strategy for justifying the Iraq War actually relied on public *attentiveness* in order to keep the threat of terrorism in the public’s consciousness. Kull, Ramsay & Lewis (2003) demonstrate that major misperceptions held by the public on the eve of the Iraq War were positively correlated with attentiveness (not inattentiveness) to the news media. Even Jacobs & Page (2005, 118), who make perhaps the most persuasive case that public opinion is epiphenomenal to foreign policy decision making, qualify their conclusion by noting that public opinion “may play a substantial part in

highly salient questions of war and peace.” In short, while the executive may *prefer* the decision-making autonomy that an inattentive public would allow (Baum 2004), leaders who are intent on war are obliged to go public in order to secure the “capital (in the form of taxes) and labor (for armed forces, extraction of natural resources, and the industrial production) necessary for modern war” (Crawford 2002, 56). In short, unless an executive intends to wage war entirely by covert means, democratic leaders *invariably* make their war decisions in front of large and highly attentive domestic audiences with “skin in the game.”

1.3.1.2 Why (and How) Public Opinion Matters

Although the Almond-Lippmann thesis retains many adherents, the apparent correlation of the anti-war movement with US policy changes in the later years of the Vietnam War reenergized the debate over the capacity of public opinion to influence foreign policy (Aldrich et al 2006; Holsti 1992). Challenging the conception of an inattentive, irrational, and easily ignored and/or manipulated public is a growing consensus that public opinion in matters of foreign policy is far more rational and consistent than the Almond-Lippmann thesis suggests (e.g., Caspary 1970; Jentleson 1992; Jentleson & Britton 1998; Nincic 1992; Popkin 1994; Russett 1990; Shapiro & Page 1988; Sobel 1993; Verba et al 1967), that both the degree of public attentiveness to foreign policy and elite attentiveness to the opinions of the general public are subject to variation, (e.g., Jacobs & Page 2005; Page & Shapiro 1983), and that democratic publics are far more resistant to manipulation than the deception thesis implies (e.g., Owen, 1997; Reiter 2012; Zaller 1992). In short, the leading challenge to the Almond-Lippmann thesis

maintains that public opinion is neither nullified by elite indifference and manipulation nor deterministic of foreign policy. Rather, “public opinion and policy are thought to interact in a manner that lies somewhere between these extremes” (Foyle 1999, 8).

How does public opinion exert its influence? Unsurprisingly, scholars have found that the ability of democratic publics to punish their leaders at the polls is a critical factor. Gelpi, Reifler & Feaver (2007) found strong evidence that the electorate’s “retrospective judgment” regarding the prudence of the Iraq War figured prominently in voter choice. Hurwitz & Peffley (1987) discovered a similar correlation between retrospective judgments of foreign policy and Reagan’s approval ratings. While some leaders may be more tolerant than others of *short-term* fluctuations in approval (Foyle 1999), the expectation that the electorate will judge foreign policy decisions retrospectively demands that any democratic leader hoping to maintain power must take into account “anticipated future opinions” (Zaller 1994, 251) or “latent public opinion” (Baum & Potter 2008, 55) when considering foreign policy options.

Many scholars who contend that public opinion can or should inform foreign policy choices cite Key’s (1961) metaphor that public opinion acts as a system of dikes that channels public policy (e.g. Kusnitz 1984; Powlick 1991; Powlick & Katz 1998; Risse-Kappen 1991; Russett 1990; Sobel 1993). The metaphor suggests that while policy is fluid, public opinion—the “system of dikes”—is constant, a set of facts that set structural limits on executive autonomy. “Public opinion sets broad limits of constraint,” argues Russett (1990, 110), identifying a range of policies in which decision makers can choose, and in which they must choose if they are not to face rejection in the voting booths.”

Is Key's metaphor useful? Do leaders simply accept the laws of fluid dynamics and work within the boundaries that public opinion creates? Or, when the public opinion threatens to deny them their policy preferences, will they attempt to restructure or disable the metaphoric dikes? Mueller (1973) was among the first to theorize variability of public influence on foreign policy decisions not only from issue to issue, but also variation in public influence on a single issue from t_1 to t_2 . Mueller introduces two hypotheses that continue to attract scholarly attention. The "casualties hypothesis" (Burk 1999) claims that public support for war is negatively correlated with of casualties (contributors and critics include Berinsky 2007; Gartner 2008; Gelpi, Feaver & Reifler 2005; Kull & Ramsay 2001; Slantchev 2004). The "rally-'round-the-flag effect," explains variation in public support for war as a product of the public's tendency to bandwagon with their leaders in the early days of a conflict, giving the executive significant short-term autonomy (contributors and critics include Baum & Groeling 2010; Baum and Potter 2008; Oneal, Lian, & Joyner 1996; Stoll 1984).

The casualties hypothesis and rally-'round-the-flag effect share with the rhetorical mobilization model two important intuitions: 1) that public support for the use of force is variable, and 2) that variation in public support influences national security decisions, either by delimiting the policy options that are politically feasible for a decision maker or by granting the leader a mandate for aggressive action. There is, however, an important difference. Like most explanations for public attitudes towards war, these theories base their analyses on observations taken *after* the decision to go to war has been made. The rhetorical mobilization model, by contrast, focuses entirely on that discrete and undertheorized period between the executive's recognition of a threat and the moment of

policy decision—a period during which neither leader nor public can count bodies or observe battlefield trends. Few scholars theorize the influence of public opinion during the hours, months, or even years in which the executive deliberates transitioning the state from peace to war. The remainder of this section considers two notable exceptions that suggest alternative explanations to the rhetorical mobilization model. I revisit these arguments in Chapter 7.

Jentleson (1992) and Jentleson & Britton (1998) introduce a systemic-level variable—the “principal political objective” of the military intervention under consideration—to explain variation in a leader’s capacity to mobilize domestic support for war. The authors conclude that the American public is likely to support forceful intervention if the objective is to coerce “foreign policy restraint” of an adversary who has taken aggressive actions against the US or an ally. If, however, the purpose of a forceful intervention is to coerce “internal political change” in a target state or forcefully respond to a humanitarian crisis, the public is leery.¹³ “Americans do appear to have a much more pragmatic sense of strategy than they are given credit for—an approach to the world that is actually ‘pretty prudent’ when it comes to the use of military force” (Jentleson 1992, 71). Drezner (2008) makes a similar claim. His analysis of Pew, Council of Foreign Relations, and Chicago Council of Global Affairs polling data from 2004 casts doubt on the conventional wisdom that the public is “unable to digest the realist logic of a dispassionate, hard-headed national interest” (Drezner 2008, 53). Americans, he finds, will generally support the use of force for “realist foreign policy objectives” such as defense of the homeland or securing critical resources (Drezner 2008,

¹³ Jentleson 1992 and Jentleson & Britton 1998 reach the same basic findings. The primary differences are inclusion of a third category of political objective (humanitarian intervention) and some additional quantitative testing.

63). They have little appetite, however, for “legalistic-moralistic” interventions to promote democracy or defend human rights (see also Oneal, Lian & Joyner 1996).

Like Jentleson (1992), Jentleson & Britton (1998), and Drezner (2008), Foyle (1999) also theorizes the interaction between the executive and the domestic audience during the period between preference formation and policy decision. Foyle’s explanation for variation in domestic influence over decisions to employ force turns to individual-level analysis. He argues that the degree to which public opinion influences a leader’s foreign policy decision making depends the leader’s beliefs regarding the proper role of public opinion in foreign policy. For presidents who believe that it is desirable and/or necessary for foreign policy to reflect the public’s will, public opinion constrains decision-making autonomy. Those who do not are more likely to behave in a manner more consistent with the Almond-Lippmann thesis.

To summarize, the Almond-Lippmann thesis, which faced few theoretical challenges for nearly 50 years, gave international relations scholars an excellent reason to ignore public opinion. But mounting evidence that leaders, cognizant of the risks of pursuing labor and capital-intensive foreign policy objectives (like war) without public support, do *not* ignore public opinion has prompted scholars to question long-held assumptions. The influence of public opinion on foreign policy decision making, for these scholars, is a *variable* with potentially profound implications for international political outcomes.

In addition to the public opinion literature, there is a second body of scholarship that my dissertation engages. The rhetorical mobilization model seeks to explain variation in the influence of domestic opinion on foreign policy decisions by examining

variation in executive rhetoric. In making this argument, I join a growing number of scholars who theorize the role of rhetoric, argumentation, and persuasion in international politics. I will briefly survey this emerging research agenda and highlight the theoretical gaps that the rhetorical mobilization model attempts to fill.

1.3.2 Political Communication: Arguing, Bargaining, Frames, and Narratives

Constructivists agree with rationalists that political actors act purposively in the world to satisfy their perceived interests. Rather than accepting interests as exogenous and fixed, however, the constructivist approach to international politics seeks to explain how interests and identities are acquired and the conditions under which they may change (Fearon & Wendt 2002; Finnemore & Sikkink 2001; Hopf 1998; Hurd 2008; Wendt 1999). Prominent explanations for the construction and reconstruction of interests, identities, and preferences have theorized the influence of global and local norms (e.g., Finnemore 1996; Finnemore & Sikkink 1998), ideational diffusion and institutionalization (e.g., Checkel 2001; Legro 2000), and culture and national identity (e.g., Barnett 1999; Cruz 2000; Mattern 2001). The family of explanations that anchors my research examines *discourse* as a mechanism of social construction.

There has been significant debate among scholars of political communication regarding the relationship between two types of speech acts commonly employed by interlocutors engaged in a discursive process: arguing and bargaining. Most scholars agree, following Habermas (1984, 1987), that arguing and bargaining occupy distinct modes of action (communicative action and strategic action), ontologies (holism and

individualism), and logics (the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences) (Muller 2004, 396).

In communicative action, political actors behave in accordance with the logic of appropriateness. Actors *argue* “to persuade others to see the world in a particular way and to act in accordance with the conclusion that follows from the argument” (Crawford 2002, 14). But the defining telos of communicative action is not to “win”; it is to find consensus. Actor A may enter into an argument hoping to persuade actor B, but both are “open to being persuaded by the better argument” (Muller 2004, 397; Risse 2000, 7).

Communicative action pays particular attention to *persuasion*, speech-acts that prompt interlocutors “to update and revise their interests, preferences, and perceptions of a given situation” (Risse 2000, 7). Crawford (2002, 100-01), for example, contends that the use of ethical arguments “denormalized” the dominant norms that had long justified European colonial policies. Finnemore (2003) describes how, in the early 20th century, legal scholars from weak Latin American states persuaded the diplomatic corps of powerful European states to revise their beliefs regarding what constituted appropriate use of military force. Observing that Jordanian behavior 1988-1998 was inconsistent with realist predictions, Lynch (1999, 255) concludes that state identities and interests “become subject to change at those points when an open public sphere permits the appearance of public deliberation oriented toward questioning consensus norms.” For each of these scholars, discourse is the mechanism that renders cooperative social and political action possible. Interlocutors attempt to discover a reasoned consensus by making and defending arguments.

Contrasting this is strategic action. Political actors, in accordance with the logic of consequences, use language instrumentally to advance fixed interests and preferences. Actors *bargain* to achieve the best possible deal for themselves, exchanging “demands backed by credible promises, threats, or exit opportunities” (Risse 2000, 8). Actor A may compromise or even surrender her position altogether, but she has not been *persuaded* by actor B’s argument, nor did she enter into communications with B open to the *possibility* of persuasion. Krebs & Jackson (2007, 42), for example, argue that political actors prevail “not by persuading one’s opponents of the rectitude of one’s stance, but by denying them the rhetorical materials out of which to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal.” Krebs, in his exchange with Kaufmann (Krebs & Kaufmann 2005, 200-201) cites the Bush administration’s success in selling the Iraq War as an example of “rhetorical coercion,” rhetorically depriving the opposition of “winning arguments, of socially sustainable avenues of reply.” At the level of interstate discourse, Goddard (2009) argues that Prussia’s rhetorical strategy to justify its expansion into Danish-held Schleswig-Holstein undermined would-be counter-balancing coalitions by setting “rhetorical traps,” representing their intentions as consistent with the norms and identities of potential counter-balancers. Payne (2001, 39, 46) suggests that the power disparities and information asymmetries that are inevitable in any discursive process create a “communicative environment” that is “neither grounded in, nor creative of, genuinely shared social understandings.” For Payne and the other scholars I have highlighted here, rhetoric is coercion, not a Habermasian search for a shared truth between interlocutors.

Because arguing and bargaining are ontological opposites, some scholars suggest that combining these two approaches risks theoretical incoherence (e.g., Holzinger 2001;

Dessler & Owen 2005). Muller (2004) dismisses the ontological distinction. Following Kratochwil (1989), Muller argues that both types of speech acts, arguing and bargaining, are ultimately rule-governed speech acts, and are, therefore, logically and ontologically compatible. Risse (2000, 9) acknowledges their logical and ontological distinctiveness, but attempts to soften the border of the arguing-bargaining frontier by introducing a third mode of action that lies on a continuum between strategic and communicative action. *Rhetorical action*, according to Risse, is a form of communication in which actor A—who is *not* prepared to be persuaded—seeks to persuade her target audience(s) “that they should change their views of the world, their normative beliefs, their preferences, and even their identities” in accordance with policy preferences or interpretations of a given situation (Risse 2000, 9). What makes this mode different from strategic action is actor A’s assumption that at least one segment of the target audience is, consistent with communicative action, prepared to be convinced (either by actor A or actor A’s opponents).

Risse’s rhetorical action is a useful contribution. It makes room for two familiar types of speech acts, *framing* and *strategic narrative*, which do not fit comfortably under either of Habermas’s other modes of action (communicative and strategic). It is also particularly important for the rhetorical mobilization model. The scholarship on frames and strategic narratives provides a theoretical bridge from the political communication literature to the public opinion literature summarized above. My dissertation attempts to reinforce that bridge.

A frame for sociologist Erving Goffman (1974, 21)—widely credited with introducing the concept to the social science lexicon—is a “schemata of interpretation”

that enables individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” significant events within their own lives as well as within the narrative of their broader communities. Events in themselves have no objective political meaning, “but rather are made meaningful and intelligible by actors who locate them within an overarching narrative” (Barnett 1999, 13; see also Krebs 2015a, 2015b). Frames, in short, “fix meaning to events” (Barnett 1999, 9). They “shape how people understand the world and, based on this understanding, what is perceived to be appropriate action” (Autesserre 2009, 254).

But frames are not objective descriptions. Political actors employ frames *strategically* to link their preferences with collective identity and situate their vision for action within the constructed (or reconstructed) narrative of the collective. Framing involves “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, 5; see also Crawford 2009). While frames do not *cause* political outcomes, they do “have real effects in the world” by placing “boundaries around what can meaningfully be said and understood” about a given event or situation (Hodges 2011, 5). In an international relations context, scholars have turned to frame analysis to explain the influence of international organizations (Barnett & Finnemore 2004), nuclear strategies (Eden 2004), the mutual influence of news media and foreign policy decision makers (Entman 2004), human rights advocacy (Keck & Sikkink 1998), and humanitarian intervention (Shaw 2007).

Strategic narrative is a similar but broader concept. Like frames, political actors fashion strategic narratives to shape the behavior and policy preferences of domestic and international audiences in order to advance their preferred policies (Miskimmon,

O'Loughlin & Roselle 2013). Also like frames, strategic narratives are leveraged as instruments of power and, consistent with Risse's rhetorical action, assume at least one persuadable audience. But unlike frames, narratives contain a temporal quality (Barnett 1999; Miskimmon et al 2013). They move beyond a specific event or issue and situate that event or issue in a coherent story about where the nation has been and where it should be going (Barrett 1999, 8; see also Campbell 1992, 1993; Edelman 1988; Miskimmon et al 2013; Ruggie 1995). Hodges (2011, 63), for example, explains that the Democrats acquiesced to the Bush administration's preference for regime change in Iraq not because they were persuaded by the administration's keen analysis, but because the administration's "war on terror" narrative depicting Iraq as one of many fronts America's response to the 9/11 "constructed a version of sociopolitical reality that even opponents of the Bush administration's policy [had to] live within." For Krebs (2015a, 2015b), it was Roosevelt's failure to leverage the "narrative mode" of discourse, that is, to engage in "storytelling," that prevented the US from intervening "as early or as openly as Roosevelt would have liked in the European crisis."

The political communication literature offers insights that are important for the rhetorical mobilization model. It suggests, first, that leaders neither treat domestic preferences as fixed nor do they perceive themselves as mere servants to domestic preferences. Leaders act strategically to shape domestic preferences by constructing frames and narratives that promote their own policy preferences and deny their opposition "socially sustainable" platforms from which to fashion alternative frames and narratives (Krebs & Jackson 2007, 42; Krebs & Kaufmann 2005, 201). This idea distinguishes frames and strategic narratives from argumentation (and the communicative

mode of social action). What distinguishes frames and narratives from bargaining (and the strategic mode of social action) is that when leaders construct their frames and narratives, they assume, per Risse's rhetorical mode of social action, that at least one target audience—the public in the case of the rhetorical mobilization model—is prepared to be persuaded, “to have their understanding of the situation challenged” (Risse 2000).

Being prepared to be persuaded and actually being persuaded are, of course, distinct conditions. Frames and narratives are rarely uncontested, never unmediated, and, contrary to some Almond-Lippmann adherents, never completely under the control of the framers and storytellers who construct them. Why do some frames and narratives dominate? Why do some fall flat? The political communication literature has not satisfactorily addressed these questions. This is the primary ambition of my dissertation.

1.4 Concluding Thoughts and the Way Ahead

The field of international relations tends to treat talk as “cheap,” wan utterances that cost the sender nothing and therefore communicate little (see Morrow 1994). But the scholars who make this claim are concerned with communications between sovereign states, where incentives to misrepresent and structural barriers to making credible commitments stand tragically in the way of finding rational alternatives to international conflict. But international relations theory has paid little attention to a different type of talk: domestic discourse. E. H. Carr, one of the pioneers of international relations as a distinct discipline, recognized at the dawn of the Second World War that this genre of rhetoric could profoundly influence international outcomes. “Rhetoric,” he writes, “has a long and honoured record in the annals of statesmanship.” For Carr, calculating state power

simply by taking inventories of military hardware or auditing national wealth and natural resources constitutes a “mere counting of heads.” The raw materials that make war possible have no functional meaning until a statesman, through the “art of persuasion,” can extract these resources from domestic society and place them in the service of the state (Carr 1946, 132).

I argue, with Carr and others, that the warfighting capacity of a democratic state is latent; it must be rhetorically summoned into existence whenever war is imminent. Faced with a war-threatening crisis, democratic leaders orchestrate rhetorical mobilization campaigns to transform “national power,” the total material and human resources of a nation, into “state power,” the material and human resources that are actually available to the government for the pursuit of its foreign policy objectives (Zakaria 1998, 38). Rhetorical campaigns that resonate with domestic audiences render military force feasible and coercive diplomacy credible. When, however, a rhetorical campaign fails to resonate with the public or cow domestic opposition, the state’s *actual* warfighting capacity falls short of its unconstrained potential, coercive threats appear vapid, and options for the military element of national power are strictly narrowed.

While the anarchic structure of the international system may prompt leaders to prefer aggressive policies, it is not the international structure that sends troops to fight on foreign battlefields. Leaders initiate wars and whole societies fight them. It is, and always has been, the speech act of a leader—an emperor, a Kaiser, a president—directing one people to visit violence upon another people that demarcates and distinguishes a state of nominal peace from a condition we would recognize as war. Before any combatants can cross swords as a legitimate act of state violence, a leader intent on war must first

“cry havoc,” and, as this dissertation will argue, *how* he or she does so, matters.¹⁴ In this context, talk is not cheap at all. It is the mechanism that renders cooperative social action, like war, possible (Johnson 1993, 75). It is for this reason that Carr characterizes rhetorical power—“the power over opinion”—as “the third form of power...not less essential for political purposes than military and economic power” (Carr 1946, 132).

In the following chapter I explicate my argument. I start by revisiting the macro-structures that dispose distinct domestic actors to hold particular interests and preferences during war-threatening crises and then describe the process by which interests, preferences, and, ultimately, war decisions are constructed (or reconstructed) through rhetoric. Chapter 2 will pay particularly close attention to conceptualizing the independent variable of primary interest to my analysis: rhetorical mobilization campaigns. It will discuss in detail the measures of variation in the resonance of rhetorical mobilization that I have adapted from social movement scholarship for an international relations application. From these I will derive testable hypotheses.

In Chapters 3 through 6 I analyze two war-threatening crises in US foreign policy history to test the descriptive and explanatory power of the rhetorical mobilization model. The first case I consider is the Bush administration’s successful attempt to marshal domestic support for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This is a crucial case because of the administration’s overwhelming success despite the ambiguous threat. Chapter 3 employs process-tracing techniques to defend the causal logic I propose. In Chapter 4, I conduct a content analysis of the compendium of presidential speeches delivered during the Bush

¹⁴ The allusion, from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (Act 3, Scene 1), is intended to suggest that some form of utterance from a recognized authority (in Shakespeare’s case Julius Caesar’s metaphoric cry of “Havoc”) is always necessary to translate a leader’s preference to unleash (“let slip”) the destructive power of military force (“the dogs of war”) into actual military action.

administration's to assess the resonance of the Bush administration's rhetorical campaign. Next I analyze Roosevelt administration rhetoric following the German blitzkrieg of spring 1940, when Roosevelt recognized the urgent necessity for US intervention in the Second World War. As discussed above, I offer this case because of the unlikely outcome given the enormity and imminence of the German threat. As with the Iraq case, I divide my analysis into a process tracing effort (Chapter 5) and a content analysis to measure the resonance of Roosevelt's rhetorical mobilization campaign (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 concludes my dissertation with a cross-case analysis of my two cases, an evaluation of alternative explanations, a summary of my findings, and a discussion of implications for international relations scholars.

Chapter 2

The Rhetorical Mobilization Model

This chapter presents a model of executive decision-making during war-threatening crises that understands war decisions in democratic states as social constructions. The rhetorical mobilization model describes the process that links a democratic executive's policy preference for the use of force, or for aggressive actions that make war likely, with an actual policy decision during a war-threatening crisis. The engine of this process is a mediated exchange of information between the executive, domestic opponents to the executive's policy preference, and the general public that predictably occurs during the distinct period of time between the executive's recognition of an international threat or opportunity and the moment of policy choice. The rhetorical mobilization process, I argue, forms and, potentially, re-forms the foreign policy preferences of each of these domestic actors—including the executive—and determines the degree to which the executive's war decision, the policy choice that is ultimately implemented, resembles its unconstrained policy preference, the notional policy choice the executive would have made in the absence of domestic influences.

I begin this chapter by describing and operationalizing executive war decisions, the dependent variable of my analysis. Next I discuss the two social structures—the structure of the international system and the structure of modern warfare—that shape actor preferences and impinge on the decision-making autonomy of all leaders, democratic or not, during war-threatening crises. I pay particular attention to the latter structure, which, in my estimation, is a systemic force that students of international conflict generally fail to account for. Next, after detailing the causal logic of the overall

rhetorical mobilization process, I turn to the primary explanatory variable of the dissertation: rhetorical mobilization campaigns. First I offer a definition to distinguish this species of discourse from other forms of political communication. I then propose a strategy for measuring and comparing variation in the efficacy of rhetorical mobilization campaigns. Having fully specified the rhetorical mobilization model, I then deduce hypotheses that I will test in the case studies that follow (Chapters 3-6).

2.1 The Outcome Variable: Executive War Decisions

The distinguishing characteristic of foreign policy analysis research program is the dependent variable upon which it focuses: a foreign policy decision (Stuart 2008, 576). The rhetorical mobilization model “takes as its starting point” a specific type of foreign policy decision: executive war decisions.

This variable warrants a two-part explanation. First, for the purpose of this project, the *executive* is a composite noun that includes the chief executive of a democratic state (a president or prime minister), plus her or his principal national security advisers. For ease of syntactical operation, I will treat the executive as singular and gender-neutral, an “it” rather than a “he,” “she,” or “they.” I will also use the term administration to refer to US presidents and their national security teams. Although a president’s administration is typically understood more broadly, I use this term for readability; “the Roosevelt executive” is awkward.

The composition of a leader’s national security team is determined, to some extent, by the statutory responsibilities of certain appointed positions within government. A typical national security team for a US president, for example, includes the Secretaries

of State and Defense, a National Security Adviser (since the Nixon administration), and key military advisers, primarily the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the geographic combatant commander of the region in question. But a leader's personal preferences, loyalties, and trust-bonds also matter. One could argue, for example, that Nixon relied on a one-man national security team: Henry Kissinger. George W. Bush, on the other hand, defined his national security team in unusually broad terms. Along with the typical players, Bush relied heavily on his Vice President and granted an atypical degree of influence to his Deputy Secretary of Defense and his closest political advisers (McClellan 2008; Packer 2005; Woodward 2004).

It is, of course, a significant abstraction to treat a team of diverse and large personalities as a unitary actor. Policy preferences during a war-threatening crisis are likely to diverge dramatically.¹⁵ However, at the moment of a war decision, the point at which my dependent variable takes on its value, the executive behaves *as if* it were a unitary actor; dissenting opinions are generally suppressed. If there are members of the executive who choose not to suppress their dissenting opinions, they are typically disaffiliated, voluntarily or otherwise. Bush's Secretary of State, Colin Powell, was hardly an enthusiastic supporter of forcible regime change in Iraq. Yet there was little doubt in the administration that Powell would "deliver his department" (Miller, interview with the author on 27 April 2015). Indeed, he did much more than that. Powell's

¹⁵ Allison and Zelikow's (1999) account of the Cuban Missile Crisis offers an unparalleled insight into how a national security team can hold radically different positions yet appear relatively univocal at the moment of decision. In his analysis of administration decision-making during the Iraq War, Woodward (2004, 155) observes, "Rarely, however, had there been such deep division within a national security team as between Cheney and Powell. Each had a fundamentally different definition of what was possible, and what was necessary"

credibility and public support for the administration's policy preference delivered many undecided voters and members of Congress.

This brings me to the second part of the definition of my outcome variable. I define a *war decision* as the culminating event of a policy planning process of undefined duration. The starting point of this process is the moment when the executive, in response to a given set of international threats or opportunities, settles on a policy preference that involves the overt use of military force. It concludes—after hours, days, months, or even years—with an observable policy outcome: either a decision to implement the executive's policy preference for the use of force or for aggressive actions that increase the likelihood of war, or a decision to amend or abandon that preference.

Treating this process as a discrete package of time with distinct start and stop dates is also an abstraction. In some cases the planning process culminating in a war decision is demarcated by easily distinguishable events. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, we can confidently estimate the point at which the executive recognized the imperative to prepare the nation for the possibility of war, as well as the point that Kennedy rendered his war decision: the naval blockade (or “quarantine”). These demarcations are not always as obvious. For example, Richard Haass, a senior State Department official during the lead up to the Iraq War, described the administration's deliberation and ultimate war decision as more of “an accretion” than a distinct event (quoted in Packer 2005, 45). But despite the imprecision of making point estimates of start dates and decision points, this abstraction is theoretically useful for setting temporal boundary conditions on the behaviors this dissertation seeks to analyze.

Rather than treating a war decision as a discrete variable—war or no war—I conceptualize variation on the dependent variable as a ratio of the executive’s policy preference to the ultimate policy outcome. The denominator is the executive’s unconstrained policy preference that varies along a continuum from a decision to apply no military force at all (0), to a decision that commits the state to total war (1). The executive’s ultimate policy choice, which also varies from status quo to total war, is in the numerator. Although I do not actually assign numerical values to war decisions, the idea of a ratio is conceptually useful for this analysis. For a war decision that is indistinguishable from the executive’s unconstrained policy preference, the value of the war decision variable would approach 1. If, however, the executive decides to amend its preference by altering, for example, its timing, strategy, or force composition, then the war decision variable would incrementally decrease. If the executive chooses to abandon its preference altogether, the conceptual ratio of war decision to unconstrained policy preference would approach 0.

2.2 Structural Limits to Executive Decision-making Autonomy

Gideon Rose (1998, 168) proposes that future research in the field of foreign policy analysis should focus on specifying, “the ways that intervening unit-level variables can deflect foreign policy from what pure structural theorists might predict.” Implicit in Rose’s counsel is a substantial task. In order to detect that a given unit-level variable—like domestic opinion or executive rhetoric—has somehow deflected foreign policy from its structurally determined vector, an analyst studying foreign policy decision making must first explicate the structural forces at work at the moment of foreign policy decision.

This is the purpose of this section. I argue that during war-threatening crises there are two structural forces that tend to exert *opposing* influences on executive war decisions. The structure of the international system creates incentives for international competition and conflict. The structure of modern warfare tends to constrain executives from escalating competition and conflict to the level of interstate violence. Statesmen can—and routinely do—take positive measures to diminish the influence of both of these structures on their foreign policy options. But, following Waltz (1979) and Roberts (1996), structures are, by definition, “stable elements of society” (Roberts 1996, 138) that establish “a set of constraining conditions” that “limit and mold agents and agencies” (Waltz 1979, 73-74). The causal arrow, in other words, tends to point from structure to event. While structures are not immune to human agency, they are resistant (Roberts 1996, 138). Since no state can succeed perfectly in nullifying their effects, both of these structures warrant the attention of foreign policy analysts.

It is widely acknowledged—and not disputed here—that the anarchic structure of the international system creates incentives for international competition and conflict (Copeland 2000; Jervis 1978; Labs 1997; Layne 2002; Mearsheimer 2001; Van Evera 1998). The structure of the international system by no means drives states inexorably toward war. Indeed, the tendency for states to balance against disparities in material power tends to make war prohibitively risky (Waltz 1979). States that fail to temper expansionist policy preferences invite counterbalancing coalitions and risk costly wars and overseas “quagmires” (Snyder 1991). But these restraints on interstate violence are imperfect. Without an overarching power to make and enforce international agreements and protect the weak from the powerful, leaders can never be certain about the material

capabilities or intentions of other states (see esp. Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1979). This creates a powerful incentive for executives to fear other states, seize opportunities to enhance relative power, and attend to imbalances of power and perceived threats by all available means, including coercive diplomacy and military force (Mearsheimer 2001).

For many scholars, this structure is sufficient to predict, indeed determine, executive decision making.¹⁶ The executive, more than any other domestic actor, interacts directly with the anarchic international system. Not only is the executive in immediate contact with its counterparts in other states, but it also is privy to sensitive information about the capacity and intent of other states to do harm, as well as the state's own capacity to protect itself from international threats and project its power across international borders. Expert communities and large bureaucracies work ceaselessly to synthesize and interpret for the executive the constant stream of information regarding international affairs. Furthermore, the executive, especially the chief executive, is held ultimately accountable for its conduct of foreign policy. The "legacy" of a chief executive is an indelible record that is more often linked to a leader's foreign policy triumphs and blunders than to any domestic accomplishments. Finally, while a leader's interests are radically more complex than merely maintaining power, holding power is instrumental to achieving any other objectives and is, therefore, a primitive interest (Milner 1997). Several studies suggest that while a *successful* war may enhance a leader's hold on power (Chapman & Reiter 2004; Chiozza & Goemans 2011; Curran, Schubert, & Stewart 2002; Lian & O'Neal 1993; Mueller 1973), *unsuccessful* wars may

¹⁶ Neorealism and its several variants are theories of international politics, not foreign policy decision-making (Waltz 1979). But if states act in accordance with the logic of the international structure, then presumably leaders are making foreign policy decisions according to this logic.

be less detrimental to a leader's tenure than conventional wisdom suggests (Chiozza & Goemans 2004; Debs & Goemans 2010), especially in democratic states.

As a result of all these factors, the executive may, during times of international crisis, perceive—correctly or not—much to gain from competition and conflict while the risks to the state and the executive's hold on power are, arguably, manageable.

Conflictual incentives may be checked or mitigated by counterbalancing coalitions (Waltz 1979), information-sharing international institutions (Keohane 1984; Krasner 1983), and interstate interaction and practice (Ruggie 1998; Wendt 1992, 1999).

However, these mitigating factors cannot eliminate these incentives entirely. Given the logic of anarchy, structural incentives toward competition and conflict are, essentially, constants in international politics.

But the competitive and conflictual international system does not tell the entire structural story. There is a second structural force, generally ignored by international relations theory, that tends to create incentives for leaders to seek alternatives to war during war-threatening crises: the structure of modern warfare. There are two features of modern, industrialized warfare that interact to create “a set of constraining conditions” (Waltz 1979, 73) on executive autonomy. First, modern war demands significant, and sometimes total, societal mobilization. When France mobilized its population for the French Revolutionary Wars, it fundamentally transformed warfare. France's mass, popular army was not only larger than its competitors, but also, because of its capacity to replace casualties with a ready supply of motivated recruits who “arrive with a certain willingness to become soldiers, a certain educability, and a certain commitment to the outcome of the battle,” was capable of maintaining combat effectiveness over prolonged,

bloody campaigns (Posen 1993, 83; see also Schweller 2009). France's crushing victories, particularly under Napoleon, forced other great powers to make similar reforms or risk annihilation.

This profound transformation permanently changed the relationship between the state and its citizens. If the former wants war, it must mobilize the latter or risk political and military disaster. "Variation in mobilization and extractive capacity of great powers vis-à-vis their domestic societies" has since become a critical (and often overlooked) determinant of relative power (Schweller 2009, 228). Like the structure of the international system, the structure of modern warfare affected this profound and fundamental change in state behavior "through socialization of the actors and through competition among them" (Waltz 1979, 74).

The need to mobilize societies for war acts as a constraining influence on leaders during war-threatening crises primarily because of a second feature of modern warfare: the material *costs* of war are more widely distributed in society and more apparent than the material *benefits*. War affects "functionally differentiated" actors within domestic society differently, generating heterogeneous interests and, from these, heterogeneous policy preferences (Moravcsik 2008, 236).¹⁷ The prospect of interstate war, therefore, will tend to cause the foreign policy consensus in a state to splinter. There are some in society who can rationally anticipate an approaching war with ex ante expectations of a material payoff. The executive who prosecutes a successful war stands to benefit politically in the present and, in the future, to secure a favorable judgment from history. Although war typically disrupts economies, business elites in some industries,

¹⁷ Among the most effective and energetic anti-war movements in the US in the late 1930s and early 1940s were comprised of the members of American society who were likely to pay the highest cost in the event of war: college-age men and the mothers of college-age men. See Olson 2013.

particularly those that profit from defense spending, may also expect to benefit materially if the state chooses war. The “merchants of death” explanation for international conflict that became prominent after the First World War maintains that the potential for war profits is so strong that companies like Boeing, Northrop Grumman, and Blackwater will use whatever political leverage they have to nudge the state toward war (Engelbrecht 1934). As Eisenhower was leaving office in 1961 he warned the public of the growing power of this small segment of society that he labeled the “military-industrial complex.”

For the vast majority, however, *ex ante* expectations of realizing material benefits from war are unjustified. Indeed, ordinary citizens—upon whose support a government intent on war depends—face the prospect of substantial material costs as war approaches. Even before the emergence of mass popular armies, the advent of total war, and the development of weapons capable of leveling cities, Immanuel Kant recognized that in any society it is the ordinary citizen, not the leader, who bears the preponderance of war’s burdens. For the prince, Kant tells us, declaring war is the “easiest thing in the world to do.” War “does not affect his tables, his hunt, his places of pleasure, his court festivals, and so on” (Kant 1983 [1795], 113). But when governments commit their states to war they commit their populations and those of the rival state (or states) to a degree of risk that is, in most cases, radically disproportionate to any material gain the average citizen should rationally expect to realize. Since Kant penned these observations, states have industrialized and democratized their warfighting capacities, making Kant’s analysis more relevant than ever. The tools, tactics, and techniques of modern warfare ensure that it is the general populations of warring states—not the political leadership or even the senior ranks of the military—that are subject to war’s severest harms. They are killed,

maimed, imprisoned, displaced, impoverished, starved, enslaved, orphaned, and widowed. They send their sons and daughters to face unspeakable dangers and attend to their broken bodies and souls if they return.

Nor is the average citizen likely to perceive or fully comprehend the extent, proximity, or complexity of international threats that sometimes prompt their leaders to consider war. Unlike the executive, most domestic actors—even the elites and privileged within society—have little direct interaction with the international system. It is difficult, therefore, for the average, self-interested citizen to perceive international upheavals as relevant to their own lives and worthy of their attention, let alone their sacrifice. As the demands of *realpolitik* prompt statesmen to respond to gathering threats that are “more potential than actual,” the average citizen is justifiably “reluctant to absorb the costs,” creating a gulf “between what *realpolitik* requires of the leadership and what the public is willing to sanction” (Schuessler 2010, 140-141; see also Schweller 1992).

For Roosevelt and Reagan, this gulf was palpable. For the Reagan administration, US policy in Nicaragua was central to a broad strategy in America’s existential struggle with the Soviet Union. For most Americans and the members of Congress who represented them, it was incomprehensible that the outcome of a civil war in a tiny Central American state could have any material bearing on their lives. The degree of risk the average citizen was willing to shoulder for a Contra victory, therefore, was essentially zero. Likewise, Roosevelt faced unrelenting opposition to expanding support to Britain and France from a public who did not comprehend the Nazi threat as remarkable. Given evidence from the WWI generation, many Americans concluded that even a successful US intervention would necessitate staggering costs that could secure no more than

another intermission between European bloodlettings. For those who do not immerse themselves in international politics, the connection between foreign troubles and private interests can seem obscure. If, as J. S. Mill ([1848] 1965) maintains, collective action is the product of the rational pursuit of self-interest, then the leader's task of marshaling domestic support for war will be formidable given the average citizen's *ex ante* expectations of material costs and the obscurity of the payoff.

This is not to say that war is never in the self-interest of the general public. The political interests of average citizens consist of more than a summation of material risks and rewards. Because individuals benefit from living in a society in which mutual cooperation and promise-keeping are assumed, there is inherent value in honoring obligations to society, even when those obligations involve personal risk or sacrifice (Dagger 2010; Hobbes 1991 [1651]; Klosko 2005; Locke 1980 [1690]; Rawls 1999 [1971]). Beyond their political obligations to the polity, ordinary citizens act in their rational self-interest when they seek to advance cherished non-material values. Citizens of the Western European democracies fought the Nazi regime not only to preserve the political integrity of their states, but also to preserve the individual liberties that western culture has long embraced as fundamental to human flourishing. Ordinary citizens willingly, even eagerly, support their governments when the state chooses war. They sacrifice personal safety and comfort for good, honorable, even noble reasons.

Nevertheless, the material *disincentives* for ordinary citizens to choose war (over not war) are strong and pervasive. They are also, I contend, primitive, a starting point from which any further discussion about the prospect of war must proceed. War always demands and always exacts the sacrifice of ordinary citizens who, when confronted with

the prospect of war, *cannot rationally expect for the material payoff to exceed those costs*. This creates a *rational presumption against war* that I maintain is a systemic constant that imposes a structural barrier to executive autonomy regarding the decision to use military force. Leaders who believe—rightly or wrongly—that war, or policies that increase the likelihood of war, are in the interest of the state, must overcome this presumption in order to access the moral and material support needed to make their policy preferences succeed. This structural dynamic obtains in all states, but it is especially problematic for leaders of liberal democracies who generally lack the coercive instruments to force the compliance of the citizenry.

For scholars who insist that the structure of the international system is the only relevant structural influence on foreign policy behavior, war decisions are virtually automatic and merit little analytical attention. The problem with this approach is that, while parsimonious and elegant, it is difficult to sustain in the light of empirical evidence. The anarchic structure of the international system may indeed be sufficient to explain the executive's rational *preferences*. It cannot, however, explain why some leaders choose to revise or abandon their policy preferences in favor of policies that they believe are suboptimal in geopolitical terms.¹⁸ The German threat in the late 1930s justified the more-aggressive European policy that Roosevelt unambiguously preferred, not the cautious policies that the US ultimately adopted and continued to embrace until Japan attacked and Germany declared war. If we consider only the structure of the international system, this outcome is incomprehensible. When, however, we incorporate a second

¹⁸ Fearon's (1995) "rationalist explanation for war" argues that states that are contemplating war will bargain in order to find an outcome that both sides would prefer to war. If states can find that solution in the "bargaining zone," they will rationally choose to pursue the peaceful option. Fearon's model does not, however, explain why leaders accept outcomes that they *do not* prefer to war.

structural influence, the structure of modern warfare, this outcome is explicable. Just as an anarchic social systems creates structural incentives for interstate competition and conflict, the nature of modern war creates structural constraints on decision-making autonomy of leaders during war-threatening crises.

The “state as a unitary actor” is a model any statesmen would eagerly embrace during a war-threatening crisis; no leader cheerfully abdicates autonomy to domestic interests in matters of national security. But the degree of autonomy that the leader retains, that is, the degree to which the state actually *behaves* as a unitary actor, is variable (Milner 1997). Roosevelt understood that leaders who commit their populations to war without successfully revising an unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences risks domestic sanction (Dallek 1995). Not only does that leader risk punishment at the polls, but he or she also risks access to the moral and material support from society that modern war demands. Domestic opinion during war-threatening crises aggregates through political representatives, interest groups, opposition parties, the franchise, or, in extreme cases, through civil disobedience and civil unrest to find expression in the state’s foreign policy decisions. Prior to committing the state to war, therefore, any leader since (and including) Napoleon who determines that the use of force is warranted must, before any bullets fly, attempt to persuade his or her population that war is in the interest not only of the government, but of the governed as well. The state has many tools at its disposal for accomplishing this; the coercive instruments available to an autocratic leader, for instance, can be persuasive indeed. But in a modern democracy like the US, the focus of this analysis, the primary instrument for aligning domestic preferences with the executive’s policy preference is rhetoric.

2.3 Causal Logic of the Rhetorical Mobilization Process

With the outcome variable, structural dynamics, and the basic intuition behind the rhetorical mobilization model in hand, this section rehearses the causal logic diagrammed in Figure 2.1 (below).

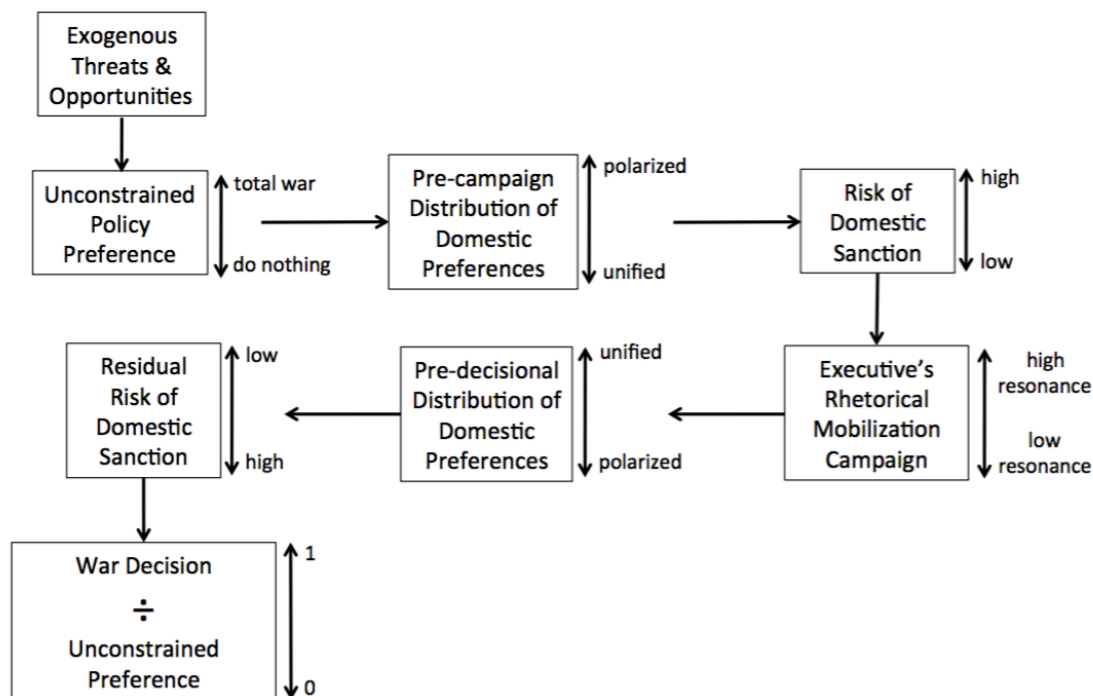


Figure 2.1: The rhetorical mobilization process

Prior to a war-threatening crisis, before extraordinary international events interrupt the status quo, domestic preferences regarding the state's foreign policy tend to be relatively homogeneous. The aphorism that "politics stop at the water's edge" enjoys considerable, though imperfect, empirical validation. The average citizen, whose daily life is little touched by the ordinary conduct of international relations, tends to leave such matters to "the experts" and reserve her political energies for domestic issues. Under

non-crisis conditions, therefore, domestic opinion regarding the state's conduct of foreign affairs is typically spread over a relatively narrow distribution around a readily identifiable center.

International events that prompt the executive to consider the use of force, however, trouble this consensus and, predictably, set in motion the rhetorical mobilization process. Faced with a war-threatening crisis, the executive constructs policy options and decides upon a policy preference, or a short list of preferences, that varies according to the degree of civil mobilization required. At one end of the continuum, the executive may prefer to take no military action. This may entail accepting the status quo or, perhaps, conceding to the demands of a threatening state. If the executive's policy preference is maintenance of the status quo, no civil mobilization is necessary. At the other end of this continuum is a preference for total war, a policy choice that would demand mobilization of every element of civil society.

During this initial stage of foreign policy decision making, the executive may give some consideration to how various domestic audiences might react to a given course of action. It may even elect to eliminate options it regards as politically infeasible. For the purpose of the model, however, I treat the policy preferences that emerge at this point of the decision-making process as the executive's *unconstrained preference*, a notional course of action that the leader would take in the absence of domestic considerations. In other words, the executive's unconstrained preference is the policy the executive would implement if the state were in fact—not by assumption—a unitary, rational actor with an unchecked decision maker at the helm.

Having determined its unconstrained preference without consideration for domestic opinion, the executive will estimate risk of domestic sanction if it institutes that preference. Although Putnam (1988) theorizes international negotiations, war-threatening crises, his conceptualization of a “win set” is helpful here. A win set is the set of all international-level agreements that would be supported by various domestic constituencies. At this point in the rhetorical mobilization model, the executive wants to know whether its win set is large enough to include its unconstrained preference for the use of force.

In constructing its estimation of the risk of domestic sanction, the executive is likely to rely on some form of systematized public polling. However, since domestic sanction is rarely immediate, an executive contemplating war is less concerned with a snapshot of the current mood that a public opinion poll would offer and more interested in understanding “anticipated future opinions” (Zaller 1994, 251; see also Baum & Potter 2008; Gelpi, Reifler & Feaver 2007; Hurwitz & Peffley 1987). It will, therefore, focus at least as much attention on estimating attitudes of the opinion-leading elite—the media, expert communities, senior military officers, and other political leaders—as it does gauging the opinions of the general public (Saunders 2014).

If the executive’s unconstrained policy preference requires little in the way of human or material support from civil society, it is more likely to fall within the win set. Indeed, the risk of domestic sanction may be sufficiently low to obviate the need for an elaborate and expensive rhetorical mobilization campaign. For example, an unconstrained policy preference to reposition a warship introduces no new demands for

material support or positive contributions from the public. The executive's preference, therefore, is unlikely to generate significant domestic attention or debate.

However, as the executive's unconstrained policy preference moves along the continuum from doing nothing to total war, it places an increasing demand for positive societal contribution and sacrifice. For many domestic constituencies, this will drive the executive's unconstrained preference out of its win set. When the executive initially makes public its preference for war, it brings into existence for each citizen the possibility, however remote, of an unplanned and unwelcome life-change.¹⁹ It is possible that the domestic audience will rally immediately behind the leader's preference for an aggressive foreign policy, particularly if the international threat that prompted her preference is conspicuous and imminent (e.g., following the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor).²⁰ However, because the social structures that shape interests and preferences during war-threatening crises affect various domestic actors differently, it is more likely that the domestic foreign policy consensus will splinter. The distribution of domestic preferences at the instant that the executive first declares (or divulges) its preference for

¹⁹ As Schuessler (2010) argues, leaders who make their preferences for the use of force public have political incentives to obfuscate the extent to which they have settled on their policy preference until such time as domestic opinion solidly favors the leader's policy preference. Executive declarations of policy preferences, therefore, tend to be less explicit than my model portrays.

²⁰ In cases like Pearl Harbor or the 9/11 al Qaeda attacks, the clarity of the international threat makes the rhetorical mobilization process relatively easy for the executive; a direct attack erodes the average citizen's rational presumption against war. Nevertheless, the executive must still plan and execute a rhetorical mobilization campaign. In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, even Americans who had witnessed the Japanese raid relied on President Roosevelt to explain what had just happened (an act of war by Japan and not, for example, a rogue Japanese admiral), how American was going to respond (a declaration of war and not, for example, a single reprisal strike), the extent of societal mobilization (full mobilization for a long war and not, for example, a limited reprisal for which the US military was already capable). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Americans were eager for a fight, but where and with whom? As I discuss in Chapter 3, connecting al Qaeda raids in New York and Washington, D.C. to the Bush administration's policy preference to invade Afghanistan and remove the Taliban government required a sophisticated rhetorical mobilization strategy.

the use of force will become relatively *polarized*. If a center can be identified, variation around that center will increase.

We can also imagine in the moments following such a declaration a highly attentive public waiting for the executive's next words, its justification for abandoning a status quo that, up until that point, it had tolerated. Unlike the public's level of attentiveness to quotidian affairs of international politics and the many foreign policy decisions that will affect the average citizen indirectly if at all,²¹ the general public and the officials who represent the public have compelling incentives to pay riveted attention when their leader starts talking about war.

Although the executive may have statutory authority to pursue its preference regardless of the distribution of domestic preferences, a leader who commits the state to war without attempting to revise a polarized distribution of domestic preferences risks domestic sanction. These risks may be political: punishment at the polls, loss of party influence, loss of political leverage on other issues, civil disobedience, and, in cases of extreme heterogeneity as the US witnessed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, violent civil unrest.

An executive who fails to acknowledge the interests and preferences of the public also assumes *military* risks. Without a stable domestic commitment to the use of force, the executive is likely to demand that its admirals and generals adopt tactics and strategies that are driven by political, rather than military, imperatives. Casualty avoidance is one example. An executive fighting an already unpopular war will strive to

²¹ The "Almond-Lippmann consensus" (Holsti 1992) maintains that the percentage of Americans who are attentive to foreign affairs is miniscule. See especially Almond (1960); Converse (1962); Lippmann (1922); Rosenau (1961). Challengers to the inattentive public thesis include Caspary (1970); Nincic (1992); Page & Shapiro (2010); Popkin (1994); Russett (1990); Shapiro & Page (1988).

preserve the marginal support it enjoys by insisting that military planners prioritize casualty reduction over speed, surprise, mass, and other purely military virtues.²²

Additionally, if the unpopular war becomes protracted, a possibility every executive must consider, the military will likely be forced to fight with ranks that become increasingly depleted, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as society increasingly denies government demands for replacement troops. The military may require years or decades to recover from such a war, producing prolonged period of vulnerability for the state.²³

When risks of domestic sanction are high, therefore, the executive is likely to perceive its policy options as constrained. The distribution of domestic preferences, in other words, renders some policy options—primarily those that require significant societal contributions—prohibitively risky and, therefore, outside of its win set.

At this point in the rhetorical mobilization process, Putnam's (1988) conceptualization of a win set becomes less useful. Because Putnam's model does not include a theory of domestic politics, his win set static. The rhetorical mobilization model, by contrast, conceptualizes the risk of domestic sanction as a dynamic variable. When the risk of domestic sanction creates for the executive a constrained policymaking environment, instead of simply yielding to the judgment of the people, the executive will take positive measures to neutralize that constraint.

While this may sound undemocratic, it is an abundantly rational response. The executive has access to privileged information not only regarding the nature and extent of

²² An example is the 1999 Kosovo air campaign in which NATO aircraft were directed to fly above 15,000 feet in order to minimize casualties. Although this policy effectively diminished the effectiveness of Serb air defenses, it also diminished the military efficacy of the campaign and the capacity of the pilots to discriminate between military targets and noncombatants. See Dunlap 1999.

²³ For an outstanding account of the effects of unpopular wars on the military profession see Bacevich (2013).

international threats, but also into the state's capabilities and resolve to meet those threats. The latter in particular is information that the executive cannot share with its domestic audience without compromising the state's diplomatic and military advantages (see Fearon 1994, 1995; Reiter 2003; Schultz 1999, 2001). Furthermore, the executive carries a burden during war-threatening crises that does not trouble the general public: it must answer for its war decision. The executive—particularly the chief executive—will be held accountable for the outcome of a war-threatening crisis not only in the short-term by voters at the polls, but also in the long term by the judgment of history. In short, the executive has both the ability and the incentives to think and act strategically in international affairs that other domestic actors do not share. No executive, therefore, will happily accept the public's unstudied opinion as authoritative and final.²⁴ Instead, an executive that has settled on an unconstrained preference for war will plan and execute a rhetorical mobilization campaign to revise the *pre-campaign* distribution of domestic preferences in favor of a more unified *pre-decisional* distribution.

If successful, the executive effectively expands its win set. It creates a *permissive* decision-making environment in which domestic preferences neither constrain the executive from using force nor push it into war. With the typically constraining influence of domestic preferences essentially neutralized, the executive is free to make its policy decision in a manner that approximates the unitary rational actor assumption that systemic models assert. Because a successful rhetorical mobilization campaign diminishes the significance of domestic opinion as a planning factor, the likelihood that the executive will adopt its unconstrained preference as its ultimate policy choice is, all

²⁴ Foyle (1999, 2004) argues that the degree to which US presidents are willing to base their foreign policy decisions on public opinion is variable based on individual perspectives on the proper role of public opinion in foreign policy deliberation. I evaluate this argument in Chapter 7.

else equal, increased. If, however, the rhetorical mobilization campaign fails to affect this revision, the likelihood that the executive's preference for war will prevail as the ultimate policy decision is diminished; the executive is more likely to update its own preferences rather than commit its population to an unpopular war.

My empirical chapters will trace the executive decision-making process outlined above during two war-threatening crises in US foreign policy history. I will attempt to demonstrate that, in both cases, variation in the efficacy of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign accounts for observed variation in the outcome variable, the extent to which executive's war decision corresponded with its unconstrained preference. The remaining challenge for this chapter is to establish how the efficacy of rhetorical mobilization campaigns varies. Why do some campaigns garner broad support while others generate little enthusiasm?

2.4 The Explanatory Variable: Rhetorical Mobilization Campaigns

In this section I define rhetorical mobilization as a species of political communication that states deploy in order to marshal domestic support for war or for aggressive policies that increase the likelihood of war. How will we recognize rhetorical mobilization when we see it? What distinguishes this form of executive rhetoric from all of the other oral and written emanations of government? How does it vary? International relations theory has paid little attention Carr's notion of rhetorical power. As a result, extant IR literature provides few useful exemplars for conceptualizing and operationalizing this variable.

As an alternative to fabricating a conceptualization from whole cloth, I turn instead to other social sciences that have theorized analogous processes. Social

movement theory seeks to theorize when, why, and how social movements mobilize, or fail to mobilize, populations for collective action. Although I am aware of no scholars in this field who have made this claim, I believe that this rich research program offers a useful analog for when, why, and how states mobilize, or fail to mobilize, domestic populations for war. Like the executive in a state that is mobilizing domestic support for war, social movement activists frequently embrace values and beliefs that may not necessarily resonate with the public at large. Individuals outside the movement may lack awareness of an issue, may believe the issue does not justify their active attention or personal sacrifice, or may embrace values and beliefs that diverge from those of the movement (Snow et al 1986, 476). In order to access the moral and material resources needed to advance the movement's cause, therefore, social movement activists, like executives marshaling public support for war, must act as "signifying agents" that actively engage "in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers" (Snow and Benford 1988, 98). This signifying work is accomplished through what social movement theorists have branded collective action frames, "schemata for interpretation" (Goffman 1974, 21) that "help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action" (Benford & Snow 2000, 614. See also Goffman 1974; Snow et al 1986; Snow & Benford 1988).

Social movement activists seeking to generate public support for their causes and executives seeking to generate public support for war face similar challenges. Like a social movement activist attempting to motivate potential adherents to abandon a comfortable—or at least tolerable—status quo, the executive will orchestrate a "rhetorical

movement that seeks to overturn standing policy by announcing a new vision” (Goodnight 2010, 96). Given this similarity, and given the richness of the social movement literature, applying analogous concepts from social movement theory to define executive rhetoric during war-threatening crises and establish criteria for measuring variation in the efficacy of that rhetoric is warranted. I discuss how rhetorical mobilization campaigns vary later in this chapter. This section focuses on description.

My definition of rhetorical mobilization campaigns adapts social movement theory’s conceptualization of collective action frames for an international relations application. A rhetorical mobilization campaign is *the compendia of public utterances crafted for the purpose of marshaling domestic support for war and delivered by the executive or its spokespersons during the discrete period of time between the executive’s recognition of an international threat and its ultimate war decision*. Rhetorical mobilization campaigns have four defining tasks (see Benford & Snow 2000). First, they attempt to construct a shared meaning of a global event. Social movement theorists refer to this as “diagnostic framing.” The executive manufactures diagnostic frames both to clarify the problem and fix the blame. By identifying victims, “amplify[ing] their victimization” and naming the culpable agents, the executive “seek[s] to delineate the boundaries between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ and construct movement protagonists and antagonists” (Benford & Snow 2000, 616). The goal of diagnostic framing is to induce the domestic audience to understand global events in a manner that supports the executive’s policy preferences (Goffman 1974, 21). The Kennedy administration’s rhetoric during the Cuban Missile Crises furnishes a useful example of how an executive can leverage diagnostic framing. Rather than characterizing the deployment of Soviet

missiles to Cuba as defensive or a Soviet effort to balance US missiles in Turkey, either of which, arguably, are valid characterizations of Soviet intentions, the Kennedy administration framed the missile deployment as Soviet aggression (Weldes 1996, 289-291).

After labeling the problem and the trouble-maker(s), the second defining goal of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is to propose a solution. Here the executive publicly articulates its plan—or perhaps a range of options—for collective action. For social movement theory, this constitutes “prognostic framing.” Analysis of prognostic frames underscores the importance of the executive’s initial diagnostic framing decision. Returning to the Cuban Missile Crisis, if the Kennedy administration had diagnostically framed the Soviet missile deployment as a balancing measure, doing nothing would have been a reasonable policy alternative; balancing against power concentrations is, after all, generally recognized as virtuous statecraft. Doing nothing could also be interpreted as a fundamentally *realist* response. If the Soviet missiles in Cuba did not appreciably change the strategic balance, as Kennedy’s Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, observed (Allison & Zelikow 1999), why risk major war with a nuclear power? But because the administration deployed the “aggression frame,” it politically tied itself, and, significantly, its domestic opposition, to policy alternatives that involved positive action (Weldes 1996).

The third defining goal of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is “motivational framing,” the rhetorical effort to motivate the collective action that is appropriate to the prognostic frame that the executive has proffered. An executive leverages in various combinations what Benford (1993) calls vocabularies of severity, urgency, efficacy, and

propriety (or duty), to provide its domestic audience with a rationale for abandoning a heretofore-tolerable status quo and “engaging in ameliorative collective action” (Benford & Snow 2000, 617).

Finally, rhetorical mobilization campaigns seek to *demobilize* potential adversaries. Here again, diagnostic framing plays a critical role. A diagnostic frame “tends to constrain the range of possible ‘reasonable’ solutions and strategies advocated” (Benford & Snow 2000, 616). When the executive labels a given event and that label sticks, it implicitly invalidates some policy options, thus delimiting the range of legitimate prognostic frames available to domestic political rivals (Krebs 2015a; Krebs 2015b; Krebs & Jackson 2007; Krebs & Lobasz 2007). Following Benford (1987, 75), I refer to the executive’s efforts to demobilize potential adversaries as “counter framing.” Rhetorical mobilization campaigns aim to deny potential opposition to the executive’s policy preference the “rhetorical materials out of which to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal” (Krebs & Jackson 2007, 42). Using the Cuban Missile Crisis one more time, the Soviet-aggression frame drove the more-dovish policy options from the field. Regardless of its validity, the Munich analogy was a fresh “lesson learned” for the American public. Any policy that appeared to concede to aggression was vulnerable to politically unsustainable charges of appeasement (see Weldes 1996).

Up to this point, this chapter has described my outcome and explanatory variables, and the social structures in which they operate. To summarize, an executive war decision is the culminating policy decision that marks the end of a discrete planning process that begins with the executive’s recognition that war is the preferred policy option. While the anarchic structure of the international system may produce incentives

for an executive to favor a military option, the structure of modern warfare imposes a formidable barrier to its autonomy to implement its unconstrained preference. In order to neutralize that constraint, executives organize for, plan, and implement rhetorical mobilization campaigns, my explanatory variable. Following social movement theory's conceptualization of a collective action frame, a rhetorical campaign attempts to construct a shared meaning of a given set of global events, offer a plan for collective action, mobilize the domestic audience for that action, and demobilize potential domestic adversaries. The efficacy of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign, I argue, determines the degree of residual risk of domestic sanction at the moment of decision and, therefore, the extent to which domestic constraints will influence the ultimate war decision.

In the next section I offer an approach to measuring and comparing the efficacy of rhetorical mobilization campaigns.

2.5 Operationalizing Rhetorical Mobilization Campaigns

Having described the rhetorical mobilization process and conceptualized rhetorical mobilization campaigns, the next challenge is to hypothesize the relationship between rhetorical mobilization campaigns and observed variation in the dependent variable, executive war decisions. Three alternatives seem most likely. The first acknowledges that the distribution of domestic preferences may constrain executive autonomy, but argues that it is the nature of the international threat itself, not how the executive frames that threat, that determines the extent to which various domestic constituencies will support the executive's unconstrained preference. The second alternative explanation is

that any divergence between the executive's unconstrained preference for war and its ultimate war decision is explained by the decision maker's idiosyncratic tolerance for political and military risk. I consider both of these explanations in the concluding chapter. In this section, and the empirical chapters that follow, I explore a third explanation. The rhetorical mobilization model claims that variation in the efficacy of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign determines whether the executive will implement its unconstrained preference for the use of military force or, alternatively, choose to amend or abandon it.

This prompts two obvious questions. First, what makes one rhetorical mobilization campaign more efficacious than another? Second, can efficacy be measured independent of its outcome, i.e., non-tautologically? I contend that the answer to both of these questions is "yes," and again, social movement scholarship provides a useful analog. Following (among others) Benford & Snow (2000), Snow & Benford (1988), Snow & McAdam (2000), and Tarrow (1992), I measure variation in the efficacy of a rhetorical mobilization campaign by its *resonance*. Benford & Snow (2000, 620-22) survey the social movement literature and organize extant hypotheses for how and when a collective action frame is likely to resonate into two categorical bins: *salience* and *credibility*. The salience of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is the degree to which executive rhetoric appeals to the values, beliefs, and daily concerns of target audiences. Credibility assesses the plausibility of executive rhetoric. I apply these measures to hypothesize variation in the resonance of rhetorical mobilization campaigns. My empirical chapters will test two overarching hypotheses:

H1: *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that are (are not) salient increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (to amend or abandon) its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.*

H2: *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that are (are not) credible increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (to amend or abandon) its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.*

Like resonance, salience and credibility seem like blunt instruments that are more likely to lead to tautological assertions than analytical insights. But social movement scholars have also theorized several axes along which both salience and credibly *measurably* vary. I apply these factors, with minor modification, to measure the salience and credibility of rhetorical mobilization campaigns.

2.5.1 Salience

Three factors determine the salience of a rhetorical mobilization campaign: *centrality*, *narrative fidelity*, and *experiential commensurability* (Benford & Snow 2000, Snow & Benford 1988, Snow & McAdam 2000, Tarrow 1992). When either social movements activists or state leaders attempt to inspire target audiences to abandon the status quo and make positive contributions to a cause, they make claims that the values, beliefs, and perhaps even the identities of the collective are at risk. *Centrality* concerns the extent to which the executive establishes a plausible link between its diagnostic and prognostic frames and core national values. For liberal democratic states, individual liberty, equality, justice, and similar ideals expressed in various founding documents like the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* or the US *Declaration of Independence* and *Bill of Rights* typify values that democratic leaders routinely access. *Narrative fidelity* is similar. Every state has an “extant stock” of myths of a storied past.

These constitute both the “cultural resources base” from which the executive can fashion a rhetorical mobilization campaign and the “lens through which framings are interpreted and evaluated” by targeted audiences (Tarrow 1992, 189). Narrative fidelity measures the extent to which a rhetorical mobilization campaign associates the executive’s diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames with these national myths. Founding myths are prevalent examples. So too are narratives of battlefield victories. The centrality and narrative fidelity of a rhetorical mobilization campaign also has implications for counter framing. If the executive can convincingly claim fidelity with widely admired national values and myths, it forces prospective opposition to argue against the cultural and normative grain.

Although drawn from the social movement literature, the concepts behind centrality and narrative fidelity should be familiar to students of international politics. One of the major approaches in foreign policy analysis considers the role of national values in foreign policy decision making (Hudson 2013). George (1980, 236), for example, argues that in order to establish “a broad and stable [domestic] consensus on behalf of a long-range foreign policy,” a president needs to convince the public that “the objectives and goals of his policy are desirable and worth pursuing—in other words, that his policy is consistent with fundamental national values and contributes to their enhancement.” Other international relations scholars have focused on the influence of national values on formulation of national security strategies (Johnston 1998; Legro 2000; Monten 2005), what constitutes a legitimate cause of war (Finnemore 2003; George 1980; Goddard 2009), the use or non-use of certain weapons and tactics (Schweller 1992; Tannenwald, 1999), and threat identification (Haas 2005). The role of

national myths has also been theorized in international relations and foreign policy analysis contexts. Breuning (1997) and Esch (2010), for example, argue that foreign policy options that are consistent with (or, through well-crafted rhetoric, can be made to seem consistent with) national myths are more likely to garner public support and, therefore, particularly attractive to foreign policy decision-makers.

The third factor that determines the salience of a rhetorical mobilization campaign to target audiences is *experiential commensurability*. This factor concerns the relevance of a given rhetorical mobilization campaign to the everyday concerns and experiences of various target audiences. Issues that intrude on our daily lives are more likely to resonate than those that do not. The executive achieves experiential commensurability by moving its rhetorical focus from collective values that the current international crisis has put at risk to individual needs that may not be met unless the state moves out on the executive's preferred policy.

A democratic leader may rationally determine that military intervention to establish a favorable balance of power in a resource-rich region is in the state's national interest. However, a rhetorical mobilization campaign that simply explains the facts of self-help and balance-of-power politics in an anarchic world would not be salient. If, alternatively, the campaign foregrounds, for instance, the humanitarian crisis that current events have provoked or invokes an analog to a "great war" in which other generations responded to similar threats and opportunities, it achieves centrality and narrative fidelity. Executive rhetoric achieves experiential commensurability when it brings to the attention of the target audience, for example, that the current crisis threatens to increase the cost of a gallon of gas or a bag of groceries. Experiential commensurability intensifies as the

potential cost to the individual of doing nothing goes up. If the executive can convince listeners that doing nothing would cost them their lives or result in enslavement, then that audience is likely to take action.

The relative salience of executive rhetoric generates three sub-hypotheses regarding the expected resonance of a rhetorical mobilization campaign:

H1.1: *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to core values and beliefs of target audiences increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.*

H1.2: *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that characterize (fail to characterize) the executive's policy preference as consistent with prominent national myths increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.*

H1.3: *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to the everyday experiences of the general population increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.*

2.5.2 Credibility

The second categorical bin of factors that affect the resonance of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is credibility. Like salience, social movement theorists understand credibility in three dimensions that I have adapted for this analysis: congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility (Benford & Snow 2000, Snow & Benford 1988, Snow & McAdam 2000, Tarrow 1992). *Congruency* concerns the consistency between the values that the executive deploys to justify its preferences and the executive's observable actions. When, in other words, there are visible inconsistencies between what the executive says and what it does, the rhetorical mobilization campaign is likely to lose credibility and lose adherents. Just as environmental movements lose followers when

they accept funding from the corporations they condemn, democratic leaders lose support for their policies when words and deeds seem incongruent. For example, aggressive (and televised) US counterinsurgency tactics troubled the Johnson administration's framing of the US war in Vietnam as an effort to secure the freedom of the South Vietnamese people. Burning villages to "save them" exemplifies a failure of congruency.

The second factor that determines credibility is *empirical credibility*. If evidence becomes available that seems to contradict the executive's statements of fact, then the executive is likely to lose support for its policy preference. It is important to note, however, that the existence of contradictory evidence does not by itself constitute a failure of empirical credibility. Contradictory evidence erodes credibility only when it is readily available to the targeted audience. Executives that are adept at controlling information, therefore, are better able to manage empirical credibility. In retrospect, most analysts agree that there was sufficient evidence to credibly dispute the Bush administration's framing of the threat posed by Saddam's Iraq, particularly its emphasis on the terror-WMD nexus. But as I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, the administration's success in controlling information preserved its empirical credibility. Likewise, because the editors of the major US news outlets so enthusiastically favored war with Spain in 1898, evidence that contradicted the pro-war frame had little hope of gaining a broad audience. During the Vietnam War, by contrast, the *New York Times*' decision in 1971 to publish a Department of Defense study of post-WWII US involvement in Vietnam (the "Pentagon Papers") destroyed the empirical credibility of the Nixon administration war rhetoric by revealing to the American public that it had been systematically misled, not

only by Nixon and Kissinger, but also by every administration since Truman regarding the extent and character of US involvement in Southeast Asia.

Finally, the credibility of a rhetorical mobilization campaign depends on what I call *reputational credibility*. Speakers who enjoy a high degree of reputational credibility—because of their position, their access to critical information, their track record for “getting it right,” or their access to the media—are generally more persuasive (Benford & Snow 2000, 620-21). Unlike a social movement, at least one of the interlocutors in a rhetorical mobilization campaign—the chief executive—will always enjoy a relatively high degree of reputational credibility in the realm of foreign policy. Even if the leader is unpopular, his or her access to privileged information and the news media confers credibility on issues of international politics and guarantees a visible platform from which to articulate the campaign’s themes and messages (Krebs & Lobasz 2007, 415; Western 2005, 117-20). Most of the variation in reputational credibility, therefore, resides not in the foreign policy credibility of the leader, but in the credibility of the leading articulators of *opposing* frames. For various reasons that I consider in Chapter 3, high-credibility opponents opted not to challenge the Bush administration’s framing of the Iraq threat in 2002-03. The vocal opposition to the policy, primarily mid-ranking technocrats, lacked the public affairs resources to cross swords with the administration’s communications machine. Despite the opposition’s formidable critiques, the administration’s reputational advantage was decisive. By contrast, Roosevelt’s framing of the German threat faced aggressive counter framing not only from

highly credible members of Congress, but also from an American hero, Charles Lindbergh.²⁵

A focus on frame credibility suggests three additional sub-hypotheses for when a rhetorical mobilization campaign is likely to resonate:

H2.1: If executive actions that contradict the assertions of its rhetorical mobilization campaign are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory actions become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.

H2.2: If facts that contradict the executive's diagnostic frame are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory facts become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.

H2.3: The greater (lesser) the foreign policy credibility of the primary opposition to the executive's preferred policy, the more (less) likely it is that the executive will amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.

To summarize, the rhetorical mobilization model argues that when the executive of a democratic state has settled on an unconstrained policy preference for the use of force, the likelihood that the executive's preference will become state policy is determined by the efficacy of its rhetorical campaign. This section has presented a strategy for measuring and comparing the efficacy or *resonance* of executive rhetoric. Following the social movement literature on collective action framing, I have argued that salient and credible rhetorical mobilization campaigns increase the likelihood that the executive will implement its policy preference unadulterated by domestic influences. I have also suggested observable and measurable factors for determining the salience and credibility of a rhetorical mobilization campaign. From these I have deduced six sub-

²⁵ I briefly discuss this unconventional political rivalry in Chapter 5. For a detailed and entertaining history see Olson 2013.

hypotheses for when an executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference and when it is more likely to amend or abandon its preference. In the following section, I explain my strategy for testing these hypotheses.

2.6 Methods and Case Selection

This dissertation makes two types of claims. The first concerns a causal mechanism. I describe a process, the rhetorical mobilization process, which links an executive's unconstrained preference for the use of military force with its ultimate policy choice, its war decision. The second is a claim regarding a causal relationship. I maintain that a rhetorical mobilization campaign that resonates domestically—measured in terms of salience (three factors) and credibility (also three factors)—is an “*insufficient* but *necessary* part of a condition which is itself *unnecessary* but *sufficient* for the result”: war in a democratic state (Mackie 1993, 34). When rhetorical mobilization campaigns resonate with domestic audiences, the political and military risks of war to democratic leaders recede. The likelihood that the executive will implement its unconstrained policy preference for war or for policies that increase the likelihood of war, therefore, increases. When, however, rhetorical campaigns fail to resonate, the risk of domestic sanction constrains the executive's decision-making autonomy and increases the likelihood that the executive will amend or abandon its policy preference.

I rely on case studies to test both claims. However, the nature of these two claims suggests distinct methods for each. In order to test the my first claim, I need to explicate the intervening steps that bridge the gap between an executive's preference for war and its ultimate policy choice. This suggests a process-tracing approach. Following

Waldner's (2014, 128) "completeness standard" for process tracing, I attempt to establish "causal and explanatory adequacy" by mapping the events of two historical cases onto the process I diagram above (Figure 1).²⁶ I will describe each of the intervening steps that constitute the rhetorical mobilization process, offer an explanation for how each of these mediating steps "impl[ies] its successor," and make the case that, taken together, these intervening variables are sufficient to determine (*ceteris paribus*) the outcome variable, the executive's war decision (Waldner 2014, 131-32).

"Process tracing," writes (Collier 2011, 824), "requires finding diagnostic evidence that provides the basis for descriptive and causal inference." I suggest that I will have established a "strong basis for causal inference" as well as a rationale for rejecting rival explanations (George & Bennett 2005, 222) if my empirical analysis reveals three observable manifestations—"empirical fingerprints" (Pedersen & Beach 2013)—of the rhetorical mobilization process. First, I expect to find evidence in each of my cases that when the executive initially went public with its unconstrained policy preference for war, the distribution of domestic preferences became increasingly polarized relative to the moment before policy articulation. I will look for this evidence in public opinion polling data and in the public statements of foreign policy opinion leaders in the media, the political opposition, and within the executive itself. I also expect to find evidence that the executive recognized the political and/or military risk of

²⁶ For Waldner (2014, 128), "Process tracing first and foremost requires this descriptive inference from event-history map to causal graph." Causal adequacy is established by the "logical coherence and sufficiency of a causal graph." Analysis should include: "Does each node in the causal graph imply its successor? Are there missing nodes? Is the set of non-terminal nodes sufficient to reach the outcome node?" Explanatory adequacy results from "our knowledge of the relevant causal mechanisms linking each node of the causal graph."

implementing its unconstrained policy preference without building a stable domestic commitment.

Second, I expect to find evidence that the executive responded to the weakened foreign policy consensus by organizing for, planning, and implementing a rhetorical mobilization campaign. Every government has a directorate or several directorates responsible for the task of explaining its decisions and its actions to the world and to its own population. In the case of the US government, “strategic communication” is a multifaceted and well-funded task spread across several agencies.²⁷ However, strategic communication professionals—and those who fund and oversee their activities—insist that they do not engage in “propaganda” in the pejorative sense of that word. Indeed, they actively eschew activities that could be construed in those terms; they *communicate* the government’s policy preferences and decisions, they do not *market* them. As a result, the US government (like most modern democratic governments) lacks a standing organization with the manpower, training, and doctrine to “sell a war” efficiently and effectively.

If rhetorical mobilization campaigns are, as I argue, essential for accessing the elements of national power needed to fight a modern war, then we should expect to discover in democratic states intent on war the emergence of a “wartime public opinion apparatus” (Jacobs 1992), *ad hoc* organizations established to perform those marketing functions. We should also expect to discover in executive rhetoric evidence of a

²⁷ Although definitions of strategic communication abound, Paul (2011, 17) offers a relatively parsimonious amalgam of several: the “coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives.” The many tasks of strategic communication are shared primarily between the State Department and the Pentagon and include three major efforts and target audiences: telling the US government’s story to potentially hostile foreign audiences (military information operations), to friendly foreign audiences (public diplomacy), and to its domestic audience (public affairs).

deliberate marketing plan. In other words, analysis of executive rhetoric should reveal some effort at diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational framing, and counter framing.

Finally, I will reexamine the distribution of domestic preferences at the moment of policy decision for each of my case studies. If the executive implemented a policy that closely resembled its unconstrained policy preference, then I expect to find evidence that the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences was more favorable (for the executive) than the pre-campaign structure. If, however, the executive amended or abandoned its preference, I expect to find, particularly in polling data and the public statements of foreign policy opinion leaders, that there was little change in the degree of domestic consensus over the course of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign.

Although finding this evidence would give us a cause to update our confidence in the explanatory power of the rhetorical mobilization model (Pedersen & Beach 2013), it is not sufficient to support my second claim: that an efficacious rhetorical mobilization campaign is an insufficient but necessary part of any explanation for war in a democratic state. In order to test this claim, I rely on two additional tools. First, I employ content analysis to measure the salience and credibility of the rhetorical mobilization campaigns in my selected cases. The datasets I analyze are comprised of all presidential speeches made during a given rhetorical mobilization campaign.

My analysis proceeds in four steps. First I identify the two presidential speeches that mark the start and end dates of the rhetorical mobilization campaign. Second, I create and analyze a "training set." I select from all presidential speeches made during the period of analysis those speeches that were, or have since been, identified—by

scholars, contemporary analysts, or the executive's themselves—as significant foreign policy announcements. The purpose of analyzing a training-set is to discover how (or if) the executive attempted to establish salience (experiential commensurability, narrative fidelity, and/or centrality) and credibility (congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility rhetorically). In other words, the purpose of analyzing a training set is to deduce the executive's rhetorical strategy. Next, having found evidence (or not) in the training set of language consistent with these criteria, I create dictionaries of signifiers—key words and phrases associated with each criterion of salience and credibility. Finally, I apply these dictionaries to the entire dataset—all speeches delivered by the president during the period of interest—in order to code each event as positive or negative for each factor of salience and credibility. Because of the size of one of the datasets, I use an automated content analysis tool (Atlas.ti) to facilitate my coding and minimize coding errors.²⁸ Nevertheless, I manually inspect each occurrence to ensure proper context and delete all coding errors.²⁹

It is important to note here that two executives may attempt to represent the same concept with very different language. For example, the Bush administration relied heavily on World War II allusions to establish narrative fidelity. Roosevelt, for obvious reasons, lacked this cultural reference. So while ideally I would apply the same signifiers to both of my case studies, I must instead make the argument for each case that the distinct dictionaries I create are testing for the same factors.

²⁸ The dataset for my Bush case study is comprised of 170 speeches. Manually coding each of these speeches for multiple factors would have assumed significant risk of coding error that automated tools mitigate. While the Roosevelt dataset includes only 33 speeches, I used the same automated technique in order to be consistent across cases.

²⁹ An example of a typical coding error is the following sentence from the 28 January 2003 State of the Union Address that Atlas.ti initially coded as “WMD”: “A simple chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen generates energy which can be used to power a car, producing only water, not exhaust fumes.”

My decision to restrict my datasets to presidential speeches is not intended to suggest that a rhetorical mobilization campaign is no more than a corpus of speeches by a given leader. Presidential speeches in the US, for example, are typically delivered to relatively small audiences. Although many speeches are broadcast on television or radio, most are not and, with the exception of a few key speeches made during a president's tenure in office, television and radio audiences are limited. Furthermore, entire executives wage rhetorical mobilization campaigns, not just the chief executive. The Sunday talk show circuit in the US exemplifies the team approach to rhetorical mobilization.

But there are three qualities of presidential speeches that make them ideal for analyzing an executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign. First, they are observable manifestations of the executive's rhetorical strategy; no detective work is required. A researcher can deduce a strategy from the text without, for instance, interviewing participants in political strategy sessions. Second, unlike press conferences or media appearances by high-ranking administration officials, presidential speeches are uncontaminated expressions of the intent of the rhetorical campaign. Most presidential speeches are meticulously drafted long in advance. Although the speechmaker has the final say in what he or she delivers, speechwriters circulate drafts to each relevant office and directorate where every word is parsed and ratified (Gershkoff & Kushner 2005; McClellan 2008). With few exceptions, presidents stick to the methodically scripted text. Finally, even though they play to limited live audiences, the most salient parts of any presidential speech is reproduced and re-contextualized for days, weeks, and, in some cases, years after the speech (Hodges 2011). Key phrases are taken up by the news

media, echoed by administration officials, ridiculed by satirists, and debated in classrooms and at dinner tables. It is through these “multiple, overlapping discursive encounters that social meanings are constructed and contested” (Hodges 2011, 17).

Because most of the work that is being done by presidential speeches is done well after the speech, through reproduction and re-contextualization, I have chosen to treat the resonance factors as discrete rather than continuous variables. One possible approach to codifying speeches would have been to count the number of utterances of a given signifier and scoring a speech with five references to “terrorists and tyrants,” for example, as *more salient* than a speech with only one reference. In my opinion, this disregards the importance of reproduction and re-contextualization. What the public actually hears is not the speech, but “selected pieces of quotable segments that are repeated over and over again in news reports,” public debates, and informal conversation (Hodges 2011, 87). The “terrorist and tyrants” quotable segment is a good example of a sound bite that “spiked” in news reporting after the 2003 State of the Union (Hodges 2011, 87). Quantifying the reproduction of resonance factors in the news media would be a difficult but do-able exercise. Tracing the less-formal transmission of these quotable segments would be, I believe, prohibitively labor intensive. Instead, I focus my analysis on presidential rhetoric, and I code each event (i.e., presidential speech) as positive or negative for a given resonance factor regardless of the quantity of signifiers present in a given event.

The second tool I use to support my claim that the resonance of a rhetorical mobilization determines the likelihood that the executive will implement, amend, or abandon its unconstrained preference for war, is counterfactual analysis. Assertions of

causal necessity “automatically generate explicit counterfactuals” (Levy 2008, 628). My assertion that a salient and credible rhetorical mobilization campaign increases the likelihood that an executive will implement its policy preference for war implies that reversing the values of salience and credibility should also reverse the outcomes. Evidence that an executive’s war decision would have been the same in both the real and counterfactual worlds would disconfirm the rhetorical mobilization model.

The counterfactual accounts I offer consider three questions. First, would the outcome, the war decision, have been different if the values of salience and credibility were reversed? Second, how would it have been different? In my Iraq case, for instance, would the Bush administration have abandoned its preference for forcible regime change if its rhetorical mobilization campaign had failed to resonate, or would it have simply delayed implementation? Finally, if I conclude that the outcome would have been different, *why* would it have been different? The validity of my counterfactual propositions will be enhanced if I can draw on well-established theories to explain a potential mechanism that connects the reversed value on my explanatory variable with a different value on my outcome variable (Levy 2008).

Turning now to my case selection, Gerring (2007) outlines nine desiderata for case selection. Two of these stand out as most applicable to my choices. The first is *diversity*. The objective of the researcher selecting cases based on diversity is to illuminate the full range of independent or dependent variable variation. My cases supply the latter, a choice that may draw criticism. “Several methodologists have sounded alarm bells about the tendency of qualitative research to select cases based on their value on the

dependent variable,” write Mahoney & Terrie (2008, 743).³⁰ Yet comparative-historical studies “quite explicitly engage in the practice.”

Following, among others, Gerring 2007, Mahoney & Terrie (2008), Mill (1850), and Ragin (2004), I selected my cases with the intent of maximizing variance in the dependent variable. The cases of the Bush’s campaign to win support for the 2003 Iraq invasion and Roosevelt’s campaign to marshal domestic support for intervention in Europe serve this purpose well. Considering my outcome variable as a ratio of unconstrained policy preference to ultimate policy choice, the Bush case comes as close to approaching 1 as any US intervention since the Second World War. The administration launched Operation IRAQI FREEDOM without amending the timeline, troop level, or strategy.³¹ The outcome variable for the Roosevelt administration, by contrast, approaches 0. By June of 1940, the Roosevelt administration had concluded that Britain would fall without direct US military intervention and, without Britain and the Royal Navy, America could not survive as a prosperous, liberal, and independent state. The administration understood that the stakes could not be higher. Yet, despite Roosevelt’s incomparable aptitude for building domestic support for grand enterprises (Dallek 1995), the administration failed to overcome the formidable non-interventionist coalition that opposed his unconstrained preference.

³⁰ King, Keohane & Verba (1994) caution that case selection that is correlated with the dependent variable attenuates estimates of causal effects. The authors concede, however, that selecting on the DV may help establish the plausibility of a causal claim and is sometimes the only viable approach. See also Geddes (1990). Bennett & Elman (2006) maintain that when researchers select cases on the DV in order to test claims of necessity or sufficiency, as my research attempts to do, selection bias does not apply.

³¹ Arguably, the administration’s insistence on limiting the size of the invasion force may have been influenced by concerns over “anticipated future opinions” (Zaller 1994, 251) or “latent public opinion” (Baum & Potter 2008, 55). Yet the administration maintained that the size of the force was driven entirely by military, and not political, considerations.

The second case-selection criterion that informed my choice is the theory-testing value of the *crucial case*, selecting cases that are most or least likely to result in a particular outcome (Gerring 2007). Here again, the Bush and Roosevelt cases meet this criterion admirably. Prior to the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign launched on the one-year anniversary of 9/11, few would have predicted such strong domestic support for America's first preventive war against a state that had no involvement in the 9/11 attacks, had no ambitions beyond the region, and, given the large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons that Iraq was presumed to possess, had ample capacity to inflict horrific casualties on the US and its allies and ample incentives if backed into a corner.³² The outcome of the Roosevelt case is similarly unlikely. States seek survival (Labs 1997; Mearsheimer 2001; Schweller 1996). After Germany's offensive in the spring of 1940, Roosevelt recognized that America's survival as a prosperous and liberal state was genuinely at risk if Britain fell, an inevitable outcome if the US failed to intervene. The administration's decision to implement a policy in which it had little faith rather than fighting for national survival calls into question the most basic assumption of international relations theory.

A final case selection consideration has implications for generalizability. In order to hold constant potentially confounding factors such as culture, region, regime type, relative power, institutional framework, media culture, and technology, I have chosen to

³² Gershkoff & Kushner (2005) point out that Americans strongly supported forcible regime change despite expectations that a war with Iraq would be long and costly. On average across various polls taken during the period of interest, the authors found that 55 percent of those surveyed expected the war to be long, 44 percent expected large casualties, 50 percent believed a war with Iraq would effect the economy badly, and 62 percent responded that war would increase the short-term risk of terrorism at home. A significant percentage of respondents over this period (35 percent) believed that war with Iraq would result in reinstatement of the draft. In short, few Americans expected a repeat of the low-cost Gulf War.

limit my empirical analysis to US foreign policy decisions.³³ In doing so, I hope to render more salient the causal work being done by rhetorical mobilization. Although this scope decision will necessarily limit my claims to the generalizability, I intend to offer in my concluding chapter a tentative defense of my intuition that the rhetorical mobilization model can be generalized beyond the US case.

2.7 Summary

Accounting for both the structure of the international system and the structure of modern warfare enhances the fidelity of international relations theory with observed behavior of decision makers during war-threatening crises. It also, however, substantially complicates any model of executive decision making and raises vexing questions. Since these two structural forces tend toward opposing and incompatible outcomes—war or not war—clearly structure per se cannot be determinate. When and why will the structure of the international system cause statesmen not only to think but also to act offensively (Mearsheimer 2001, 32)? Under what conditions, alternatively, will the structure of modern warfare deflect foreign policy decision makers from the policy choices that the logic of international anarchy and national interest “defined in terms of power” (Morgenthau 1960, 5) would predict (Rose 1998, 168)? Do statesmen simply navigate a middle route between these forces, or do they take positive measures to overcome those structural influences that work against their policy preferences?

³³ Since the cases I have selected span about 65 years of US foreign policy history, none of these factors are held perfectly constant. As I will discuss in my concluding chapter, two institutional variables in particular are potentially confounding. First, technology has profoundly influenced the media over this period of time. Second, the institution of the all-volunteer force has fundamentally altered who fights America’s wars.

The rhetorical mobilization model maintains that when the executive favors war or policies that increase the likelihood of war, it will attempt to neutralize constraints to its decision-making autonomy. Its chief instrument for accomplishing this is rhetoric, the explanatory variable that is the principal concern of this dissertation. The efficacy of executive rhetoric during war-threatening crises, I argue, determines the extent to which structural constraints will affect policy outcomes. In Chapters 3-6, I evaluate this claim against the historic record.

Chapter 3

The Iraq War and the Tale of the Threat Triangle

The 1998 Iraq Liberation Act—the brainchild of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), a conservative foreign policy think tank with powerful allies like Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz—made regime change in Iraq the official policy of the US government. Not surprisingly, however, President Clinton showed little interest in actively pursuing the policy agenda set forth in this Republican-sponsored bill. Two years later, with a Republican in office and former PNAC supporters occupying high positions in the Bush government, the idea of forcible regime change in Iraq appeared to have a chance of gaining critical mass. Influential advisers, consultants, and lobbyists pressed Bush, even before his inauguration, to get serious about using military force to unseat Saddam Hussein and his Baathist regime. While President Bush may have been somewhat friendlier to the idea than his predecessor, advocates of regime change remained frustrated.

The 11 September 2001 al Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington changed this. According to Richard Perle, one of PNAC's founding members and an early advocate of forcible regime change, "The world began on 9/11," (quoted in Packer 2005, 41).³⁴ Bush, in his autobiography, confirms Perle's observation. "Before 9/11, Saddam was a problem America might have been able to manage." Accordingly, Bush's early Iraq policy, like his predecessor's, focused on containment and sanctions. However, Bush continues, "through the lens of the post-9/11 world, my view changed" (Bush 2010, 229). One unnamed senior administration official told the *New York Times* that,

³⁴ Throughout the dissertation I will use the widely accepted shorthand "9/11" to refer to the 11 September 2001 al Qaeda attacks in New York and Washington, DC.

“Without Sept. 11, we would have never been able to put Iraq at the top of our agenda...It was only then that this president was willing to worry about the unthinkable—that the next attack could be with weapons of mass destruction supplied by Saddam Hussein” (Weisman March 23, 2003). Commentators disagree whether the al Qaeda attacks prompted a genuine rethinking of global threats or merely offered a pretext for pursuing long-held ambitions. Regardless, the events of 9/11 reordered the Bush administration’s foreign policy agenda. Just over 18 months after the attacks, US and coalition ground troops invaded Iraq with the mission of toppling Saddam Hussein’s government.

This chapter analyzes the discrete period of time between the moment that the Bush administration settled on its unconstrained policy preference for forcible regime change and the moment when the administration authorized the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to issue the execute order that sent conventional US forces into Iraq. I do not attempt to explain how or why the administration arrived at its unconstrained preference, a choice that, at the time, puzzled most of the top-level flag and general officers who saw Iraq as only a middling threat (Newbold, interview with author on January 9, 2015). Instead, I accept the administration’s preference for forcible regime change as a given and attempt to describe how it converted this preference into large-scale collective action. In other words, I will offer a description of the rhetorical mobilization process that concluded with the US-led invasion of Iraq. In Chapter 4, I will offer an explanation for why administration rhetoric was so successful.

For many systemic-level explanations for the causes of war, distinguishing between a leader’s preference for war and his ultimate decision to implement that

preference serves no theoretically useful purpose. In the case of the Iraq War, the outcome gives analysts few reasons to challenge this approach; there is little substantive difference between the policy envisioned in late 2001 and the policy implemented in March 2003. However, by tracing the rhetorical mobilization process from initial public articulation of the administration's policy preference to the issuance of the execute order to launch the invasion of Iraq, I will demonstrate that the administration's systemically motivated preference for war, while certainly necessary to explain the outcome, is not sufficient. The Iraq War, in others words, was not an inevitable outcome of 9/11 or President Bush's post 9/11 thinking.

This chapter proceeds in four parts. Section 3.1 describes the evolution of the Bush administration's unconstrained preference for forcible regime change in Iraq. In Section 3.2, I consider the administration's perception of the pre-campaign distribution of domestic preferences, the initial domestic response to the administration's public introduction of its unconstrained policy preference. I will argue that the administration perceived formidable domestic challenges to its policy agenda, challenges that could cost the President the continued support of the American public and, ultimately, the White House. In the next section, I describe how the administration, recognizing the political and military risks of implementing its policy preference with a polarized distribution of domestic preferences, organized for, planned, and implemented a sophisticated rhetorical mobilization campaign to mitigate the risk of domestic sanction. I will describe the administration's rhetorical campaign using the framing taxonomy suggested by social movement scholarship: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational framing, and counter framing. In the final section, I will examine the pre-decisional distribution of

domestic preferences and the residual risk that the Bush administration perceived at the moment of its war decision. I will argue that the risk of domestic sanction had significantly diminished during the course of the rhetorical mobilization campaign, creating a permissive decision-making environment.

Chapter 3 is primarily descriptive. I will attempt to establish “causal and explanatory adequacy” (Waldner 2014) by demonstrating a correspondence between the events of the rhetorical mobilization process with each node in the directed acyclic graph introduced in the previous chapter. I will present my main causal claims in Chapter 4, where I make a case that the changes in the distribution of domestic preferences observed during the period of analysis are best explained by the resonance of the Bush administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign. I will also argue that the favorable pre-decisional structure of domestic preferences that resulted was a necessary condition for Bush’s war.

Many scholars and journalists have analyzed and criticized the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq and forcibly remove Saddam Hussein from power in (e.g., Clarke 2004; Hersh 2004; Jervis 2010; McClellan 2008; Mearsheimer 2011; Packer 2005; Suskind 2004). It is not my purpose here to critique war decisions; my purpose is to understand how war decisions are made. Although I will offer observations regarding the veracity of administration rhetoric when this has bearing on theory, the objective *truth* of the administration’s claims are generally of little interest to this project. Indeed, the content of an administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign serves as a “form of truth,” a political fact that produces international political outcomes (Hodges 2011, 5). “Although it may or may not be empirically valid that Saddam

Hussein had ties to al Qaeda and possessed weapons of mass destruction,” observes sociolinguist Adam Hodges (2011, 6), “if a significant number of people believe it to be true, real consequences result.”

3.1 Bush’s Unconstrained Policy Preference: Forcible Regime Change

Gauging precisely when the Bush administration settled on its policy preference for forcible regime change in Iraq is difficult, primarily because no one in the administration itself can point to a specific moment of decision. Richard Haass, the director of policy planning in the State Department during the period in question, described the decision more as “an accretion” than an event. “A decision was not made—a decision happened, and you can’t say when or how” (quoted in Packer 2005, 45).

Nevertheless, there are several distinct events that prompted conspicuous shifts in how the administration viewed the threats and opportunities that Saddam’s regime presented. On the afternoon of September 11, 2001 for instance, literally before the smoke in the Pentagon’s corridors had cleared, advocates of forcible regime change started repackaging their case for war. Both Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz openly raised the possibility of Iraqi involvement in the attack. On the afternoon of the attack, reports journalist Bob Woodward (2004, 9), Wolfowitz offered odds, assigning a 10 to 50 percent probability that Saddam was somehow involved.

Despite early enthusiasm among some senior officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the idea of overthrowing Saddam as a response to 9/11 did not gain immediate traction. During a 15 September Camp David meeting of the principals—

Bush, Cheney, Powell, Rumsfeld, and Rice³⁵—agreed that Iraq should not be the first effort in America’s new “war on terrorism.” Bush reportedly told his national security team, “I believe Iraq was involved, but I’m not going to strike them now. I don’t have the evidence at this point” (Woodward 2003, 99). Most participants seemed to understand, however, that this was a decision regarding sequencing, not a decision to spare Saddam. The general agreement among the principals, except possibly Powell, was that 9/11 had made regime change in Iraq strategically advantageous and, more importantly, politically possible.

While generally the principals may have agreed that removing Saddam by force served US foreign policy interests, they arrived at this conclusion through distinct strategic logics. Two justifications dominated, creating an unlikely alliance between political realists and idealists. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and other self-proclaimed champions of *Realpolitik* saw an opportunity to eliminate a persistent source of instability from a region that was critical to US economic prosperity and national security. National interest and power calculations, in other words, justified war. The administration had “either lost confidence or never had confidence that sanctions were effective,” observed Frank Miller, a former senior adviser to the President. Despite US containment efforts, “Saddam was still shooting at Northern and Southern Watch aircraft. He was still, in the administration’s view, building and maintaining WMD. He was obstructing Hans Blix’s

³⁵ For the purpose of the Iraq War case, I consider these five individuals to comprise the decision-making “executive” that I describe in the previous chapters. Others who made major contributions to the rhetorical mobilization campaign and to the ultimate war decision include Deputy Secretary of State Dick Armitage, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith. In his memoir, former White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan (2008) observes, with some concern, that Senior Advisor Karl Rove and Bush’s “counselor” Karen Hughes were also instrumental not only in selling the administration’s policy, but also in shaping it. For McClellan, this represents an unhealthy shift in American politics in which domestic politics and foreign policy have become dangerously interwoven. He calls this the “permanent campaign” atmosphere.

inspectors” (interview with the author on April 27, 2015). The Joint Staff’s Director of Operations, Lieutenant General Gregory Newbold, recalls that during President-elect Bush’s first Pentagon brief the only questions Bush himself asked were regarding the costs and efficacy of Operations Northern and Southern Watch (interview with author on January 9, 2015). In short, classic preventive war logic dominated this justification. America would exploit its power advantage to create a Saddam-free Middle East before Iraq’s WMD program could diminish that advantage.

The *Realpolitik* bloc also viewed forcibly removing Saddam as a valuable exercise in costly signaling. Despite apparent successes in Afghanistan, many in the Pentagon, including Rumsfeld, feared 9/11 had damaged America’s superpower credibility (Rumsfeld 2011, 414). Similarly, Cheney viewed the resort to force not as a failure of diplomacy, but rather, in Clausewitzian tradition, as its extension and catalyst. The use of force, asserted Cheney in 2004, “makes your diplomacy more effective going forward, dealing with other problems” (quoted in Bacevich 2005, 19). Regime change in Iraq would send an unequivocal signal of America’s power and resolve to the “Arab street,” to the other members of “axis of evil,” and to any power harboring hegemonic ambition in the region and perceiving weakness in the American response to 9/11.

The second line of justification nurtured a Wilsonian faith that the formidable economic and military might of the US could and *should* be used to transform the lawless periphery into a zone of American-style liberalism. Founded under the intellectual leadership of political commentators Norman Podhoretz and Irving Kristol, neoconservatism maintains that evil is real, that only power and the willingness to use it can defeat evil, and that history had invested the US with the role of freedom’s guarantor

(see Monten 2005; Hendrickson & Tucker 2005). As early as 1996, leading neoconservatives like Wolfowitz, Feith, and Perle campaigned for the invasion of Iraq, arguing that the fall of Saddam would have a cascading effect in the Middle East leading to widespread adoption of Western democratic values. Writing in 1998, Robert Kagan, a foreign policy analyst influential in neoconservative thinking, insisted that a successful US intervention in Iraq “would revolutionize the strategic situation in the Middle East, in ways both tangible and intangible, and all to the benefit of American interests” (Kagan 1998, 25). When the Republicans won the White House in 2000, many of these neoconservatives graduated from “insurgents...into establishment figures” (Bacevich 2005, 89). Leading neoconservatives like Wolfowitz, Libby, and Feith who claimed influential seats in the Bush government, particularly in the Department of Defense, leveraged their newfound influence to reshape the president’s preference for containment of Iraq into policies more favorable to “liberation” of the Iraqi people from the grips of the tyrant (Packer 2004, 13-14, 48).

After 9/11, the neoconservative vision of American power leading the rest of the world to a better future resonated with Bush. As McClellan (2008, 129) recounts in his memoir:

Although I didn’t realize it at the time we launched our campaign to sell the war, what drove Bush toward military confrontation more than anything else was an ambitious and idealistic vision of transforming the Middle East through the spread of freedom. This view was grounded in a philosophy of coercive democracy, a belief that Iraq was ripe for conversion from a dictatorship into a beacon of liberty through the use of force, and a conviction that this could be achieved at nominal costs. The Iraqis were understood to be modern, forward-looking people who yearned for liberty but couldn’t achieve it under the brutal, tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein.

But Bush's growing appreciation for the transformative potential of American economic and military power was paradoxically coupled with a genuine—and reasonable, given recent events—sense of America's vulnerability. The 9/11 al Qaeda attacks signaled a fundamental innovation in the logic of terrorism. Rather than limiting their attacks to achieving a sufficient level of carnage to attract headlines without breeding revulsion, al Qaeda had demonstrated an appetite for mass murder. Exacerbating Bush's sense of vulnerability was the nightmare scenario of a "rogue regime" supplying mass-casualty terrorists with WMD. "President Bush felt personally responsible for 9/11," offered General Newbold. "He was not going to let this happen again" (interview with author January 9, 2015).

According to General Newbold, the scenario in which an unstable dictator provides mass-casualty terrorists with WMD played powerfully with Bush and was aggravated by the intelligence community's track record for underestimating Iraqi capabilities. Following the first Gulf War (1990-91), UN inspectors uncovered and dismantled a WMD program that was far more advanced than the intelligence community had anticipated. The expulsion of the inspectors in 1998 rendered the anti-Saddam coalition essentially blind. With the world's attention drifting away from Iraq, the Saddam regime was free to pursue the unconventional weapons program that it had long desired. Bush shared with the nation his sense of vulnerability, and his evident frustration, in his 7 October 2002 address from Cincinnati: "Many people have asked how close Saddam Hussein is to developing a nuclear weapon. Well, we don't know exactly, and that's the problem." Bush had presided during the deadliest attack on US soil in the history of the Republic at a time in which the counter-proliferation regime had

experienced significant setbacks, in Iraq and elsewhere. It is difficult, therefore, to second-guess Bush's conclusion that the nature of global threats had changed and that America had to either adapt to a new understanding of "imminent threat" or risk disaster.

Given this amalgam of incentives, McClellan concludes that when Bush asked Rumsfeld to update war plans for Iraq on 21 November 2001 (see Woodward 2004), he had made his decision to go to war, "even if he convinced himself it might still be avoided" (McClellan 2008, 127). As Bush shared with journalist Woodward, "Keeping Saddam in a box looked less and less feasible to me" (quoted in Woodward 2004, 27). Although certainly debatable, I maintain that this marks the moment at which the Bush administration settled on its unconstrained policy preference, the first node in the causal diagram introduced in Chapter 2. The best evidence for this is the reported reaction from General Franks, the regional combatant commander who would be responsible for planning and executing the invasion. Presidents and defense secretaries routinely direct theater combatant commanders to "brush off" various war plans. Rarely does this signal Washington's intent or desire to execute those plans. Franks, however, perceived that this request was different and advised his subordinate commanders, "if you guys think this is not going to happen, you're wrong" (quoted in Woodward 2004, 115).

A more important date for the purpose of evaluating the explanatory power of the rhetorical mobilization model is January 29, 2002. This is the day that Bush first signaled to the public the administration's unconstrained policy preference. "I will not wait on events while dangers gather," he explained in his State of the Union Address to nearly 52 million viewers. "I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten

us with the world's most destructive weapons." Although Bush's speech included two other states in its "axis of evil," Iraq was the only target that speechwriter Michael Gerson had in mind when he drafted the speech. According to Gerson, his job was to establish a plausible nexus between Iraq, WMD, and global terrorism. The decision to make the axis a trio rather than a solo act was a deliberate measure that Rice had proposed in order to conceal from Congress and the public how mature Iraq war planning was at that early date (Woodward 2004, 87).³⁶

3.2 Pre-campaign Distribution of Domestic Preferences

As the Bush national security team prepared its immediate response to the 9/11 attacks, the challenge of garnering public support for war was negligible. Not since December 1941 was the American public more eager for a fight. Nine days after the attack, a *San Diego Union Tribune* cartoonist, Steve Breen, captured the public mood with a cartoon portraying an American bald eagle, muscular and angry, sharpening its talons.

The Bush communications team faced a very different challenge as it prepared to mobilize the American public behind its unconstrained policy preference of forcibly removing the Saddam Hussein regime from power. Bin Laden was still at large, Americans were still shedding blood in a still-popular war against al Qaeda and the Taliban, and Saddam—defanged and contained for over a decade—was roundly loathed but generally forgotten.³⁷ Not only did Bush fear that broadening the war beyond al

³⁶ For an excellent analysis of incentives for leaders to misrepresent the degree to which they determined to lead the state into war, see Schuessler (2010).

³⁷ In early 2001 (prior to 9/11), fewer than a half percent of respondents considered the possibility of a war with Iraq to be among the most important problems facing the US. As late as March 2002, Americans were still more concerned with the economy and terrorism. It was not until February 2003 that the prospect of war with Iraq emerged as the top concern for Americans (see <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/search.html> accessed March 26, 2015).

Qaeda and the Taliban risked confusing and ultimately losing the support of the American public, he also believed that it could “cost [him] the presidency” (quoted in Woodward 2004, 280).

Some (e.g., Foyle 2004) suggest that Bush may have overestimated the political risks of taking down Saddam. In an ABC poll taken shortly after 9/11 (published November 1, 2001), 78 percent of respondents answered favorably to the question “Would you favor or oppose having US forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power?” Although this figure stabilized as Americans recovered from the shock of that day, the favorable responses to similar questions posed by Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* in multiple polls taken from September 2002 to March 2003 generally held in the high-fifties to low-sixties, and never fell below 52 percent.³⁸ Furthermore, President Bush’s approval ratings, which spiked at a prodigious 90 percent 10 days after 9/11, settled to a still-impressive low- to mid-sixties throughout the period of analysis.

It is unlikely, however, that the Bush team found the polling data entirely encouraging. While most polls did indeed suggest public support for forcible regime change, the details regarding *how* Saddam should be ousted and *when* military force would be appropriate revealed a more circumspect public. For example, in a Princeton Survey Research Associates/*Newsweek* poll (25-26 April 2002; N=1000) only 31 percent of the respondents agreed that the Bush administration had sufficient international

³⁸ The low point for the Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* survey, 52 percent, was 23-25 January 2003. As I discuss below, this correlates with the publication of a *New York Times* op-ed in which former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft challenged the basic assumptions of the administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign. The Bush administration recovered quickly, however; in a Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* poll taken during the week of the 20 March 2003 invasion, 64 percent of the respondents favored using force to depose Saddam. This was the highest favorable response since the first post-9/11 poll.

support to take military action against Iraq (54 percent responded that lack of support prevented the administration from taking military action). Sixty-seven percent of the respondents to a Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* poll (30 May-1 June 2002; N=1019) believed that “the Bush administration greatly overstated the threat Iraq posed to the US in order to justify a war with Iraq.” Only 20 percent of the respondents to Chicago Council on Foreign Relations poll (1-30 June 2002; N=3262) supported an invasion if the US had to “go it alone.” Sixty-five percent responded that “the US should only invade Iraq with UN approval and the support of its allies,” while 13 percent were opposed to an invasion altogether. An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll (7-11 August 2002; N=1023) found that 57 percent of respondents favored a US invasion of Iraq with ground troops. However, when pollsters added the caveat “even if that caused a significant number of casualties,” support fell to 40 percent. Likewise, three months into the administration’s rhetorical campaign, a *Washington Post*/ABC News poll (12-15 December 2002; N=1209) reported that only 45 percent of those who favored military action against Iraq supported an invasion using ground troops (50 percent opposed) and only 30 percent favored invasion if it meant “a significant number of US military casualties” (63 percent opposed).

It would have been difficult for the administration to draw definitive conclusions from the proliferation of opinion polls on Iraq that followed the 2002 State of the Union Address. Polling data would, however, have supported some general conclusions about the American public’s readiness for a potentially costly invasion of Iraq. First, primed by the experience of 9/11 and decades of anti-Saddam rhetoric, the American public needed little convincing that a Saddam-free world would be an unconditional good (Holsti 2012, 26). Additionally, the public seemed *conditionally* amenable to achieving this end

through military means. Yet the polling data would also have suggested to a careful reader of the public mood that the American public's rational presumption against war was still very much intact. Prior to, and in the early days of, the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, the public was concerned about US unilateralism and unconvinced that the administration had justified the costs of an invasion, which most Americans believed would be high.³⁹ In a CBS/*New York Times* poll conducted in early September 2002, only 27 percent of the respondents thought that the Bush administration had explained its policy (cited in Foyle 2004, 280).

In short, polling data in late 2001 and early 2002 suggested public support for the administrations preferred policy, but highly contingent support. Polling data reflected an angry public that was eager to respond to the violence of 9/11. But the administration recognized that anger would not sustain public support when hypothetical poll questions become real wars (Western 2005, 110). Since leaders preparing for potentially long wars must concern themselves with not only with the prevailing public mood, but also with "anticipated future opinions" (Zaller 1994, 251) or "latent public opinion" (Baum & Potter 2008, 55), such contingent support would not have impressed the administration.

The administration would also have recognized foreign policy elites could greatly trouble such a weak consensus (Saunders 2015; Schuessler 2010). As discussed in the previous chapter, *elite-cuing* (Brody 1991, Berinsky 2007, 2009; Zaller 1992, 1994), a well-established theory of political behavior, maintains that even the so-called attentive

³⁹ Opinion polls during this period consistently reveal that the American public expected that a US invasion would be costly. In a PIPA poll taken just over a month before the invasion (12-18 February 2003; N=3163), 70 percent were very or somewhat convinced that if the US went to war with Iraq, it would likely "face costs running into hundreds of billions of dollars." In the same survey, 71 percent very or somewhat convinced that if the US invaded, "Saddam Hussein would have nothing left to lose and would likely use weapons of mass destruction against US forces and US cities, and distribute these weapons to terrorist groups."

public takes their cues from the foreign-policy elites they most trust. Leaders who successfully garner elite support for their policy preferences protect themselves from costly political consequences in the event their policies turn south (Saunders 2015). In January 2002, the Bush administration had not earned elite support. Until the administration could ensure the cooperation of elite cue-givers, there would be risk of inciting an elite debate that could “spill over into the public domain, triggering a public ‘fire alarm’ that wakes the rationally ‘sleeping’ voter” (Saunders 2015, 474).⁴⁰

Signs that the Iraq issue had troubled the post-9/11 elite foreign policy consensus were initially apparent in the mixed reviews from media and foreign policy elites following the 29 January 2002 State of the Union Address, Bush’s clearest public statement to date of the administration’s unconstrained policy preference. Some cheered Bush’s bold statement. Former CIA director James Woolsey, for example, told NPR’s *Frontline* (February 23, 2002) that he was “quite positively impressed” by the speech. The *Washington Post*’s editorial page praised the speech for pushing “US foreign policy in the right direction” (*Washington Post* January 31, 2002, B06).

But the speech also took many by surprise. For *Washington Post* columnist Mary McGrory, the speech “was the chilling intimation that the unilateralism so evident in his early days was creeping back” (McGrory 31 January 2002, A25). Similarly, a *New York Times* editorial remarked, “The application of power and intimidation has returned to the forefront of American foreign policy” (*New York Times* January 31, 2002, A24). Retired General Wesley Clark described the rhetoric of Bush’s speech as “overwhelming” (quoted in Bumiller 2002, A5). In an interview on NPR’s *Frontline* (February 21, 2002),

⁴⁰ Saunders credits McCubbins & Schwartz (1984) with the fire alarm metaphor.

then-president of the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace Jessica Mathews described the speech as “a terrible mistake from the first moment.”

The risk of active elite opposition increased as the Bush White House, which “prided itself on message discipline” (McClellan 2008), began to lose control of that message early in its campaign. On 16 September 2002—just five days into the administration’s earnest “campaign to sell the war” (McClellan 2008)—the *Wall Street Journal* ran an article quoting Bush’s chief economic adviser, Lawrence Lindsey, who estimated that a war with Iraq could cost between \$100 and \$200 billion (Davis 2003). Although these figures seem quaint in hindsight, they were two to four times higher than any projection that the White House had shared to that date.⁴¹ For a public that was just beginning to grasp the implications of the increasingly dire anti-Saddam rhetoric, “Lindsey’s figures were eye opening” (McClellan 2008, 122). Honest forecasts of the costs of war reinforced for average citizens their rational presumption against war and gave rhetorical ammunition to administration critics. “Talking about the projected cost of a potential war,” therefore, “wasn’t part of the script, especially not when the White House was in the crucial early stages of building broad public support” (McClellan 2008, 122).

From the administration’s perspective, the most dangerous elite cue-givers, those that are most likely to alert the news media and the public, are the unexpected critics from within the party or the administration itself (Baum & Groeling 2010, Trager & Vavreck 2011). Potential internal challengers to the administration’s “script” included senior officials in the intelligence community, the military, and the State Department (to

⁴¹ Prior to Lindsay’s comments, the administration had only requested “an absurdly low” \$2.5 billion for postwar reconstruction (Packer 2004, 116).

include the Secretary and Deputy Secretary) who were unconvinced that Saddam could not be contained or that Iraq posed a degree of threat that warranted war. Failure to garner the support of these challengers, or at least secure their silent neutrality, sharply increased the administration's exposure to domestic political sanction. More dangerous still, these internal challengers shook the administration's confidence that it would enjoy unconstrained access to the elements of national power needed to prosecute a successful war.

Because internal challengers tend to voice their objections privately in accordance with their professional values, the nature and extent of these challenges are unclear. Woodward (2004), through interviews with Bush, Powell, and Rice, pieces together the contents of two private meetings in which Powell reportedly catalogued the risks of forcible regime change. Powell warned the president, according to Woodward (2004, 149), that war would be profoundly destabilizing for the region. He also called into question the feasibility of democratizing a state that had never known democracy. Woodward reports that it was in the first of these meetings that Powell introduced his "Pottery Barn rule: You break it, you own it." As the most trusted (by the American people) member of Bush's cabinet and, more importantly, the only top-level official with combat experience, Powell's *explicit* support of the administration's policy preference was essential. Powell's silent neutrality would have been insufficient and active opposition would likely have raised the risk of domestic political sanction to intolerable levels.

Furthermore, the administration's unconstrained policy preference severely strained relations between the civilian DoD bureaucracy and the senior flag and general

officers who would ultimately be responsible for implementing this policy. Lieutenant General Renuart, US Central Command's Director of Operations (J-3), reportedly responded quite strongly to a November 2001 phone call from his counterpart on the Joint Staff (Lieutenant General Newbold) warning him of the tasking that would soon be coming his way. "You got to be shitting me," replied Renuart. "We're only kind of busy on some other things right now" (Woodward 2004, 8). General Newbold shared General Renuart's incredulity. "Of all the threats to the US," remarked Newbold, "Iraq with WMD ranked about eighth place" (interview with author on January 9, 2015).

Both the military and the intelligence community pushed back particularly hard against administration rhetoric suggesting an Iraq-al Qaeda alliance. "Saddam would never give away WMD to al Qaeda," General Newbold asserted. "It was an accepted fact in the intelligence community that Saddam considered al Qaeda a real threat, and al Qaeda thought Saddam was an apostate" (interview with author on January 9, 2015). The most public evidence that America's flag and general officers were not entirely on board with the administration's thinking on Iraq came in February 2003 when Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that "several hundred thousand soldiers" would be needed to ensure success in Iraq. This number far exceeded any Bush administration estimate and the 145,000 troops that ultimately comprised the ground invasion force. Wolfowitz responded with public charges that Shinseki's estimates were "wildly off the mark" and lamented that, "the Army didn't get it" (Packer 2004, 114).

Herspring (2008) reports that senior military officers had become sufficiently vocal in their opposition to administration policy preferences that a "revolt of the

generals” became a genuine concern for some of the civilian leaders in the Defense Department. Indeed, reports Herspring (2008, 100), “what to do with the military,” was an agenda item for Perle’s July 20, 2002 Defense Planning Board. As Bacevich (2007) observes, the internal debate over America’s Iraq policy had turned the intuition behind civilian control of the military on its head. The most senior officers on the Joint Staff, whose statutory responsibility is to provide presidents and secretaries of defense with their best military advice, had to focus their efforts on restraining the endemic militarism evident in some of the Pentagon’s senior civilian leadership and divest them of the notion of war on the cheap. As one commentator observed, “the notion of civilian control of the military became meaningless, since civilians were the leading militarists” (quoted in Bacevich 2007, 63).

In sum, shortly after the September 11 al Qaeda attacks, the Bush administration settled on its unconstrained policy preference of forcible regime change in Iraq. The administration introduced the policy to its domestic audience on August 29, 2002 in the President’s State of the Union Address. The announcement and the national debate it inspired had a polarizing effect on the distribution of domestic preferences, which had been strikingly unified since 9/11. Recognizing the political and military risks of committing the state to war in a polarized distribution of domestic preferences, the administration choreographed a complex rhetorical mobilization campaign to create a more favorable decision-making environment, one in which domestic opinion would have little bearing. I turn to this next.

3.3 Rhetorical Mobilization

From September 2002 until the day of the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the administration followed “a meticulously planned strategy to persuade the public, the Congress and the allies of the need to confront the threat from Saddam Hussein” (Bumiller 7 September 2002, A5). The “script,” as former White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan calls it, “had been finalized with great care over the summer” of 2002 and was ready for a September rollout (McClellan 2008, 120). Why September? White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card offered the *New York Times* a candid explanation: “From a marketing point of view, you don’t introduce new products in August” (Bumiller 7 September 2002, A5).

Card’s comment should alert us to the fact the administration recognized that its rhetorical mobilization campaign—McClellan’s “script”—was something distinct from the routine discourse of government. It also gives us a clear start date for our analysis of the administration’s rhetorical campaign. While several key elements of the Bush administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign were laid out months earlier (I discuss these below), “The campaign to sell the war didn’t begin in earnest until the fall of 2002” (McClellan 2008, 126). Given these explicit signposts, I mark President Bush’s first major speech in September of 2002, his “Address to the Nation from Ellis Island” commemorating the one-year anniversary of 9/11, as the start date of the administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign (Bush September 11, 2002). Although not as well signposted, I mark the conclusion of the campaign with the president’s 17 March 2003 “Address to the Nation on Iraq” (Bush March 17, 2003). The Ellis Island speech subtly transfers the audience’s attention from al Qaeda to Saddam. Likewise, the language and

structure of the 17 March 2003 speech signals a subtle transition in rhetorical intention from *justifying* the Iraq War for the domestic audience to *fighting* the Iraq war, transmitting the themes and messages of an information campaign to a different target audience: Saddam's regime, Iraq's armed forces, and the Iraqi people.

In this section I examine the presidential rhetoric during the rhetorical mobilization campaign (September 11, 2002 to March 17, 2003). The primary purpose of my analysis is to evaluate these speeches in terms of the four defining tasks of rhetorical mobilization campaigns as theorized by social movement scholarship: diagnostic, prognostic, motivational, and counter framing. First, however, I will examine how the Bush administration organized for its rhetorical campaign.

3.3.1 Emergence of *ad Hoc* Organizations

The Bush administration's "wartime public opinion apparatus" (Jacobs 1992) relied on several organizations that were stood up for the express purpose of marketing forcible regime change to the domestic audience. Two stand out. The first was the Office of Special Programs (OSP). Frustrated with what he perceived as the intelligence community's penchant for circumspection, Rumsfeld established his own *ad hoc* analytical organization under Douglas Feith, DoD's Undersecretary of Defense for Policy. The linkage between al Qaeda and Saddam's regime was fundamental to the administration's diagnostic frame, which I discuss below. The founding purpose of OSP was to prove the existence of this linkage, despite the fact that most professional analysts had already dismissed this intelligence thread. From the Pentagon's perspective, OSP personnel could perceive connections and nuances that endemic biases in the intelligence

profession—particularly its bias against trusting the testimony of defectors—had prevented CIA and DIA analysts from seeing (Hersh 2004, 210-211).

But, as Jervis (2010) observes, OSP suffered from its own biases. Because the purpose of the OSP was to *prove an assumption*, it was working deductively rather than inductively, the approach that professional intelligence analysts insist upon (Packer 2005, 107). The dangers are clear: because OSP was working to find the facts that would support a premise, they inevitably found them (Jervis 2010; Packer 2005). As CIA Director George Tenet observed, “Feith and company would find little nuggets that supported their beliefs and seize upon them...Isolated data points became so important to them that they would never look at the thousands of other data points that might convey an opposite story” (quoted in Herspring 2008, 106). In short, OSP personnel conducted all the functions of intelligence analysis, but they lacked both the skills and discipline that professional analysis demands (Herspring 2008, 106).

Although OSP was not overtly established to market the administration’s policy preference, this was ultimately its primary contribution. Intelligence professionals are *painstakingly* careful about conflating vetted intelligence with raw data. OSP personnel were not, as noted above, intelligence professionals. Feith’s office characterized their evidence of Iraq’s link to al Qaeda as “conclusive,” and presented their findings in the scores of daily briefings that comprise the battle rhythm of the Beltway (Herspring 2008, 107). As un-vetted information infiltrated the innumerable PowerPoint briefings presented on a daily basis by mid-grade action officers throughout the National Capital Region, discredited data became practically indistinguishable from reliable intelligence. Through reproduction and proliferation of reports and briefings, OSP findings infiltrated

the talking points of top administration officials and the President himself (Herspring 2008).

The second *ad hoc* organization that was essential for the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign was more explicit about its marketing function. The White House Iraq Group (WHIG), established by Bush's Chief of Staff Andrew Card and run by his Senior Political Advisor Karl Rove, "had been set up in the summer of 2002 to coordinate the marketing of the war to the public" (McClellan 2008, 141; Woodward 2004, 172). A noteworthy addition to the senior officials from the White House, State Department, and the Pentagon who comprised the WHIG was John Rendon, CEO of the Rendon Group, a public relations firm hired by the White House to market its Iraq policy preference to foreign and domestic audiences.⁴² The WHIG scripted administration talking points, orchestrated the day-to-day drumbeat to reinforce selected themes and messages, and responded to external threats to the campaign or internal lapses in message discipline.

The WHIG's most critical initial task was to evaluate various rationales for war with Iraq—geopolitics, democratization, humanitarian relief, etc.—and determine which was more likely to resonate with the American public (Prados 2004, 23). In the sections that follow, I outline the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames that the WHIG determined would best garner domestic support for the administration's unconstrained preference.

⁴² It is not particularly noteworthy that DoD contracted a highly capable public relations firm like the Rendon Group to support its activities; public affairs and public relations are vitally important to effective implementation of any public policy. What is noteworthy, however, is Card's choice to include Rendon himself as a member of the WHIG. This is indicative of the importance the administration placed on communicating its unconstrained preference. Public relations, in other words, was not a peripheral task.

3.3.2 Diagnostic Framing: The Tale of the Threat Triangle

As discussed in Chapter 2, I follow social movement scholarship (Benford & Snow 2000; Snow et al 1986; Snow & Benford 1988) in defining diagnostic framing as the executive's effort to construct rhetorically a shared meaning of a given global event or situation. Diagnostic framing is the most consequential element of the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign. Not only does the diagnostic frame determine the boundaries of appropriate prognostic and motivational frames, but, if the executive is successful in establishing its diagnostic frame as a "hegemonic discourse" (Krebs & Lobasz 2007, 411-12),⁴³ it also deprives potential domestic opponents of "socially sustainable avenues of reply" (Krebs & Jackson 2007; Krebs & Lobasz 2007). I explore this aspect of the Bush administration's diagnostic framing in Chapter 4.

Establishing the diagnostic frame was the primary effort of the WHIG during the summer of 2002 (see McClellan 2008; Prados 2004). Given the wide array of ills that various policy proponents believed forcible regime change would address, several narratives were available for WHIG exploitation. However, examining presidential speeches during the period of interest (September 11, 2002 to March 17, 2003) reveals that the administration decided to prosecute its rhetorical mobilization campaign on a relatively narrow front. Rather than emphasizing the idealist vision of a virtuous domino effect in the Middle East that administration neoconservatives promoted or Rumsfeld and Cheney's "interest defined as power" worldview, Bush's speeches indicate a decision to

⁴³ Krebs & Lobasz's (2007, 411-412; fn 2) conceptualization of "hegemonic discourse" follows Antonio Gramsci's conception of "cultural hegemony," a social construction of the bourgeoisie that becomes accepted as "common sense" value of all people (Thomas 2009). Like a cultural hegemony, a hegemonic discourse is difficult to achieve, but, once achieved, it is also difficult (though not impossible) to overturn.

construct a diagnostic frame on the narrative of a threat triangle: the nexus of mass-casualty terrorism, so-called “rogue states,” and the proliferation of WMD.

The first side of the threat triangle was established well before the initiation of the rhetorical mobilization campaign, in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Hodges (2011, 23) observes that on September 11, 2001, Bush made the first reference to a “war on terrorism,” suggesting that America’s response would be “formulated within the framework of war.” Although conventional wisdom suggests that going to war was an inevitable response to 9/11, conventional wisdom is informed by this hegemonic discourse. Krebs & Lobasz (2007, 413) remind us that, “September 11, like all political events, did not speak for itself. It required interpretation, and it did not have to lead to a War on Terror.” As Hodges (2011) points out, an alternative diagnostic frame could have emerged. The administration could, for instance, have framed the 9/11 attacks as horrific criminal acts similar to the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Indeed, the crime frame was evident in some of the early post-9/11 executive rhetoric. Shortly after the attacks, President Bush promised the American public that “the search was underway for those who are behind these evil acts” and that US intelligence and law enforcement agencies would “bring them to justice” (Bush September 11, 2001). If the administration had persisted in this framing, America’s response could conceivably have taken shape within the framework of international law enforcement, not war.

But the war on terror frame ultimately emerged as hegemonic, and remained so up to the invasion of Iraq and beyond (Krebs & Lobasz 2007, 212 fn 2). On the day following the attacks, although law enforcement references appeared sporadically in the

President's rhetoric, Bush made it clear that the war frame would henceforth dominate.

Speaking from the Cabinet Room of the White House on the morning of 12 September:

"I have just completed a meeting with our national security team, and we have received the latest intelligence updates. The deliberate and deadly attacks which were carried out yesterday against our country were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war"

(Bush September 12, 2001). Whether or not the administration was looking ahead to Iraq is unclear. Nevertheless, executive rhetoric in the shadow of 9/11 established the war on terror frame as the diagnostic frame for the al Qaeda attacks, which "laid the groundwork for launching very real military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq" (Hodges 2011, 23).

Side two of the threat triangle was the existence of "outlaw regimes" in general, and the regime of Saddam Hussein in particular. Having established as "common sense" (in the Gramscian understanding of that expression; see Krebs & Lobasz 2007; Thompson 2009) that America was at *war* with terrorism, the next task of the administration's diagnostic framing was to shift domestic attention away from 9/11 and al Qaeda, and redirect it toward 9/11, al Qaeda, *and* the regime of Saddam Hussein. In other words, the administration needed not only to re-introduce to the American public an old antagonist (Saddam), but also to rebrand him within a new war on terror frame.

Despite the radically disparate strategic objectives of a secular nation-state and a militant terrorist group organized around a hyper-literal interpretation of religious texts (Hodges 2011, 68), and despite the lack of evidence establishing al Qaeda and the Saddam regime as anything other than mutual antagonists, the administration's diagnostic frame sought to link rhetorically these otherwise wildly dissimilar actors.

The rhetorical conflation of the Saddam regime with the perpetrators of 9/11 began in earnest with Bush's 11 September 2002 Ellis Island speech that launched the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. One sentence stands out as the first shot fired. For approximately two-thirds of his speech, Bush focused entirely on the events of 9/11, the perpetrators, the victims, the first responders, and "history's call" to this generation of American's to respond to the challenge of mass-casualty terrorism. The text then takes a rhetorical turn. "We are joined by a great coalition of nations to rid the world of terror, and we will not allow any terrorist *or tyrant to threaten civilization with weapons of mass murder*" (Bush September 11, 2002). The italicized phrase creates the rhetorical bridge from hijacked aircraft to WMD, and from al Qaeda to an unnamed tyrant. In subsequent remarks, the President names the narrative's antagonist. "We know Saddam Hussein has longstanding and ongoing ties to international terrorists... We must confront both terror cells and terror states, because they are different faces of the same evil" (Bush October 2, 2002). As Hodges (2011, 73) observes, "the choice of the modifier 'terror' positions the nation-state of Iraq as morally equivalent to 'terror cells.'"

The third side of the threat triangle described by the administration's diagnostic frame explained to the American public why the alliance between al Qaeda and Baghdad had rendered the status quo intolerable and warranted collective action and sacrifice: Saddam's WMD program. The assertion that Saddam alone posed a threat to the US was easily countered. Saddam may have had a track record for miscalculation, but no one doubted that his primary motivation was self-preservation; in other words, deterrence theory applied. However, Saddam's alleged alliance with al Qaeda, an organization that had demonstrated an appetite both for mass murder and martyrdom, suggested the

possibility of a means of WMD delivery that could conceivably conceal the author of the attack. Deterrence, in other words, was not necessarily assured.

The administration's diagnostic frame leveraged this possibility to persuade the American public that the status quo was no longer tolerable. Its power to persuade relied on one assertion that the administration would vigorously defend throughout the rhetorical mobilization campaign and one hypothetical that the administration would frequently raise. The assertion was that Saddam's WMD program was active, and potentially more advanced than US intelligence estimates acknowledged. "We know that Saddam Hussein pursued weapons of mass murder even when inspectors were in his country," Bush explained to the United Nations General Assembly and a large television audience. "Are we to assume that he has stopped when they left" (Bush September 12, 2002)? The hypothetical that followed Bush's assertion played out the worst-case scenario given an Iraq armed with WMD and in an alliance with al Qaeda or another terrorist group. "Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists. Alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraq regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints" (Bush October 7, 2002).

One of the biggest challenges facing the Bush administration's diagnostic framing effort was that Saddam's government, although ugly and repressive as ever, had committed no new sins since it expelled the UN weapons inspectors in 1998. Although Saddam's immediate response to 9/11 was obtuse—he blamed the attacks on US foreign policy—he later offered sympathy for the victims and was on his best behavior henceforth. "As soon as 9/11 happened," remarked General Newbold, "Saddam stopped

doing anything. He was afraid he'd be the next one in the whack-a-mole contest. No more public statements. No more shooting at our aircraft" (interview with author on January 9, 2015). Not only did Iraq discontinue its previously routine engagements with US and British aircraft monitoring Northern and Southern Watch no-fly zones, it also readmitted international weapons inspectors. So what had changed that justified war? The administration's diagnostic framing had to answer this question. It had to clarify for the domestic audience why the status quo, which the US government had tolerated for nearly four years, was no longer tolerable.

According to the administration's diagnostic frame, Saddam's regime may not have changed since 9/11, but the world had. The advent of mass-casualty terrorism had rendered the other two sides of the threat triangle, rogue states with active WMD programs, intolerable. By rhetorically constructing an alliance between America's old antagonist, Saddam, and its new enemy, al Qaeda, the administration's diagnostic frame successfully portrayed Iraq as a *new* problem that demanded a change in policy.

Much has been written about the veracity of the claims that comprised the Bush administration's diagnostic framing. The existence of terrorist groups pursuing mass-casualty tactics was, of course, incontestable. But the assertions and speculations that Iraq had an active WMD program and had established alliances with al Qaeda were contended at the time and have since been debunked. What the Bush administration actually knew about these claims and when it knew it is of significant historical and ethical importance. However, for the purposes of this project, these questions hold little interest. Regardless of the factual merit of these assertions, they produced real consequences in the real world (Hodges 2011, 67). The administration's diagnostic

framing constructed a “version of reality” that, for the majority of Americans, demanded a response. Next I consider how the administration framed what that response should be, its prognostic frame (Hodges 2011, 64).

3.3.3 Prognostic Framing: Forcible Regime Change

Although the rhetorical mobilization campaign for the Iraq War, as I have argued, began in earnest in the September 2002, two essential cornerstones were laid in advance. As discussed above, the January 29, 2002 State of the Union—the “axis of evil” speech—introduced the logic of the threat triangle upon which the administration constructed its diagnostic frame. Four months later, the administration introduced the radical shift in strategic doctrine upon which it would build its prognostic frame: anticipatory self-defense.

In his commencement address at the United States Military Academy in June 2002, President Bush explained to the graduating Cadets and a large television audience that deterrence and containment—the doctrine that had won the Cold War—were no longer relevant in the era of the threat triangle.

Deterrence—the promise of massive retaliation against nations—means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies” (Bush June 1, 2002).

Like Truman’s 1947 speech to Congress that introduced the doctrine of containment and heralded start of the Cold War, Bush’s West Point speech announced a fundamental shift in US strategic doctrine for the era of mass-casualty terrorism (Goodnight 2010, 97).

The problem (per the diagnostic frame) was the confluence of rogue states, WMD, and

mass-casualty terrorism; the solution (the prognostic frame) for the Bush administration was to strike first. “[T]he war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action, and this nation will act” (Bush June 1, 2002). *New York Times* columnist Elisabeth Bumiller reflected that the Bush’s West Point speech “seemed aimed at preparing Americans for a potential war with Iraq” (Bumiller June 2, 2002, 1). McClellan’s (2008) response to Bumiller’s assessment is blunt: “It was.”

Prognostic framing not only makes the executive’s unconstrained policy preference public, it also seeks to portray its policy as a *legitimate* response to the diagnostic frame. George (1980) argues that establishing the legitimacy of a given foreign policy is a two-part proposition. First, in order to marshal domestic support for US foreign policy, an administration must establish “cognitive legitimacy.” It must persuade the domestic audience that it possesses the strategic competency and can marshal sufficient material resources to accomplish the objectives set out in its proposed policy. Second, an administration must establish “normative legitimacy.” It must persuade the domestic audience that its preferred policy is consistent with dominant national values and ideologies.

The US military’s surprisingly (surprising given the British and Soviet Union history in that region) rapid success in Afghanistan decisively established cognitive legitimacy for most Americans. To many observers—including many in high office—the “revolution in military affairs” had, for the US, transformed warfare into a low-risk, high-

payoff enterprise.⁴⁴ Establishing normative legitimacy of forcible regime change, therefore, was the primary focus of the administration's prognostic framing. Its approach to this problem was to offer a reinterpretation for the post-9/11 era of the traditional notion of preemption.

There are two types of anticipatory war: preventive and preemptive (for the explanation of anticipatory war that defines its contemporary usage, see Walzer 2006, Chapter 5). For most scholars of international law and military ethics (e.g., Crawford 2007; Rodin 2007; Walzer 2006), the Iraq War was a clear case of *prevention*. Preventive wars are waged to eliminate or mitigate the capabilities of "a potential future aggressor who does not yet pose an imminent threat" (Rodin 2007, 144). International law has long treated cases of prevention as indistinguishable from any other war of aggression. According to David Rodin (2007, 145), a leading scholar of moral philosophy, "there is no uncertainty as to the legality of undertaking military action against 'emerging threats before they are fully formed'...it clearly contravenes international law as it currently stands." Not only are preventive wars illegal by the standards of international law, they are also, according to Schweller (1992), undemocratic. For Schweller, democratic norms and institutions constrain leaders from initiating wars if the threat is not immediate or evident.

Preemptive wars, by contrast, are waged in anticipation of *imminent* attack. Just war scholar Michael Walzer (2006, 75) likens preemption to a reflex action, "a throwing

⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that the US military was arguably the least convinced that technology had fundamentally "transformed" warfare. H. R. McMaster, an Army General and a History PhD from the University of North Carolina, observes that advocates of military transformation had "proven" the efficacy of the "revolution in military affairs" only in computer simulations that held as constants the messy parts of war – its cultural and psychological context. He describes transformation as a "faith-based" approach to warfare that "focused narrowly on how the United States would *like* to fight and then assumed that the preference was relevant" (McMaster 2008, 20-21).

up of one's arms at the very last minute.” Unlike prevention, preemption has long been recognized in international law and just war doctrine as self-defense, and, therefore a legitimate use of force. The critical distinction, the *imminence* of an attack, is well established in customary international law. Writing in response to the 1837 *Caroline* affair in which British troops boarded and destroyed an American vessel in an act that the British characterized as preemption, Secretary of State Daniel Webster argued: “It will be for that Government [i.e., for the government claiming preemption] to show a necessity of self-defense, instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation” (quoted in Riechberg, Syse & Begby 2006, 564).⁴⁵ In short, although a legal use of state violence, both positive and customary international law has set a very high bar for a government to justify preemption.

The intent of the West Point speech, according to McClellan (2008), was to lower the bar for what constituted legitimate grounds for preemption in order to characterize its unconstrained policy preference as a preemptive war. The Bush doctrine, as it was later dubbed, “unambiguously stated” that the United States “would not hesitate to use force if necessary to preempt not just an ‘imminent’ threat but a ‘grave and gathering’ one if need be” (McClellan 2008, 134). The Bush administration’s prognostic framing is best understood, therefore, as both a public statement of its unconstrained policy preference, forcible regime change, and a justification for its reinterpretation of imminence in order to legitimize that preference. In his address to the UN General Assembly, President Bush warned that “the first time we may be completely certain he has a—nuclear weapons is

⁴⁵ Although Webster’s definition “seems to be the favored one among students of international law,” Walzer (2006, 75) is critical. “I don’t believe that it addresses itself usefully to the experience of imminent war. There is often plenty of time for deliberation, agonizing hours, days, even weeks of deliberation when one doubts that war can be avoided and wonders whether or not to strike first.”

when, God forbid, he uses one [*sic*]” (Bush September 12, 2002). In Webster’s era, in other words, failure to preempt an imminent threat could result in grave outcomes. In the post-9/11 era according the administration, “vast oceans no longer protect us from danger” (Bush October 7, 2002). Failure to preempt “grave and gathering” threats, therefore, could be catastrophic. “Facing clear evidence of peril,” Bush insisted in his 7 October 2002 Cincinnati speech, “we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”

The Bush administration’s prognostic framing extrapolated from the threat triangle logical implications for the traditional ideas of imminent threat and preemptive war. In doing so, the administration reconfirmed the cognitive legitimacy of forcible regime change in Iraq *and* established the grounds for its normative legitimacy. Given its alleged alliance with terrorists, Iraq’s mere possession of WMD constituted an imminent threat, and, therefore, a legitimate justification for preemption. “With every step the Iraqi regime takes toward gaining and deploying the most terrible weapons,” Bush explained before the to the UN General Assembly (September 12, 2002), “our own options to confront that regime will narrow.” Although the administration expressed throughout its rhetorical mobilization campaign its hope that war could be avoided, the minimum demands it placed on the Iraqi regime to avoid war suggest that the administration did not consider a *modus vivendi* with Saddam as a serious policy option. “If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm,” Bush concluded in his 2003 State of the Union Address, “for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him” (Bush January 28, 2003).

3.3.4 Motivational Framing

Diagnostic and prognostic frames are readily discernable in President Bush's speeches during the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. In multiple speeches, the President described the emergence of a threat triangle and insisted that the imminence of the danger it presented justified forcibly ousting Saddam as a form of preemption. The third defining task of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is motivational framing, the executive's specification of societal contributions required to achieve the objectives laid out in the prognostic framing.

The administration's motivational framing targeted three primary domestic audiences with three distinct appeals. First, for those who would be directly responsible for tearing down the Saddam regime, the Bush administration's motivational frame sounded a chord familiar to most states on the eve of war. Bush's commencement address at West Point put on notice the Army's future officer corps—and indirectly all those serving in the military, the diplomatic corps, and the intelligence community—that history has “issued its call to your generation.” Bush conceded that the administration's policy preference would place large demands on the members of the armed forces and their families, but he insisted that they were necessary. “Terror cells and outlaw regimes building weapons of mass destruction are different faces of the same evil,” Bush explained in his Cincinnati speech. “Our security requires that we confront both, and the United States military is capable of confronting both.” As the planned date of the invasion became closer, the President's motivational message grew increasingly somber. During his 2003 State of the Union Address, Bush addressed the uniformed military directly.

Tonight I have a message for the men and women who will keep the peace, members of the American Armed Forces. Many of you are assembling in or near the Middle East, and some crucial hours may lay ahead. In those hours, the success of our cause will depend on you. Your training prepared you. Your honor will guide you. You believe in America, and America believes in you.”

The second domestic audience that presidential rhetoric targeted with an appeal for collective action was Congress. The administration voiced its need for Congress to go on record in support of forcible regime change by passing the Iraq War Resolution,⁴⁶ a bill sponsored by Dennis Hastert and Dick Gephardt authorizing the use of force in Iraq to “enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions regarding Iraq.” Bush made his appeal to Congress public three days prior to the House vote. During his 7 October 2002 address in Cincinnati, his most forceful defense to date of the administration’s unconstrained policy preference, Bush announced, “I have asked Congress to authorize the use of America’s military, if it proves necessary, to enforce UN Security Council demands.”

As I discuss below in more detail, administration motivations for seeking congressional approval were politically complex (as the professional politicians in Congress could easily discern), but the language of the motivational frame was carefully crafted to give potential opponents of the policy two good geopolitical excuses for giving the president what he wanted. First, the Cincinnati speech assured the public that a vote for the Iraq War Resolution was consistent with multilateral agreements already in place, not unilateral US action. “The resolution will tell the United Nations and all nations that America speaks with one voice and is determined to make the demands of the civilized

⁴⁶ The bill that Congress ultimately voted on was House Joint Resolution 114, the “Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002.” The bill passed in the House on October 10, 2002 and one day later in the Senate. President Bush signed the bill into law (Public Law 107-243) on October 16, 2002.

world mean something.” Second, even though the administration did not seek or desire a diplomatic solution, the speech portrayed the Iraq War Resolution as leverage for coercive diplomacy. “Congress will also be sending a message to the dictator of Iraq that his only chance—his only choice—is full compliance and the time remaining for that choice is limited.”⁴⁷

The final audience for the administration’s motivational framing was the general public. Although polling data suggested that a majority of Americans favored the use of force to overthrow the government of Saddam Hussein, the administration, Bush in particular, feared that support for forcible regime change would melt away as the costs of war became apparent and concrete, as they inevitably would. “I am a product of the Vietnam era,” Bush shared with Woodward (2003, 95). “I remember presidents trying to wage wars that were very unpopular, and the nation split.”

Despite the administration’s confidence in its “transformed” military, predictions that US troops would be welcomed as liberators, and evidence from the Gulf War suggesting that the Iraq army punched well *below* its weight, the administration recognized that things could go badly wrong. Administration objectives were radically more ambitious than those pursued in 1990. Unlike during the Gulf War, Iraq would be fighting for regime survival this time. For Iraq’s leadership, defeat would mean death, imprisonment, or, at a minimum, a life on the lam. Not only did Iraq have a new incentive structure and a still-formidable conventional force, it also possessed, according to intelligence estimates and the administration’s diagnostic frame, a substantial WMD capability with multiple means—including unauthorized missiles, unmanned aircraft, and

⁴⁷ Secretary of State Powell had been making the same case to members of Congress. In order to make coercive diplomacy possible, Powell explained to the House International Relations Committee on 20 September 2002, “the threat of war has to be there” (quoted in Woodward 2004, 187).

terrorist mules—of delivering chemical, biological, or, potentially nuclear payloads as far as the US homeland. In a declassified account of testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, an unnamed senior intelligence officer shared his opinion that the likelihood of Saddam employing WMD if unthreatened was low. When Senator Levin asked the witness to comment on the likelihood that Iraq would employ chemical or biological weapons in response to a US effort to forcibly unseat the regime, the intelligence officer replied, “Pretty high, in my view.”⁴⁸

Presidential speeches during the period of rhetorical mobilization campaign reflected these concerns. Although appeals for positive contributions from the general public were less explicit than those made to the military and Congress, two are discernable in the executive rhetoric. First, there is an implicit appeal for the public to accept the task of disarming Saddam as a generational burden. American national myth idealizes not only instances of individual heroism, but also the contributions of entire generations. The administration’s motivational framing included a petition for *this* generation to recognize its place in that narrative. On Ellis Island, with the Statue of Liberty and a fluttering American flag as backdrops, the president declared, “There is a line in our time, and in every time, between the defenders of human liberty and those who seek to master the minds and souls of others. Our generation has now heard history’s call, and we will answer it” (Bush September 11, 2002). References to the Second World War and the Cold War were implicit, but it is unlikely they were accidental.

⁴⁸ Declassified excerpts from the Senate testimony were provided by CIA Director George Tenet in response to a request by Senator Bob Graham, Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, to make available additional unclassified material to support the debate over the Iraq War Resolution. See *New York Times* October 9, 2002.

Likewise in Cincinnati three weeks later: “Saddam Hussein’s actions have put us on notice, and there is no refuge from our responsibilities” (Bush October 7, 2002).

The second appeal that the administration’s motivational frame directed toward the American public was essentially a plea for patience. Rather than asserting that toppling the Iraqi regime would be a low cost affair—an assertion that is typical of presidents seeking public support for the use of force and, of note, one that many in the administration actually believed to be true—motivational framing deliberately drew attention to the inevitability of costs. “An Iraqi regime faced with its own demise may attempt cruel and desperate measures...there is no easy or risk-free course of action” (Bush October 7, 2002). In direct contrast to the many commentators who publicly expressed their faith that America’s technological advantage would result in a low-cost war (at least for one side of the conflict), the President reminded the American public that,

The technologies of war have changed; the risks and suffering of war have not. For the brave Americans who bear the risk, no victory is free from sorrow. This nation fights reluctantly, because we know the cost and we dread the days of mourning that always come (Bush January 28, 2003).

By foregrounding the potential costs of a war with Iraq and perhaps even embellishing them (based on its actual expectations), the administration had, in a sense, prepaid on the political costs that the casualties hypothesis anticipates. In exchange for its frank (although never explicit) dialogue regarding the inevitability of casualties, the administration expected public support for the war to remain steadfast despite the return of flag-draped coffins.

3.3.5 Counter Framing: A New Front in the “War on Terror”

The administration’s counter framing strategy systematically rendered opposition to Bush’s policy preference politically imprudent. At the core of this strategy was the administration’s portrayal of Iraq as one of the many *campaigns* that would be fought in the “war on terror” (Hodges 2011). “Some have argued that confronting the threat from Iraq could detract from the war against terror,” Bush explained in his 7 October 2002 Cincinnati speech. “To the contrary, confronting the threat posed by Iraq is crucial to winning the war on terror... Terror cells and outlaw regimes building weapons of mass destruction are different faces of the same evil.” Rather than selling the Iraq War as the distinct policy agenda that it was, the administration chose to portray it as the next and most important *front* in America’s response to 9/11 and “discursively positioned” Iraq and al Qaeda as “interchangeable adversaries” (Hodges 2011, 16). This choice had the chilling effect on potential opposition and critics of forcible regime change that the administration intended.

The choice of the homeland security trope is particularly significant given the evidence that the Iraq-terrorist nexus was of little or no influence in the policy preference formation of leading proponents of forcible regime change. McClellan (2008) describes homeland security as the “lesser motivation for war.” Frank Miller, Special Assistant to the President during the period of analysis agreed, adding that “the reasons for going to war had nothing to do with 9/11” (interview with the author on 27 April 2015). Miller’s assertion is supported by the fact for many of the leading administration advocates of forcible regime change—Cheney, Rumsfeld, Libby, Wolfowitz, and Feith—their overt advocacy *predated* 9/11.

Representing Iraq as the next front in the war on terrorism contributed to the administration's counter framing in two ways. First, it provided a more palatable justification than the actual motivations that were prompting the administration's unconstrained preference: reasserting US hegemony in the region by eliminating an emerging rival (Cheney, Rumsfeld) and/or by exporting liberalism (Wolfowitz, Libby, Feith). Either of these justifications, if the administration had chosen to foreground them, would have provided the administration's opposition ample "rhetorical materials out of which to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal" (Krebs & Jackson 2007, 42). Americans tend to be as skeptical of overseas crusades (Drezner 2008; Jentleson 1992; Jentleson & Britton 1998) as they are uninspired by dispassionate balance-of-power calculations.

Second, by representing Iraq as the next front in a popular war that America seemed to be winning, the administration made it abundantly difficult for either the opposition party or the media to mount a critique without facing public rebuke. By rhetorically conflating a *prospective* war with an ongoing war, the Bush administration benefitted from the "rally 'round the flag effect" (Mueller 1973) that typically kicks in only when war is imminent or underway. As a result, "opposition to war had become something of a third rail" for politicians in either party; "only the very brave or the very foolhardy dared to venture anywhere near it" (Bacevich 2005, 26).

Likewise, for major news media outlets, questioning the commander-in-chief *during* an ongoing war has long been recognized as a prescription for losing customers. Several networks had recruited General Newbold, shortly after his retirement in 2002, to serve as a "talking head" during the run-up to the invasion. In meetings with ABC's leadership, for example, Newbold openly shared his doubts, as he had while on active

duty, regarding the prudence of the administration's policy preference. "They seemed fascinated with the conversation," recalled Newbold, "but they just weren't in the challenging mode." Given national mood of post-9/11 America, "they could not bring themselves to criticize the administration" (interview with author on January 9, 2015).

In addition to portraying Iraq as a front in an ongoing and popular war, the administration also isolated potential opposition by portraying a war in Iraq as abundantly winnable. There is enormous political risk in opposing a president's preference for war when a successful outcome seems likely. If indeed the war is successful, those who crossed party lines to stand with the president enjoy a modest political payoff and prevent the incumbent party from differentiating itself on the issue of war (Arena 2008; Schultz 2001), while those who opposed a successful war pay a *substantial*, often career-ending political penalty. Opposition politicians, therefore, have strong political incentives to bandwagon with the party in power during times of war and to offer public acknowledgement of support even if they have legitimate concerns regarding the administration's justification for war.

Two rhetorical strategies promoted the American public's expectations of a quick and cheap victory, an expectation that neither career diplomats nor soldiers shared. The first, as discussed above, was the administration's emphasis on its faith in the transformed military. The second was the "sweets-and-flowers narrative." Based primarily on guarantees from high-profile Iraqi expats like Ahmed Chalabi—a man who had much to gain personally from a successful invasion and, therefore, a source in whom the intelligence community put little trust—the administration assured the American public and Congress that American GIs would be welcomed as liberators, agents of

progress in a benighted and stagnant region. Rather than inciting resentment, an America willing to assert its incomparable power in Iraq and throughout the region would command respect and garner allies. Making this case during testimony in September 2002, Rumsfeld assured the House Armed Services Committee that “if our leaders do the right thing, others will follow and support our just cause” (quoted in Snyder 2003, 33).

Examined in hindsight, both the conflation of Saddam with al Qaeda and the events of 9/11 and the sweets-and-flowers narrative strain plausibility. Yet each contained a message capable of resonating with some portion of American voters and opinion makers, rendering opposition profoundly dangerous.

Up to this point I have traced the Bush administration’s decision-making process from determination of its unconstrained policy preference of forcible regime change to the conclusion of its rhetorical campaign to marshal domestic support for that preference. By mapping the events of this process onto the decision-making model this dissertation theorizes, the rhetorical mobilization model, I have attempted to show that perceived risk of domestic sanction caused the administration to organize for, plan, and execute a rhetorical campaign to create a more favorable distribution of domestic preferences. Furthermore, I have argued that analysis of presidential speeches reveals that executive rhetoric performed the four defining tasks of rhetorical mobilization as theorized by social movement theory’s conceptualization of collective action framing: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational framing, and counter framing. The next step in my event mapping effort is to examine the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences and the residual risk of domestic sanction that the Bush administration perceived at the moment of its war decision.

3.4 Pre-decisional Distribution of Domestic Preference and Bush's War Decision

We know that the policy that the Bush administration set in motion on March 20, 2003 was virtually indistinguishable, in terms of ends and means, from the administration's unconstrained policy preference as conceived in late 2001 or early 2002. In other words, the perceived risk of domestic sanction at the moment of policy implementation did not influence executive decision making. Yet, as I have argued, domestic opinion *had* constrained administration decision making in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The President in particular did not believe that the American public and other domestic actors were prepared to follow him into Iraq. What explains this change?

Three explanations seem most plausible. First, the administration may have perceived that the Iraqi threat had increased during the interval. By March 2003, the threat may have become so intolerable that the administration was willing, for the safety of the state, to accept the risk domestic sanction. While plausible, this explanation seems unlikely. As discussed above, Iraq responded to 9/11 by *moderating* its behavior. As Kaufmann (2004, 16) observes, following the November 2002 UN Security Council Resolution declaring Iraq in material breach of Gulf War ceasefire terms (UNSCR 1441), "Iraq cooperated with intrusive inspections to a degree rarely seen in a country not militarily occupied."

A second explanation for the administration's readiness to accept political risk in March 2003 that it was not ready to shoulder in November 2001 is that President Bush's individual risk tolerance had increased during the interval. It was not the degree of political risk that had changed; it was the President himself. While also plausible, this explanation is counterintuitive given the trends in presidential approval rates. According

to Gallup, the President's 87 percent approval rating in November 2001 had steadily *declined* to 58 percent one week before the invasion. A 58 percent approval rating is still respectable, but the precipitous trend would typically predict a *decrease* in risk tolerance in foreign policy decision making (Graham 1993).

In this section, I consider a third explanation for the change in the administration's readiness to accept risk of domestic sanction: the risk itself had diminished. This is the explanation that is consonant with the rhetorical mobilization model. My model contends that rhetorical mobilization campaigns that resonate with domestic audiences increase the homogeneity of domestic preferences. This has two effects. First, it increases the likelihood that the executive will be able to extract the domestic support it needs to prosecute its foreign policy preference. Second, it decreases the likelihood that the executive will be punished politically for its war decision.

In Chapter 4 I assess the resonance of the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign and offer evidence of a causal relationship between executive rhetoric and the favorable distribution of domestic preferences at the moment of Bush's war decision. My intent here is merely to establish that the perceived risk of domestic sanction had indeed changed in the administration's favor. Establishing this is critical to my argument. Without evidence of variation in perceived risk, then the administration's decision to implement its unconstrained policy preference regardless of an unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences would disconfirm my theory (Beach 2014; Bennett 2010; Collier 2011; Van Evera 1997).

For each of the four potential sources of domestic sanction considered above—the general public, the news media and other foreign policy elites, the Democratic Party, and

the administration's own bureaucracy (to include the military, intelligence community, and the professional diplomatic corps)—the risks to the administration had perceptibly and measurably diminished during the interval from the January 2002 “axis of evil” speech to the invasion of Iraq. First, as discussed above, most opinion polls taken after 9/11 consistently suggested that the American public supported military operations to overthrow Saddam. However, the administration perceived that public support was so contingent—on low costs, on UN approval, on multilateral support, on the progress of inspections, etc.—that it would quickly evaporate once war was imminent or the costs became concrete.

By February 2003, the polling data suggested robust and durable public support. According to Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* polling, support for “invading Iraq with US ground troops in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power” rebounded from 53 percent at the start of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign (3-6 October 2002) to 63 percent by February (7-9 February 2003).⁴⁹ This alone is significant. According to Graham (1994, 196-97), “majority-level public opinion” (50-59 percent) may be sufficient to enable implementation of a policy decision, but only with “decisive presidential policy leadership” to overcome domestic opponents. “Consensus-level public opinion” (60-69 percent) is likely to keep opponents at bay even without active presidential support.

A PIPA poll (12-18 February 2003; N=3163) provides a richer sense for the public mood in the later stages of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign.

⁴⁹ In a Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* poll taken on the eve of the invasion (14-15 March 2003), 64 percent of respondents favored invasion. Since war was essentially inevitable at this point, it is difficult to distinguish the effects of administration rhetoric from the tendency of the public to “rally ‘round the flag” on the eve of war (Mueller 1973).

The poll suggested that, while the American public still preferred a multilateral effort, it recognized the necessity of taking action, even without the UN's imprimatur. Seventy-four percent of respondents were very or somewhat convinced by the prompt, "Since it is now clear that Iraq will not cooperate, the UN really has no choice but to overthrow the Iraqi government." In response to the prompt, "If the UN Security Council does not pass a new resolution authorizing the invasion of Iraq, would you then favor the UN continuing the inspection process or the United States and some other countries invading Iraq anyway," 78 percent responded that the US should proceed with invasion. The February PIPA poll also suggested that the public shared the Bush administration's contention that time was critical. Sixty-nine percent found the following prompt very or somewhat convincing: "The longer we wait, the more advanced Iraq's weapons program will become...So an invasion of Iraq should be launched as soon as possible."

The polling data collected in February and March 2003 did not tell an entirely one-sided story. The American public still preferred multilateralism and generally wanted to give inspections more time. However, the polls consistently showed that a majority of Americans had accepted the administration's diagnostic framing and its insistence that the status quo—containment and inspections—was no longer tolerable. In one Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll taken one week *prior to* Secretary of State Powell's address to the UN that laid out the US case against Iraq (29-30 January 2003; N=900), 87 percent responded that they believed Iraq was hiding WMD. More surprisingly, 81 percent reported a belief that Saddam Hussein had ties to al Qaeda. Furthermore, polls taken after Powell's UN speech indicated *for the first time* since the January 2002 State of the Union that a majority of Americans (63 percent according to an

ABC/*Washington Post* survey, February 6-9, 2003; N=1001) believed that the President Bush had presented sufficient evidence to justify the use of force to topple Saddam.

Nacos et al (2011, 120) describe the public mood as “permissive.” On the eve of the war, “political leaders could go either way on war and the public would go along.”

President Bush often insisted that polls did not drive his decision making (Bush 2010). This may be true. Regardless, the increasingly favorable opinion polls play an important role in understanding the President’s ultimate war decision. The polling data itself became a political fact that shaped residual risk. First, the Bush communications team used survey results to fine tune their diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing (Holsti 2012, 25). Because such a powerful majority of Americans had accepted the administration’s diagnostic framing, opposition to the war became politically perilous. In the post-9/11 rhetorical environment, few were willing to accept the political risk of challenging the administration on grounds that it was exaggerating the threat. “Disproved doomsayers can always claim that caution induced by their warnings prevented the predicted calamity from occurring,” observes Mueller (2009, 156; quoted in Krebs & Lobasz 2007, 416). “Disproved Pollyannas have no such convenient refuge.”

The administration exploited the caution of leading Democrats to essentially eliminate the opposition party as a source of domestic political risk. On 19 September 2002, the administration sent to Congress a resolution authorizing military action in Iraq. Joint Resolution 114, Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq (commonly known as the Iraq War Resolution), forced Democratic congressmen to go on record less than a month in advance of midterm elections.⁵⁰ The bill passed the House on 10

⁵⁰ According to Woodward (2004) it was Cheney who first recognized the value of putting Democratic congressmen on record so close to midterm elections.

October by a vote of 296 to 133 and passed the Senate just past midnight of the 11th by a vote of 77-23.⁵¹ President Bush signed the bill into law (Public Law 107-243) on October 16.

The Iraq War Resolution was diplomatically significant. It signaled to the UN that the administration enjoyed the support of Congress and the American public and to the Saddam regime that administration threats were credible. But the most consequential effect of the resolution was, arguably, its effect on residual risk. By allowing the resolution's passage, Democrats had forfeited any future opportunity to punish the administration on the grounds of its war decision. To illustrate this point, Krebs & Lobasz (2007, 450) offer a counterfactual. Had the Democrats taken a "braver stance," they may have suffered some short-term losses. However, they certainly would have profited in the long run when the war "turned sour." Rather than of offering "tortured" explanations for why he now opposed what he previously authorized, presidential candidate Kerry would have been able to attack Bush's war decision directly. It is at least plausible that this would have changed the outcome.

Woodward (2004, 204) describes the resolution as "a blank check" for the administration and for Foyle (2004, 284), the vote "effectively ended the substantive role of Congress." Washington Post staff writer Dana Milbank proclaimed the morning after the White House sent the proposed resolution to Congress that the "rout of congressional Democrats was virtually complete" (Milbank September 20, 2002, A01, cited in Woodward 2004, 187). Although the Democrats did not entirely concede as Milbank predicted—indeed, only a small majority of Democratic senators voted in favor (27-21)

⁵¹ George H. W. Bush sought a similar resolution for the 1990 Gulf War. Although the resolution passed, the margins, particularly in the Senate, were far narrower (52-47 in the Senate and 250-183 in the House).

and a respectable majority of Democratic representatives voted *against* it (81-126)—the party leaders and presidential hopefuls (e.g., John Kerry and Hillary Clinton) all lined up behind the bill, making it difficult for lower-ranking Democrats to criticize the policy too aggressively (Krebs & Lobasz 2007, 444). Despite notable exceptions like Ted Kennedy and Robert Byrd—members, observes Krebs & Lobasz (2007, 444), who enjoyed safe seats and harbored no presidential ambitions—Democratic leadership and party strategists⁵² concluded that there was “no institutional interest in taking responsibility for the issue away from the administration” (Foyle 2004, 284).

The news media, with few exceptions, seemed to have arrived at a similar conclusion. Throughout the period of the rhetorical mobilization campaign, it showed little institutional interest in questioning the administration’s diagnostic and prognostic frames. Rather than challenging the more problematic aspects of the administration’s narrative, the American news media became a valuable extension to the administration’s public affairs apparatus. A 2003 study in the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Cunningham 2003 as summarized in Bennett et al 2007, 43) finds that an overwhelming number of stories during the six months prior to the invasion (essentially the period of the rhetorical mobilization campaign) originated in the White House. Of the 414 stories about the buildup to and rationale for war, only 34 originated from sources other than administration officials. Another study surveyed 393 on camera interviews during the weeks prior to Colin Powell’s UN testimony and found that 76% were government officials (Rendall & Broughel 2003 cited in Exoo 2010, 86).

⁵² According to Foyle (2004, 281-82) Democratic strategists James Carville, Stanley Greenberg, and Robert Shrum circulated a memo prior to the vote that advised members that supporting the measure would not hurt them politically and that “the debate and vote on the resolution will bring closure on the extended Iraq debate that has crowded out the country’s domestic agenda...”

There are numerous cases in which sources that were highly credible came forward, sometimes aggressively, with evidence that challenged the administration's narrative. With few exceptions, major news organizations either ignored these sources or buried their claims in innocuous sections of their publications. Media reporting on the intercepted aluminum tubes bound for Iraq illustrates this pattern of media behavior. The administration concluded that the only possible use of these tubes was as casings for rotors in centrifuges to enrich uranium. If true, this was a dramatic development, providing material evidence in a case that was, to date, entirely circumstantial (Massing 2004). It was rightfully *The New York Times'* lead story when it broke.

But the level of certainty conveyed in Judith Miller's article troubled David Albright, a physicist and former weapons inspector with whom the intelligence community had consulted on the tubes. Although the conclusion *The Times* reported represented the majority opinion, Albright was aware that a significant number of respected scientists had found the evidence inconclusive while others rejected these conclusions outright. Miller's article made no mention of this substantial minority opinion. Albright contacted Miller to voice his concerns for her portrayal of the certainty of the intelligence community's conclusions. The following week, Miller noted Albright's concerns, but essentially as a footnote in another article that further supported White House claims (Massing 2004). Dissatisfied, Albright next approached Joby Warrick of *The Washington Post* who wrote a powerful article questioning the administration's use, and possible misuse, of data. As this information threatened to undermine the sole piece of material evidence in the administration's WMD case, and ultimately its case for war, Albright's revelations warranted front-page attention. Instead,

Warrick's story in *The Washington Post* appeared on page A-18. Similarly, when lead UN weapons inspector Mohamed ElBaradei issued a preliminary report that found "no evidence" of a nuclear weapons program and explicitly dismissed the premise that the aluminum tubes represented a smoking gun, the story never made it north of A10 in the *Times* (Massing 2004).

There were, however, some first rate investigative journalists who, as the invasion was imminent, unearthed information that should have been very troubling to the administration's case. All were ignored, dismissed, or buried south of A-10 (or in other out-of-the-way places). *Newsweek's* John Barry, for example, revealed that the testimony of Saddam's defector son-in-law, General Hussein Kamel, confirmed that Saddam had *curtailed* his WMD program, directly contradicting the Bush administration's characterization of Kamel's testimony. *Newsweek* ran the story as a brief, 500-word item in its "Periscope" section—a section usually reserved for soft news, and the mainstream media failed to pick up on the story (Exoo 2010, 87). C. J. Chivers of the *Times* learned from Kurdish authorities who had visited the camp that Powell, in his UN testimony, described as a "poison and explosive training center camp...located in northeastern Iraq" that the facility was a "wholly unimpressive place" lacking even plumbing. The *Times* reported the story on page A29 (Exoo 2010 88-89). According to the *Post's* Pentagon correspondent Thomas Ricks, "The paper was not front-paging stuff. Administration assertions were on the front page. Things that challenged the administration were on A18 on Sunday or A24 on Monday. There was an attitude among editors: Look we're going to war, why do we even worry about all this contrary stuff" (quoted in Bennett et al, 35)?

In short, as the rhetorical mobilization campaign proceeded, it became increasingly evident that the mainstream news media had little interest in questioning administration claims. Instead, it effectively amplified the administration's prognostic and diagnostic framing, and underreported evidence that troubled the administration's narrative. Later, both the *Times* and the *Post* admitted to underemphasizing important challenges to the Bush administration's claims regarding the state of Saddam's WMD program. These admissions, however, came well after the invasion, when the Bush administration's communications efforts could no longer credibly maintain this spin (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2007, 50). The news media, which seemed poised to serve its watchdog function when the administration initially rolled out its unconstrained preference for forcible regime change, posed little risk to Bush on the eve of his war decision.

Finally, at the moment of Bush's war decision, the administration had to take stock of the residual risk of domestic sanction from within its own bureaucracy. Many high-ranking officers in the State Department, the intelligence community, and the military were unconvinced by the administration's diagnostic frame. The administration recognized that public expression of these doubts could derail its policy agenda. By February 2003, however, it was clear to the administration that there was little risk of revolts from within.

Multiple sources report private discussions in which Secretary Powell offered interpretations at variance with Cheney and Rumsfeld regarding the urgency of the threat, the expectations of cost, and the risks of unilateralism (Woodward 2004, 271; see also Bush 2010). As Woodward (2004, 155) observes, "Rarely...had there been such deep

division within a national security team as between Cheney and Powell. Each had a fundamentally different definition of what was possible, and what was necessary.” Given Powell’s public stature, had he decided to voice his concerns publicly, there is little doubt that public faith in the administration’s narrative would have eroded if not crumbled altogether.

But by February of 2003, Bush had good cause for faith in Powell’s loyalty. First, over objections from Cheney and Rumsfeld, Bush had given Powell what Powell most wanted: the diplomatic track that concluded with the unanimous adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1441 declaring that Iraq was in “material breach” of the Gulf War ceasefire terms. Additionally, despite Powell’s relative lack of enthusiasm for this enterprise, he was an effective campaigner who consistently remained on script. Powell was the source of 11 percent of all the network news messages claiming Iraq possessed WMD and 19 percent of claims of a link between Iraq and al Qaeda (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon & Shapiro 2011, 104-109). In his 5 February 2003 UN speech, notwithstanding his insistence that CIA Director Tenet sit directly behind him and in full camera view, Powell liberally used the first person. “[Some] say Saddam Hussein’s secular tyranny and al Qaeda’s religious tyranny do not mix. I am not comforted by this thought...Ambition and hatred are enough to bring Iraq and al Qaeda together.” Finally, in an approach typical of Bush’s leadership style, he assured himself that Powell did not present a political risk by asking him directly. “Are you with me on this?” Bush asked Powell on 13 January 2003, shortly after deciding to forgo a second UN resolution. According to Woodward (2004, 271), Powell replied, “Yes, sir, I will support you. I’m with you, Mr. President.”

Flag and general officers serving on the Joint Staff and the headquarters of US Central Command were among the first outside of the president's immediate national security team to have visibility with the administration's unconstrained policy preference. Their responses generally ranged from lukewarm to incredulous. According to General Newbold, only the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Peter Pace, agreed fully with that forcible regime change was the right policy and that now was the right time (interview with author on January 9, 2015). Yet by February, the administration had no reason to fear a "revolt of the generals." First, General Newbold, perhaps the most vocal critic of forcible regime change during high-level planning at the Pentagon and the White House, was essentially shut out of important planning meetings, sometimes learning about them only after the fact. Newbold recognized that the officer in his position, the Joint Staff's Director of Operations, *had* to be part of this dialogue. Concerned with the implications of losing his capacity to advise the President, SECDEF, and Chairman, Newbold chose to step down and retire in October 2002.⁵³ Additionally, Wolfowitz's very public criticism of Army Chief of Staff Shinseki, who in his congressional testimony had implicitly questioned the administration's public estimates of the potential costs of war, amply demonstrated to other senior officers the political costs of public dissent.

Finally, the risk that the military would obstruct implementation of the administration's policy preference was mitigated by the philosophy that the Chairman of

⁵³ General Newbold's decision to retire came as a surprise to many on the Joint Staff and in the Marine Corps. Few officers achieve the rank of Lieutenant General (or Vice Admiral), so Newbold's retirement cannot be characterized as an "early retirement." However, most considered Newbold a likely candidate for a fourth star and consideration for the most consequential positions in the military: a theater combatant command or Marine Corps Commandant. As an action officer on the Joint Staff during the period of analysis, I was among those surprised by the announcement. Although General Newbold did not share his reasons for retiring outside of his closest personal staff, family, and friends, the reasons presented above were widely accepted by the Pentagon's rumor mill. General Newbold did not share this vignette with me during our interview. He did, however, give me permission to print it.

the Joint Chiefs of Staff Richard Meyer brought to that office. The 1947 National Security Act and 1986 Department of Defense Reorganization Act grant the Chairman the statutory responsibility to provide military advice to the Secretary of Defense and the President. Eighteen officers have served as Chairman since 1949, and each, quite naturally, has defined this responsibility differently. General Myers, observed General Newbold, tended to view his role conservatively, limiting his military advice primarily to *how* to implement the policy preferences of the Commander-in-Chief and Defense Secretary, not whether those preferences were strategically prudent (Newbold interview with author on January 9, 2015).

3.5 Summary

This Chapter has traced the rhetorical mobilization process that started with the Bush administration's initial public expression of its unconstrained policy preference to forcibly remove Saddam from power and concluded with the execute order directing General Franks to initiate major combat operations. Despite polling data suggesting public support for forcible regime change, the Bush administration perceived, with good reason, that its unconstrained preference had troubled the post-9/11 consensus, increasing the risk of domestic sanction if it chose to implement its preference. The administration, therefore, organized for, planned, and executed a complex rhetorical campaign to mitigate that risk.

I have argued that during the course of the administration's rhetorical campaign, the distribution of domestic preferences became increasingly unified. The primary threats to administration's policy agenda—the general public, the Democrats, the news

media, and the senior leaders of the government agencies that would be responsible for implementing the administration's policy choice—had either been convinced, co-opted, or coerced into active support or resigned silence. As a result the residual risk of domestic sanction at the moment of the war decision had diminished. In March 2003, the administration initiated its implementation of a policy that was effectively an unadulterated version of the unconstrained policy preference it conceived in late 2001 and made public on September 11, 2002.

The next task is to make the case that the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign caused the observed unification in the distribution of domestic preferences, reducing the political and military risk of taking the nation to war and making Bush's war decision politically feasible. This is the goal of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Rhetorical Mobilization for the Iraq War: A Slam-dunk Case

The previous chapter makes three major claims about the decision-making process that culminated in the 20 March 2003 invasion of Iraq. First, the Bush administration's initial articulation of its unconstrained policy preference, forcible regime change, troubled the post 9/11 domestic consensus. The Bush administration perceived, therefore, that it could not implement its policy preference without a prohibitively high degree of political and military risk. Second, rather than abandoning or amending its policy preference in the face of this risk, the administration orchestrated a rhetorical campaign to drive risk down. Third, the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences had become measurably more unified, less polarized, than the pre-campaign structure. As a result, at the moment of the Bush administration's war decision, that is, the moment that the President authorized CJCS to issue the execute order to General Franks, fear of domestic sanction no longer constrained the administration's decision making.

In this chapter I make two additional claims. First, I argue that the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign caused the observed change over time in the distribution of domestic preferences and the administration's perceived risk of implementing its policy preference. I support this argument by measuring the resonance of executive rhetoric during this period according to criteria theorized in social movement scholarship. Second, I argue that the resonance of the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign was a necessary condition to the observed outcome. I maintain that if Bush's rhetoric had failed to resonate, it is likely that the administration would have amended or abandoned its unconstrained policy preference. To advance this claim,

I will suggest several counterfactual scenarios in which Bush rhetoric fails to resonate and suggest theoretically supported mechanisms that would predict either static or increased risk of domestic sanction at the moment of Bush's war decision.

4.1 Resonance

Adapting social movement theory's conceptualization of collective action framing to an international relations context, I hypothesized in Chapter 2 that the resonance of a rhetorical mobilization campaign determines the likelihood that the executive will implement, amend, or abandon its policy preference. I further argued that social movement theory provides international relations scholars with a useful approach to appraising the resonance of executive rhetoric. As with social movements, rhetorical campaigns to sell wars vary according to their salience and credibility, each of which can be measured by three factors that yield a total of six sub-hypotheses. In this section I will examine the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign through the lens of these six factors. Because the Bush administration succeeded nearly perfectly at converting its policy preference for forcible regime change in Iraq into state policy, we should expect to discover that the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign resonated with the American public, that is, it was credible and salient as measured by these six factors.

My dataset is the compendium of all of President Bush's speeches, including weekly radio addresses, delivered during the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. As mentioned in the previous chapter, two speeches bracket this period: President Bush's primetime address at Ellis Island on September 11, 2002 and his 17

March 2003 address to the nation announcing his war decision. Although Bush delivered speeches prior to this date that were important to the administration's rhetorical mobilization,⁵⁴ I only analyze those speeches that fall within the period of the campaign itself. With three exceptions, I chose to exclude presidential press conferences. My rationale, following Gershkoff & Kushner (2005), is that press conferences allow enough spontaneity that a president's remarks may not be entirely accurate reflections of the administration's scripted rhetorical strategy. The three news conferences I include in my dataset are: 7 November 2002 (in advance of the vote on UN Security Council Resolution 1441); 6 March 2003 (in advance of chief weapons inspector Hans Blix's report to the UN Security Council); and 16 March 2003 (a joint news conference with the British and Spanish prime ministers). I include these because of the unusually extensive prepared remarks that preceded the Q&A. I do not, however, include in my dataset Bush's responses during the Q&A that followed the President's prepared statements.

Having identified the speeches that mark the start and end dates of the rhetorical mobilization campaign, my next step is to create and analyze a "training set." For the training set I selected six speeches that either the administration or the news media had characterized as key foreign policy announcements. The training set includes: "Address to the Nation From Ellis Island, New York, on the Anniversary of the Terrorist Attacks of September 11" (September 11, 2002); "Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City" (September 12, 2002); "Address to the Nation on Iraq From Cincinnati, Ohio" (October 7, 2002); "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union" (January 28, 2003), "Remarks on the Iraqi Regime's

⁵⁴ See especially President Bush's and 29 January 2002 State of the Union Address and his 1 June 2002 commencement address at West Point. In the former Bush introduces his diagnostic framing. In the latter he lays out the doctrinal framework that supports his prognostic framing.

Noncompliance With United Nations Resolutions” (February 6, 2003), and “Address to the Nation on Iraq” (March 17, 2003). As discussed in Chapter 2, I analyzed each speech in the training set in order to deduce the administration’s rhetorical strategy for establishing salience and credibility and created dictionaries of signifiers, key words and phrases associated with each of the six factors of salience and credibility. I then applied these dictionaries to my entire dataset to code each event (i.e., each speech) for salience (i.e., experiential commensurability, narrative fidelity, and/or centrality). To facilitate coding and reduce the likelihood of coding errors, I used an automated language analysis program (Atlas.ti), manually confirming each of the program’s coding decisions. In order to evaluate the credibility of the administration’s rhetorical mobilization (i.e., congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility), I examined assertions contained in the President’s speeches against the facts and events that were in the public’s view during the period of interest and assessed the foreign policy credibility of the active opponents of the administration’s unconstrained preference.

Below are my findings.

4.2 Salience

Social movement scholars theorize that the salience of a collective action frame to its target audience is a function of three criteria: centrality, narrative fidelity, and experiential (Benford & Snow 2000; Snow & Benford 1988). In this section I analyze the salience of the Bush administration’s rhetorical mobilization according to these criteria.

4.2.1 Centrality

The centrality of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is a measure of how executive rhetoric attempts to engage the values and beliefs of the target audience. An executive may attempt to persuade its audience that a given international crisis has either put at risk the values and beliefs it prizes or has presented an opportunity to advance those values and beliefs. If the values and beliefs that executive rhetoric highlights are sufficiently important to the target audience, and if the executive plausibly demonstrates the link between those values and current events, then the rhetorical mobilization campaign is likely to resonate and unify the distribution of domestic preferences around the executive's unconstrained policy preference. Hypothesis H1.1 hypothesizes that *rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to core values and beliefs of target audiences increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.*

Analysis of both the training set and the entire dataset supports H1.1. Bush's rhetorical mobilization campaign made liberal use of value-laden words, phrases, and concepts. Specifically, the Bush administration communications team attempted to link its policy preference for forcible regime change with the protection and advancement of fundamental national values. As the President explained to his audience in Cincinnati, the ultimate purpose of forcibly ousting Saddam was not to advance the national interest or secure strategic resources, but to defend, promote, and extend basic liberal ideals. "Like other generations of Americans, we will meet the responsibility of defending human liberty against violence and aggression" (Bush October 7, 2002). Value-laden

language played an especially prominent role in the Bush campaign's effort to distinguish protagonists from antagonists, the liberal (good) "us" from the illiberal (evil) "them" (Hodges 2011, 126). "There is a line in our time and in every time," Bush declared at the launch of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, "between the defenders of human liberty and those who seek to master the minds and souls of others" (Bush September 11, 2002). Americans "exercise power without conquest, and we sacrifice for the liberty of strangers" (Bush January 28, 2003). Americans are "Unlike Saddam Hussein" because "we believe the Iraqi people are deserving and capable of human liberty" (Bush March 17, 2003).

Drawing on the training set, I selected the following words and phrases as signifiers for centrality: democracy, enslave, free/freedom, human dignity, human rights, liberty, oppression, self-government, slavery, and tyranny. Because value-laden language is common in all presidential rhetoric, context was especially critical for evaluating the centrality of Bush's speeches. In order to code an event as an instance of centrality, each occurrence had to be manually confirmed as pertaining to the discourse over the administration's Iraq policy.

After eliminating false positives, I found that each of the six training set speeches contained centrality signifiers. Turning to the entire data set, I found that 97 speeches delivered between 11 September 2002 and 17 March 2003 attempted to link the administration's unconstrained policy preference with the protection and advancement of national values.

4.2.2 Narrative Fidelity

Next I consider the narrative fidelity of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. Social movement scholars argue that the greater the extent to which a collective action frame accords with the cultural narratives and myths of a target audience, the greater the prospect of social mobilization (Bedford & Snow 2000; Snow & Benford 1988; Campbell 1988; Fisher 1984). Adapting the concept of narrative fidelity to rhetorical mobilization, I hypothesize that *rhetorical mobilization campaigns that characterize (fail to characterize) the executive's policy preference as consistent with prominent national myths increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.*

Esch (2010) explores of the Bush administration's uses of myths and narratives to legitimize its post-9/11 policies and provides useful insights for my analysis of narrative fidelity. Esch argues that the administration leveraged two myths that are deeply entrenched in the American psyche: the myth of "American Exceptionalism" and the myth of "Civilization vs. Barbarism." One example that conveys in three words elements of both myths is the "axis of evil" metaphor that the administration deployed when it first articulated its unconstrained policy preference in January 2002. The choice of "axis" implies that Americans are facing a new monolithic threat like the fascists their fathers and grandfathers confronted and defeated. It conjures a "magic age...when great evil and great good faced each other," (Lawrence Wright quoted in Esch 2010, 369). The axis of evil metaphor also recalls Reagan's "evil empire" trope and a mythologized past when the US chose to discard *détente* and recommit to Cold War victory.

The administration's capacity to tap into the cultural resources of great American military victories relies on another rhetorical choice discussed above. Once the American public had accepted the diagnostic framing of the 9/11 attacks as acts of war (rather than, say, acts or horrific criminality), the door was opened to market Iraq as just another front in that war and to propose prognostic and motivational frames that would be culturally recognizable as appropriate for a nation at war (Hodges 2011, 18-20). Other events in the same genre—World War II and the Cold War for example—became “exploitable source domains” for the administration to legitimize its Iraq policy (Hodges 2011, 20). “By alluding to World War II and the Cold War,” Esch argues, the Bush campaign “recalled past victories with longer-established mythic significance in order to portray the present war as just and winnable” (Esch 2010, 377; see also Jackson 2005).

The administration's rhetorical strategy of conflating the prospective invasion of Iraq with mythologized victories is evident in three of the six training set speeches. In Bush's Cincinnati speech (October 7, 2002), for example, the President reminded his audience that, “This nation, in world war and in Cold War, has never permitted the brutal and lawless to set history's course.” He emphasized this point with a specific Cold War example: “As President Kennedy said in October of 1962, ‘Neither the United States of America nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small.’” The 2003 State of the Union Address emphasized Saddam's link to the mythologized past.

Throughout the 20th century, small groups of men seized control of great nations, built armies and arsenals, and set out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world. In each case, their ambitions of cruelty and murder had no limit. In each case, the ambitions of Hitlerism, militarism, and communism were defeated by the will of free peoples, by the strength of great alliances, and by the might of the

United States of America. Now, in this century, the ideology of power and domination has appeared again and seeks to gain the ultimate weapons of terror.

In the final speech of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, the President reminded his audience of the appeasement narrative that is inherent in Esch's (2010)

"Civilization vs. Barbarism" myth:

In the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war. In this century, when evil men plot chemical, biological, and nuclear terror, a policy of appeasement could bring destruction of a kind never before seen on this Earth.

The narrative fidelity dictionary that I drew from the training set includes the following signifiers: world war, Gulf War, Reagan, Kennedy, Truman, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Washington, founders, founding fathers, Nazi, Hitler, and Hitlerism. Applying this dictionary to the training set, I coded three training-set speeches as positive for narrative fidelity. Looking at all of the presidential speeches during the period of the collective action bargaining campaign, 56 speeches coded positive for narrative fidelity.

4.2.3 Experiential Commensurability

The third and final criterion of salience is experiential commensurability. For students of social movements, experiential commensurability is the extent to which a collective action frame relates to the everyday hopes and concern of target audiences. Retooling this social movement concept for an international politics application, I hypothesize that *rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to the everyday experiences of the general population increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.*

The considerable task that faced the Bush administration in January 2002 was overcoming the well-established premise that Saddam, as revealed in the Gulf War, was a middling threat at best who was now fully contained. This premise was accepted not only by the general public, but also by most senior military and Foreign Service officials, including Rice and Powell. For those few who questioned this consensus, the primary concern was that if Saddam got out of his box, he would be a threat to the region, not to the American public. With so many in agreement that Saddam was either contained or merely a regional threat, “attempts to argue that Iraqi WMD programs required preventive war should have faced an uphill battle” (Kaufmann 2004, 10).

The primary rhetorical strategy for unseating this widely accepted understanding of the threat from Iraq was to establish experiential commensurability. The Bush team attempted to make the case that Saddam cannot reliably be contained or deterred, and that failure of containment will result not only in regional destabilization, but also potentially in catastrophic loss of American lives (Kaufmann 2004, 32-36).

The axiom that “9/11 changed everything” is particularly germane to understanding how the Bush administration could plausibly make this case despite substantial evidence that Iraq did not pose an imminent threat to the US or its allies. Prior to the al Qaeda attacks, terrorism was, for most Americans, something that happened in far off lands and to citizens of other states. In the relatively few instances in which Americans were targeted, they had generally done something to make themselves vulnerable; they had become Soldiers, Sailors, or Marines, they had become diplomats, they had opted to teach in universities in war-torn regions.

Terrorism was also something that killed or wounded a handful of victims at a time, a sufficient number to draw notoriety to the terrorist's cause, but not enough to incite general loathing and vilification of the perpetrators. On September 11th, al Qaeda turned what Americans thought they knew about terrorism on its head. Average Americans were now the *chief* targets and the era of mass-casualty terrorism had begun. Asked in April 2001, "How worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of terrorism," 24 percent of Americans reported that they were very or somewhat worried (Gallup, April 7-9, 2001). Three weeks after the al Qaeda attacks, that figure rose to 59 percent (Gallup, October 5-6, 2001) and remained inflated throughout the period of this study.⁵⁵ In short, the trauma of 9/11 transformed international terrorism into an everyday concern, something that could happen to ordinary Americans at anytime.

The administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign established experiential commensurability by giving Saddam a prominent role in the al Qaeda narrative. As Bush explained during his 2003 State of the Union Address:

Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.

The tale of the threat triangle, the administration's diagnostic frame, did more than conflate Saddam's regime with mass-casualty terrorism. It made Iraq the most dangerous and the most likely vector of the terrorist threat. Saddam, according to the narrative, had discovered a strategy for delivering devastating harm to Americans without concern for

⁵⁵ There were 15 Gallup surveys between 9/11 and the 20 March 2003 invasion of Iraq that asked a similar question. The average percentage of respondents reporting that they were very or somewhat worried was 42.2 percent. See <http://www.gallup.com/poll/4909/terrorism-united-states.aspx>.

massive retaliation. In his Cincinnati address (October 7, 2002), Bush warned Americans that, “Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists. Alliance with terrorists could allow the Iraqi regime to attack America without leaving any fingerprints.” Furthermore, the administration rhetoric portrayed Saddam “as an evil madman bent on the destruction of the United States and willing to run virtually any risk to himself or his country to fulfill his goals” (Kaufmann 2004, 10). But this portrayal was not necessary to support the claim that Saddam was undeterrable. The logic of the threat triangle offered a scenario in which Saddam could carry out a WMD attack against the United States and *rationaly* expect that no harm would come to him.

As if al Qaeda in possession of Iraqi-supplied chemical and biological weapons were not sufficiently terrifying, administration rhetoric expanded the hypothetical kill radius. “Only the prospect of nuclear attack,” writes Kaufmann (2004, 20) “could frighten Americans to a degree qualitatively more terrible than September 11.”

Introducing the prospect of nuclear terrorism also expanded the likelihood in the minds of average Americans that the next 9/11 could affect their lives more directly. Bush offered a grim scenario to his Cincinnati audience: “If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year...And Saddam Hussein would be in a position to pass nuclear technology to terrorists” (Bush October 7, 2002). The murder of 3000 Americans in a single day traumatized the nation. The administration’s diagnostic frame asked average Americans to reimagine that day with WMD provided by the Iraqi government. “The danger is clear: Using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear

weapons obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other” (Bush March 17, 2003). Numbers like these made the threat personal.

Packer (2005, 60) describes the narrative that the administration deployed to establish experiential commensurability in terms of a labored syllogism: “Saddam has had and still seeks weapons of mass destruction; he has used them on his own citizens in the past; he might now give them to al Qaeda or other terrorist groups; terrorists want to destroy the United States. Therefore, the United States must disarm and overthrow Saddam.” However strained the logic, the tale of the threat triangle successfully dislodged the Saddam-as-containable consensus and shifted the national dialogue from regional stability to homeland security (Kaufmann 2004, 36). The scenario in which Saddam breaks out of containment was plausible enough for most Americans, and the implications of the failure of containment were far too grave. Through threat inflation (Iraq and an active WMD program) and, more importantly, threat *conflation* (an Iraq-al Qaeda partnership), administration rhetoric rendered the Saddam-WMD-al Qaeda nexus a credible and *imminent* threat to every American household.

After analyzing the training set, I created three dictionaries to support coding for experiential commensurability, one for each of the three sides of the threat triangle. In order to be coded positive for experiential commensurability, a speech had to contain a mass-casualty terrorism signifier *and* an Iraqi regime *or* a WMD signifier *or* both. My mass-casualty terrorism dictionary included the following signifiers: terrorism, terror, terrorist, terrorize, September the 11th, 9/11, 11th of September, al Qaeda, Osama, and bin Laden. Eleven signifiers comprised my Iraqi regime dictionary: Iraq, Iraqi, Saddam,

Hussein, tyrant, dictator, terror state, outlaw regime, axis of evil, gathering threat.

Finally, I constructed a WMD dictionary that included: WMD, weapons of mass destruction, weapons of mass murder, weapons of terror, chemical, biological, nuclear, and mushroom cloud.

Each of the six training set speeches coded positively for experiential commensurability. For the full compendium of presidential speeches delivered during the period of analysis, I coded, after eliminating false positives, 103 speeches as positive for experiential commensurability.⁵⁶ In other words, 103 speeches that President Bush delivered between 11 September 2002 and 17 March 2003 contained rhetoric crafted to weave Saddam's regime and/or Iraq's WMD ambitions into the fabric of the war on terror narrative. It is also worth noting that several speeches that did not warrant coding for experiential commensurability did, however, contain a mass-casualty terrorism signifier. By keeping the threat of terrorism fresh in the minds of the American public, these speeches also played a role in enhancing the experiential credibility of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. Of the 170 presidential speeches delivered during this period, 128 made reference to mass-casualty terrorism.

4.3 Credibility

The second variable that social movement scholars have theorized as a determinant of the resonance of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is credibility. The credibility of a rhetorical mobilization campaign, as I outlined in Chapter 2, is a function of three factors: congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility. Like salience, each factor

⁵⁶ Of the 103 speeches I coded for experiential commensurability, 16 contained mass-casualty terrorism and Iraqi regime signifiers, seven contained mass-casualty terrorism and WMD signifiers, and 80 contained all three signifiers.

yields a sub-hypothesis that I adapt for analysis of rhetorical or rhetorical mobilization. Unlike salience, we can discover very little about the credibility of rhetorical mobilization campaign by looking exclusively at the content of executive rhetoric. We have to look up from President Bush's speeches and examine the administration's behavior, world events related to the war-threatening crisis, and the choices made by opponents to the administration's unconstrained preference.

4.3.1 Congruency

The first factor I consider is *congruency*. Congruency, as defined above, is the degree to which executive rhetoric during the rhetorical mobilization campaign matches its behavior, the observable diplomatic, military, or economic measures that the executive is taking during its rhetorical mobilization campaign. From congruency I hypothesize that *if executive actions that contradict the assertions of its rhetorical mobilization campaign are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory actions become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.* I contend that there were no instances during the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign in which the administration's actions contradicted its rhetoric *and* drew public scrutiny. I argue, in other words, that the Bush case does not disconfirm the congruency hypothesis.

This is not to say, however, that there were no contradictions. First, the certainty with which the administration publicly portrayed its conclusions regarding the Iraq-WMD-terrorist nexus was not consistent with intelligence community findings (Jervis

2010). I talk more about this below. Additionally, some (e.g., Mearsheimer 2011) argue that the administration's insistence that it sought a diplomatic solution was both disingenuous and contradicted by overt executive branch actions. During his Cincinnati speech (7 October 2002) Bush reassured the American people, "I hope this will not require military action," and Congress, "Approving [the Iraq War Resolution] does not mean that military action is imminent or unavoidable." In Grand Rapids, Michigan (January 29, 2003), the President insisted that he was "convinced that this still can be done peacefully. I certainly hope so. The idea of committing troops is my last option, not my first."⁵⁷ Yet this language seems inconsistent with large-scale military buildup in Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the Arabian Gulf. Mobilizations like this are costly. Having committed these resources, it is unlikely that the administration would have accepted any outcome short of its loftiest objectives: not only an agreement that Saddam and his sons would go quietly into retirement, but also an agreement from the Baathist regime to stand aside in favor of a democratically elected government. It is implausible that the administration ever conceived that these objectives could be achieved without violence.

Nevertheless, neither exaggerated claims of certainty nor claims of peaceful intentions represent failures of congruency. Although information was available to cast doubt on administration claims regarding the threat triangle, it was never broadly publicized. When contradictory evidence did become available to the news media, editorial decisions (which I discuss in the following section) prevented these contradictions from becoming widely broadcast. Regarding the apparent gap between the

⁵⁷ The President repeated this sentiment during his remarks in Waterford, Michigan (October 14, 2002), on signing the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (October 16, 2002), in Grand Rapids, Michigan (January 29, 2003), and in Kennesaw, Georgia (February 20, 2003).

administration's stated diplomatic intentions and the aggressive military mobilization it ordered, this was easily explained by the logic of coercive diplomacy. As Secretary Powell explained to members of Congress, in order for coercive diplomacy to work, "the threat of war has got to be there" (quoted in Woodward 2004, 187). Whether the military buildup was *intended* to give teeth to diplomacy or, from the outset, to implement the administration's unconstrained policy preference for forcible regime change is debatable. But the former claim was sufficiently plausible to render the administration's actions consistent with its rhetoric.

Further masking the apparent contradiction between Bush's assurances that war was a last resort and the administration's overt preparations for war was the low-grade fever that had come to characterize US-Iraq relations since the end of the Gulf War. Despite the parades that greeted the troops retuning from the Gulf War, the conclusion of the Gulf War represented a transition in the conflict, not an end to hostilities. A sizeable force remained in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and the Arabian Gulf to keep Saddam in his box. Operation Desert Storm transitioned to Operations Northern, Southern Watch, Desert Fox, and Desert Thunder. Provocations, repositioning of deployed forces, small-scale force buildups, and limited military strikes became matters of routine that were generally unremarkable to the American public. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the public failed to recognize that mobilization for the Iraq War not only differed in scale from those observed over the past decade, but also differed in kind. In other words, it is unsurprising that the American public, to include careful observers, failed to recognize incongruence between administration assurances that diplomacy

remained its favored policy option and administration actions in preparation for implementation of its actual policy preference.

4.3.2 Empirical Credibility

The second criterion for gauging the credibility of an executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign is empirical credibility. Rhetorical mobilization campaigns resonate with target audiences when the claims of the executive are consistent with information received from nominally independent sources. From empirical credibility, I hypothesize that *if facts that contradict the executive's diagnostic frame are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory facts become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.* The historical record supports this hypothesis.

To some extent, the empirical credibility of any rhetorical mobilization campaign is outside the administration's control. In any state with reasonable freedoms of speech, no amount of information control can entirely shut down access to evidence that may contradict the executive's claims. But neither is this factor entirely out of the hands of the hands of a savvy executive with a sophisticated "wartime public opinion apparatus" (Jacobs 1992).

For the Bush administration, there appears to be two related strategies for establishing and preserving empirical credibility. First, information that discredited administration claims was never voluntarily made public. Concurrently, the administration aggressively responded to credible threats to the empirical credibility of its

rhetoric. When, for example, the National Security Advisor for the senior Bush, Brent Scowcroft, questioned Bush administration assertions in a 15 August 2002 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, the administration went on the rhetorical offensive. Speaking to an audience at the VFW national convention in Nashville days later, Vice President Cheney asserted explicitly that the Bush administration's assessment of the threat was unequivocal and implicitly that those who questioned this lacked the access to the privileged information that led the administration to its conclusions. "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction... There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us" (Cheney 26 August 2006).

In addition to silencing contradictory information, the administration was quick to make public information supporting its case against Saddam and present it with a degree of confidence that in some cases was not warranted. Former Bush speechwriter Scott McClellan (2008, 132) explains that once the decision was made to downplay the democratic vision and emphasize homeland security as the administration's rational for war—the "lesser motivation" for war according to McClellan—the administration's communication team set out to "make the WMD threat and the Iraq connection to terrorism just a little more certain, a little less questionable, than they were." The Bush team accomplished this by

Quietly ignoring or disregarding some of the crucial caveats in the intelligence and minimizing evidence that pointed in the opposite direction; using innuendo and implication to encourage Americans to believe as fact some things that were unclear and possibly false (such as the idea that Saddam had an active nuclear weapons program) and other things that were overplayed or completely wrong (such as implying Saddam might have an operational relationship with al Qaeda).

During his 7 October 2002 remarks in Cincinnati, for example, the President asserted, “We know that the regime has produced thousands of tons of chemical agents, including mustard gas, sarin nerve gas, VX nerve gas.” While this was true, it was unclear how much, if any, remained in Iraq or whether Iraq was still producing these agents. “We’ve also discovered through intelligence,” the President continued, “that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disperse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas.” This also was true, but intelligence community had no evidence that the purpose of these aircraft was delivery of chemical and biological agents. During his 2003 State of the Union Address, Bush announced,

The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production. Saddam Hussein has not credibly explained these activities. He clearly has much to hide. The dictator of Iraq is not disarming. To the contrary, he is deceiving

If true, this would be damning evidence. What the American public did not know, however, is that the CIA had recommended pulling this line from the Cincinnati speech nearly four months earlier because they considered the source for the British intelligence unreliable. According to Woodward (2004) senior leaders in the CIA were taken by surprise when the assertion resurfaced in the State of the Union.

An increasingly prevalent critique of the Bush administration is that it fabricated out of whole cloth the existence of an Iraqi WMD. This critique is unfounded. Not only did the Bush administration genuinely believe that Iraq had an active weapons program, but so to did every Western intelligence service, including those of governments opposed to Bush’s policy. The Clinton White House was similarly convinced. According to Frank Miller, who served President Bush as his Special Assistant and President Clinton

as a senior DoD official, “virtually everyone in the Perry and Cohen Defense Departments believed Saddam had an active chemical and biological weapons program and was working toward a nuclear capability” (interview with author on April 10, 2015). Miller recalls that the level of certainty was so high that during Operation Desert Fox, the 1998 bombing campaign targeting facilities suspected of supporting Saddam’s weapons program, several targets were removed from the target list out of fear of spreading chemical agents to Saudi Arabia and other allied states. Likewise, Jervis (2010) faults neither the intelligence community nor the administration for concluding that Iraq “probably (but not certainly) had active broadly based WMD programs and a small stockpile of chemical and perhaps biological weapons.” Given the evidence, “A responsible judgment could not have been that the programs had ceased” (Jervis 2010, 155).

Jervis does, however, find fault in the certainty with which their assessments were delivered. For Jervis, the evidence was “good enough to convict Saddam in a civil suit but not, as implied, in a criminal prosecution” (Jervis 2010, 127). Nevertheless, in order to establish and maintain empirical credibility, the administration’s communications team chose to make its case without equivocating. In the face of administration certitude, any contradictory evidence that emerged lacked credibility.

4.3.3 Reputational Credibility

The final measure of salience is reputational credibility. As discussed in Chapter 2, most presidents enjoy a significant degree of deference in matters of foreign policy. I approach reputational credibility, therefore, not as a measure of the executive’s, but that

of the leading voices in opposition to the executive's policy preference. I hypothesize that *the greater (lesser) the foreign policy credibility of the primary opposition to the executive's preferred policy, the more (less) likely it is that the executive will amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.* The Iraq War case strongly supports the reputational credibility hypothesis.

In the fall of 2002 when the Bush administration first rolled out its unconstrained policy preference for regime change in Iraq, it recognized the risk of high-credibility domestic opponents. At the moment of the President's war decision in March of 2003, the strongest voices in opposition to the administration's diagnostic framing were a handful of technocrats with virtually no foreign-policy credibility. Vocal opposition to the administration's prognostic framing was limited to a few Democrats whose opposition to the President was predictable and, therefore, raised little public attention. How did the administration persuade so many of the leading Democrats and others with substantial foreign policy credentials to endorse, or at least acquiesce to, its policy preference?

Several scholars argue convincingly that *persuasion* had little to do with it (Gershkoff & Kushner 2005; Hodges 2011; Krebs & Lobasz 2007). As discussed in Chapter 3, inherent in the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign was a strategy to leave no oxygen for a potential counter-framing campaign by denying the "rhetorical materials out of which to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal" (Krebs & Jackson 2007, 42). At the core of this strategy was the administration's portrayal of Iraq as a "front" in the war on terrorism, one of the many "battles" that would comprise America's response to 9/11 and mass-casualty terrorism (Hodges 2008). Leading

Democrats chose to bandwagon with the administration or remain on the sidelines “less because they had been persuaded of the Bush administration’s logic and factual claims than because the fixing of the war on terrorism as the dominant discourse after September 11 had deprived them of winning arguments, of socially sustainable avenues of reply” (Krebs & Lobasz 2007; 447).⁵⁸ Although homeland security was at best a “lesser motivation” for war (McClellan 2008, 132), the administration nevertheless chose to represent its Iraq policy preference primarily as a response to 9/11, indeed, as the “central front on the war on terror” (Hodges 2011, 41). “We must confront both terror cells and terror states,” the President explained during his announcement introducing the joint resolution to authorize the use of force, “because they are different faces of the same evil” (Bush October 2, 2002).

As a result of the administration’s “marketing choice” (McClellan 2008, 131), any challenge to the administration’s policy preference could appear—or could be portrayed—as second guessing the Commander-in-Chief during an ongoing and popular war. By representing Iraq as the “central commitment in the war on terror” (Bush October 2, 2002), the administration forced potential opponents either to remain silent or to criticize a popular president’s prosecution of a popular war. In other words, the administration had denied potential critics the ability to comment on Iraq as a distinct foreign policy agenda. Furthermore, challenging the administration “required challenging a portrait of Saddam Hussein as evil and as a terrorist, terms in which he had

⁵⁸ Although I contend that Krebs & Jackson’s (2007) “rhetorical coercion” better explains the behavior of leading Democrats, the Bush administration did make a concerted effort to persuade Congress. Between 4 September to 10 October (the day of House vote), the administration invited 195 members of the House (161 accepted) and all of the senators (71 accepted) to White House briefings in which, once again, senior administration officials, usually Bush or Cheney, overstated their certitude regarding Saddam’s WMD programs and links to terrorism, and hinted at privileged information that they could not share (Woodward 170, 188, 190, 203).

long been cast” not only by Bush administration, but by the two previous administrations as well (Krebs & Lobasz 2007, 440). With 9/11 still a fresh memory, taking a principled stand against the administration’s case for war could cost a politician an election or a newspaper its customers. Since prospective critics in the Democratic Party or the mainstream news media with sufficient reputational credibility to mount a serious challenge also had much to lose, few chose to accept that risk. Using Krebs & Jackson’s (2007) term, the administration had “rhetorically coerced” their acquiescence.

4.4 Summary of Results

Social movement scholars have theorized two variables, salience and credibility, that account for variation in the resonance of the collective action frames that social movement activists formulate to marshal support to their causes. Social movement scholarship has also proposed criteria for measuring these variables. Centrality, narrative fidelity, and experiential commensurability determine the salience of a collective action frame. A frame’s credibility is a function of its congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility.

I have argued that democratic leaders who intend to lead their nations into war must similarly orchestrate rhetorical campaigns. Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that are salient and credible, as measured by the same factors that determine the salience and credibility of collective action frames, unify the distribution of domestic preferences and reduce the risk of domestic sanction. The result is an increased likelihood that the executive’s war decision will correspond closely with its unconstrained policy preference.

The Bush administration's ultimate war decision was essentially an unadulterated version of its unconstrained policy preference. Given this outcome, the rhetorical mobilization model would expect to find evidence of a salient and credible rhetorical mobilization campaign. My findings support this. I analyzed 170 presidential speeches delivered during the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, which I have defined as 11 September 2002 to 17 March 2003. The table below summarizes the results.

Factor	Signifiers	Number of speeches coded positive
Centrality	Democracy, enslave, free/freedom, human dignity, human rights, liberty, oppression, self-government, slavery, tyranny	97
Narrative fidelity	World war, Gulf War, Reagan, Kennedy, Truman, Roosevelt, Lincoln, Washington, founders, founding fathers, Nazi, Hitler, Hitlerism	56
Experiential commensurability	Terrorism, terror, terrorist, terrorize, September the 11 th , 9/11, 11 th of September, al Qaeda, Osama, bin Laden	128

Table 4.1 Salience factors in presidential speeches September 11, 2002 to March 17, 2003

Regardless of the primary purpose or occasion of the speech, more than half of the speeches during this period (57 percent) attempted to associate the administration's

policy preference for forcible regime change with national values (centrality). About a third of the speeches (32.9 percent) attempted to link the administration's policy preference with and national myths (narrative fidelity). Finally, *most* of President Bush's public addresses delivered during the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign (75.2 percent) contained rhetoric intended to make the administration's diagnostic frame relevant to the everyday concerns of the average Americans (experiential commensurability).

Additionally, the administration successfully maintained congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility throughout its campaign. Inconsistencies between administration rhetoric and action were plausibly explained. Disparities between administration rhetoric and observable facts were not widely broadcast until after the invasion. Finally, because administration rhetoric during the period of analysis conflated the threat from Iraq with the ongoing war on terror, most likely opponents of the administration's Iraq policy with foreign policy credibility chose to remain silent rather than opposing a popular president's prosecution of a popular war.

Holsti (2012, 25) describes the administration's rhetoric during this period as "the relentless public relations campaign on Iraq." Relentless is an appropriate descriptor. President Bush delivered 170 speeches over the course of the 186-day rhetorical mobilization campaign. Occasions of these speeches ranged from major foreign policy announcements to remarks honoring the 2002 Stanley Cup champions, yet most devoted air time to advocating for the administration's unconstrained preference for forcible regime change. Although audiences were generally small, many of the speeches analyzed above were televised, and all were covered by the news media for "playback to

the nation” (Hodges 2011, 12). Sound bites and talking points lifted from Bush’s speeches became topics for Cheney, Powell, Rice, etc. to discuss in various televised venues. What the public heard from these speeches were “selected pieces of quotable segments that [were] repeated over and over again in news reports” (Hodges 2011, 87) and talk shows.⁵⁹ Through presidential speeches and their reproduction in sound bites and talking points, the Bush administration successfully constructed a sociopolitical reality in which radically dissimilar actors—Saddam and al Qaeda—could be characterized as “linked antagonists” (Hodges 2011, 64) and “The battle of Iraq” could be portrayed as just “one victory in a war on terror that began on September the 11th 2001 and still goes on” (Bush May 1, 2003).

4.5 Counterfactual Analysis

The rhetorical mobilization model theorizes that resonant rhetorical mobilization campaigns increase the likelihood that leaders will implement their unconstrained preferences for war. It must be the case, therefore, that when rhetorical mobilization campaigns *fail* to resonate, leaders are more likely to amend or abandon their preferred policies and seek alternatives to war.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I explore a negative value on my rhetorical mobilization variable. Given Roosevelt’s frustrated attempts to sell a more aggressive German policy, we would expect to discover, if the rhetorical mobilization model has explanatory value, a deficit of one or more of the six measures of resonance. Before turning to the Roosevelt case, however, I will first attempt to explore the implications of a failed

⁵⁹ On July 28, 2008, former White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan shared with MSNBC (Chris Matthews) that the communications team provided daily talking points to “sympathetic commentators at Fox News” (Hodges 2011, 81).

rhetorical campaign by examining the present case counterfactually. What if the Bush administration's rhetoric had failed to resonate? Would it have amended or abandoned its policy preference as the rhetorical mobilization model predicts? Or would it have implemented its unconstrained preference *regardless*? If the latter is the case, then my model has little explanatory value.

I attempt to defend two claims in this section. First, I argue that if the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign had failed to resonate, then it is likely that public support for war would have either remained static or receded during the period of analysis. Second, I argue that a failure to rally the general public behind its policy preference would have also cost the administration the compliance of the Democratic Party and the mainstream news media. In other words, in the counterfactual scenarios I describe, The Bush administration would have perceived the distribution of domestic preferences at the moment of its war decision as being at least as polarized as it was at the moment of policy preference articulation. Under these conditions, the rhetorical mobilization model predicts that the administration would have decided to amend or abandon its unconstrained preference rather than implementing forcible regime change. The counterfactual sketches I provide below offer theoretically grounded explanations for why this alternative outcome is plausible.

4.5.1 Counterfactual Account: The American Public

I have argued that the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign resonated with the American public because it was salient and credible. It was salient because it convincingly aligned its unconstrained policy preference for forcible regime change in

Iraq with national values (centrality), myths (narrative fidelity), and the everyday concerns of the American public (experiential commensurability). It was credible because throughout the campaign (11 September 2002 to 17 March 2003) the administration maintained consistency between its rhetoric and its actions (congruency), successfully concealed or countered challenges to its empirical case against Saddam (empirical credibility), and convinced or coerced highly credible opponents to endorse the administration's unconstrained preference or remain on the sidelines (reputational credibility).

If the Bush administration had failed to make a salient and credible case for war, would the American people have rallied so enthusiastically behind the President? More importantly, would the Bush administration have judged the distribution of domestic preferences sufficiently favorable at the moment of its war decision to risk taking the nation to war?

It is plausible that the policy outcome would have been no different. As discussed above, the American public—at least in the hypothetical world of opinion polls—had been marginally supportive of forcible regime change since the somewhat unsatisfying conclusion of the Gulf War. In other words, the Bush administration enjoyed at least a weak domestic consensus for its policy preference from the outset. I contend, however, that an alternative outcome is more plausible. Three counterfactual accounts illustrate how alternative or failed rhetorical strategies could plausibly have eroded public support.

First, as discussed above, the Bush administration made its case for war on grounds that the threat posed by Saddam's regime directly affected the lives of average Americans, that is, by establishing experiential commensurability. During the summer

of 2002, the Bush communications team decided to build its rhetorical mobilization campaign on the framework of the Iraq-WMD-terrorist nexus, a threat that post-9/11 America perceived as direct and imminent. What if the administration had decided to foreground a different rationale? Imagining this requires only a “minimal rewrite counterfactual” (Levy 2008, 641). Homeland security in the wake of 9/11, if it was a motivation at all for forcible regime change, was a “lesser motivation” (McClellan 2008, 132). “The decision to downplay the democratic vision as a motive for war,” recalls McClellan, “was basically a marketing choice.” What if, instead of the threat triangle, the administration had built its rhetorical campaign on “the democratic vision” that McClellan contends most inspired Bush’s decision making? How would the American public have responded to diagnostic and prognostic frames that highlighted forcible democratic expansion rather than the threat triangle?

According to the literature on the foreign policy preferences of the American public, not very well. For Drezner (2008), Jentleson (1992), and Jentleson & Britton (1998), for example, the “prudent” American public is generally ready to support wars in which the homeland or an ally is threatened. The average citizen is unsupportive, however, of policies focused on “liberal internationalism” (Drezner 2008) or “internal policy change” (Jentleson 1992; Jentleson & Britton 1998). Following the prudent public thesis, it is unlikely that the mean voter would have supported forcible regime change as a catalyst for Arab democratic revolution. Had the administration made the marketing choice to foreground democratization rather than homeland security, public support for forcible regime change would have remained static or, more likely, receded.

A second counterfactual considers the *centrality* and *narrative fidelity* of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. By marshaling national values and myths to support its prognostic frame, the administration was able to legitimize preventive war, a rationale for war that, in the Western legal and ethical tradition is broadly acknowledged as illegitimate (Crawford 2007; Rodin 2007; Schweller 1992; Walzer 2006). Several scholars have theorized policy legitimation as a necessary condition for long-term policy success (see for example George 1980; Goddard 2009; Goddard & Krebs 2015). Presidents, argues George (1980, 236), must persuade their publics not only that their policy objectives are prudent and achievable ("cognitive legitimacy"), but also they must establish that their policies are consistent with the values, morals, and cultural traditions of the nation ("normative legitimacy"). George offers the Nixon administration's failure to establish normative legitimacy of its *détente* policy and *détente's* ultimate failure during the Carter administration as examples of executive policy preferences that were ultimately abandoned because the administration failed to establish normative legitimacy (see George 1980, 251-258).

Considering the Bush administration's campaign through the lens of policy legitimation, it is possible to imagine a counterfactual with a different policy outcome. By characterizing its unconstrained policy preference as grounded in national values and mythical interpretations of American foreign policy history, the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign effectively "erased" (Hodges 2011) the fact that the administration's preference for preventive war represented a significant departure from American—and democratic—normative traditions (Schweller 1992). Had the Bush administration failed to establish centrality and narrative fidelity, the significance of

crossing this normative threshold would likely have become a more salient determinant of domestic opinion and could have compromised the normative legitimacy of Bush's unconstrained policy preference. Following George (1980), it is conceivable that the administration would not have enjoyed the increase in public support that was observed during this period. Indeed, if the administration's legitimation strategy had failed, public support for launching a preventive war would likely have receded.

The concept of policy legitimation also offers a plausible mechanism through which the failure to maintain congruency and empirical credibility could have resulted in the loss of public support. Mearsheimer (2011, 51-53) asserts that the Bush administration told four "lies" during its rhetorical mobilization campaign.⁶⁰ First, although the intelligence community had dismissed the connection, the administration insisted that it had conclusive evidence linking Saddam to al Qaeda. Second, the administration claimed a degree of certainty regarding Saddam's weapons program that it never had (see also Jervis 2010). Third, administration rhetoric insinuated that Saddam had a role in 9/11 even though the intelligence community had rejected this premise categorically. Finally, according to Mearsheimer, the administration insisted that it hoped to find a peaceful solution when it was intent on war from the outset. While categorizing these assertions as "lies" is arguable, Mearsheimer's argument gives us a good basis for a third counterfactual. If the Bush administration had been caught in one of these "lies" during the rhetorical mobilization campaign, would it have been able to preserve domestic support for forcible regime change? Since we do not have to imagine

⁶⁰ Mearsheimer (2011, 15-17) makes a distinction between *spinning*, emphasizing facts that provide an advantage while "downplaying or ignoring inconvenient facts," and *concealment*, "withholding information that might undermine or weaken one's position," from *lying*, making statements that are known or suspected to be false "in the hope that others will think it is true."

the lie, only the counterfactual discovery of the lie, this hypothetical once again adheres to Levy's "minimal-rewrite-of-history rule" for counterfactual analysis (Levy 2008, 641).

Based on Mearsheimer's understanding of "strategic lies," it is unlikely that discovery of contradictions in the Bush administration's rhetoric would have had any bearing on the domestic foreign policy consensus. For Mearsheimer, there is a sort of civic virtue in lies like these, told in the service of "public interest...not personal gain" (Mearsheimer 2011, 45). Because leaders have privileged information regarding international threats and opportunities, telling a strategic lie "might be the only way to force the political system into action to meet a looming danger." Furthermore, Mearsheimer suggests that because there is a general recognition that the exigencies of international affairs may occasionally demand strategic lies from leaders, "Their publics usually do not punish them for their deceptions," as long as the result is favorable (Mearsheimer 2011, 7).

According to the literature on policy legitimation, however, the public does punish leaders who pursue policies that the public perceives as illegitimate. As previously mentioned, Western democracies have normative presumptions against preventive war (Crawford 2007; Rodin 2007; Schweller 1992; Walzer 2006). The administration's already problematic characterization of its policy preference as preemption rather than prevention would have come apart if the public, the media, or the Democrats understood the extent to which the administration had manufactured Saddam's links to al Qaeda, exaggerated its certainty regarding the maturity Iraq's weapons program, or overstated its interest in finding a diplomatic solution. Returning to George (1980), these revelations could have had a devastating effect on the

administration's claims to normative legitimacy. Furthermore, revelation that the "slam dunk case" against Iraq was far more equivocal than the case that the administration presented may have activated the second of George's two mechanisms: "cognitive legitimacy." A president who cannot demonstrate that "he knows what he is doing," is likely to lose domestic support for his long-term policy agenda (George 1980, 258).

As we now know, there was substantial evidence that was available during this period that contradicted the two load-bearing elements of the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign: that Iraq had an active and advanced WMD program, and that the regime was in league with al Qaeda. An excellent study by Kull, Ramsay & Lewis (2003) provides additional evidence that public awareness of this evidence could have substantially changed public support for forcible regime change. The authors examine three "misperceptions" about the decision to invade Iraq: 1) that there was clear evidence linking Iraq with al Qaeda 2); that coalition forces have, since the invasion, discovered WMD in Iraq;⁶¹ and 3) world public opinion favored the U.S.-led invasion. The study offers two major findings relevant to this discussion.⁶² First, in a survey of 1,362 respondents, the authors found that 60 percent had at least one of these misperceptions.⁶³ In other words, most of those surveyed accepted the administration's diagnostic frame. Second, holding one or more misperception is strongly correlated with support for the war. Fifty-three percent of respondents holding one misperception supported the war, 78 percent of those with two misperceptions supported the war, and 86

⁶¹ The authors concede that the misperception that Saddam had an active WMD program was so widely held, not only by the American public and the US government, but also by foreign governments opposed to the Bush administrations policy. Since there is no variation in this variable, the authors explore the misperception that coalition forces have actually discovered weapons caches.

⁶² All findings are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

⁶³ Thirty two percent had one misperception, 20% had two, and 8% had all three. Of the 40% who held "no misperceptions" 10% thought global opinions on the war were "evenly balanced." Although this is also a misperception, Kull et al coded this response as no misperception.

percent of those with three misperceptions supported the war. For those who held no misperceptions, only 23 percent of the respondents supported the war.⁶⁴

Although the purpose of the Kull et al study was to explore the correlation between public perceptions and news source, the relevance of their findings to this project should be clear. The authors suggest a strong correlation between acceptance of the Iraq-terrorism-WMD nexus and support for forcible regime change. Significantly, the study also suggests that those who rejected the tale of the threat triangle were likely to oppose the war. If the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign had failed to maintain congruency or empirical credibility—if the intelligence community's rejection of the Iraq-al Qaeda nexus had been made public or if the contradictory evidence regarding Saddam's weapons program had emerged—then, following Kull et al (2003), we would expect a decrease in public support for war.

In the minimally rewritten counterfactual worlds I have considered, I maintain that it is at least plausible that public support would not have been as robust as it was in March 2003. Considered through legitimation theory and the prudent public thesis, public support could conceivably have receded, dropping below its January 2002 mark. Kull et al (2003) offers some quantitative support this premise.

⁶⁴ Although beyond the scope of this dissertation, a third finding of the Kull et al study is that misperceptions were strongly correlated with news source. From a sample of 3,334 respondents, 2,070 (62 percent) reported that they relied on only one news source. Of those who had only one news source, most (25 percent) responded that they relied on *Fox* followed by *CNN* (22 percent), *NBC* (20 percent), *ABC* (15 percent), *CBS* (12 percent), and *NPR/PBS* (four percent). Kull et al found that 80 percent of the *Fox* viewers held one or more of the three misperceptions. *CBS* followed closely with 71 percent. Sixty-one percent of the *ABC* viewers held one or more misperceptions, as did 55 percent of the *NBC* and *CNN* viewers. Remarkably (at least when compared to *Fox* viewers), only 23 percent of the *NPR/PBS* listeners/viewer held one or more misperceptions. After controlling for intention to vote for Bush in the next election, political party, education, and age, Kull et al found that only intention to vote for Bush was a statistically stronger predictor of misperceptions.

The loss of public support alone could have been sufficient to change Bush's decision calculus. During the 15 September 2001 Camp David principals' meeting, Bush voiced his concerns that, despite the polling data, the average American was not prepared for an expansive response to 9/11 that included forcible regime change in Iraq. The administration's perceived risk of domestic sanction would surely have deepened if public support receded or remained static during the administration's campaign to sell the war. More importantly, however, static or receding public support would have likely influenced the behavior of two other important domestic actors, either of which would have driven up the risk of domestic sanction dramatically. I consider these next.

4.5.2 Counterfactual Account: Opposition and Media Behavior

Goddard (2009) argues that criticizing or opposing a policy that is grounded in national norms and values is exceedingly difficult.⁶⁵ By foregrounding national values and myths, the administration had set for the Democrats what Goddard calls a "rhetorical trap." Like Krebs & Jackson's (2007) "rhetorical coercion," rhetorical traps coerce political opponents to support or acquiesce to policies they would otherwise oppose, not because they are persuaded that those policies are sound, but because they have been painted into a rhetorical corner. The President made it clear during his remarks to the troops at Fort Hood, Texas (January 3, 2003): "Either you're with us, or you're with the enemy; either you're with those who love freedom, or you're with those who hate innocent life." Throughout its rhetorical campaign, the administration crafted rhetoric to clarify and thicken this line, casting those who might oppose its policy preferences as soft on tyrants

⁶⁵ Goddard (2009) makes this claim in the context of international politics. The mechanism, I maintain, is essentially the same in the domestic context.

and terrorists. Those who opposed forcible regime change faced the prospect of explaining their opposition to a war aimed at preserving freedom and innocent life from genuinely odious people. In other words, executive rhetoric had denied the Democratic opposition a “socially sustainable” platform from which to launch a counter framing campaign (Krebs & Jackson 2007; Krebs & Lobasz 2007).

Krebs & Lobasz (2007) consider a counterfactual in which the Democratic Party, had they taken a “braver stance,” may have made political hay when the Iraq War started turning south. Here I want to consider a slightly different counterfactual: if the Democrats had taken that braver stance, *would there have been an Iraq War?* To put this in the terms of my analysis, would the administration have implemented its unconstrained policy preference had it failed to secure its reputational credibility by rhetorically coercing Democratic acquiescence?

The conclusion that the Bush administration would have been forced either to amend or abandon its policy preference is plausible and theoretically supported. On issues of national security, there is an inherent and largely irreconcilable information asymmetry between government and society. Many scholars theorize, therefore, that to a significant degree citizens *must* rely on elite discourse and contestation to inform their opinions (e.g., Brody 1991, Berinsky 2007, 2009; Zaller 1992, 1994). Adam Berinsky’s (2007, 975) “elite-cue theory,” for example, contends that “...the nature of conflict among political elites concerning the salience and meaning of those events determines if the public will rally to war” (Berinsky 2007, 975). Rather than making individual judgments based on cost/benefit analysis, Berinsky contends that citizens take cues from “patterns of elite conflict.” When, however, opposition parties choose to bandwagon

with the party in power as the Democrats did in October 2003, then the only elite voice upon which citizens can cue for informing their opinions on the efficacy of war is the sitting executive.

The lack of elite discourse and contestation also contributed to “a mostly captive media that conveyed the administration’s positions and its justifications” (Nacos, Bloch-Elkon & Shapiro 2011, *xii*). According to the indexing model of news reporting (Bennett 1990; Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2007), the mainstream news media has incentives to constrain their coverage to the “sphere of official consensus and conflict displayed in the public statements of the key government officials” (Bennett et al 2007, 29). News organizations confront a daily and daunting challenge of filling their pages or airtime (sometimes 24 hours of airtime each day) with content. Small, “right sized” news staffs trying to fill their “news holes” against unforgiving deadlines will often turn to the very people that they cover if those people come with sufficiently well-staffed public affairs divisions ready to provide them with polished, packaged, and professional narratives that they can faithfully record (Exoo 2010, 179). The press, therefore, privileges sources with the best communications operations, which are predominately government officials.

The indexing model of news reporting suggests that had the Democratic leaders—with their recognized foreign policy credentials and robust public affairs staffs—mounted a sustained and organized opposition to the invasion, media behavior would have been influenced. It would have reported the substance of a Democratic counter-frame the same attentiveness it paid to the administration’s narrative. Furthermore, the communications teams of leading Democrats could have amplified the voices of the handful of technocrats—like physicist and former weapons inspector David Albright—

who posed serious challenges to the administration's narrative but possessed neither the decision-making authority nor the public relations machinery to push their concerns to the top of the media's agenda.

But the news media's tendency during this period simply to report and amplify "whatever messages the administration put out" and ignore "topics and problems that the administration did not want to discuss" (Nacos et al 2011, *xii*) is not entirely explained by indexing. The news media in all its forms is owned by fewer than a dozen, large, profit-driven media corporations intent on giving their customers what they want. The American public did not want stories that were critical of the administration. Because the administration's diagnostic framing had rhetorically conflated its Iraq policy with America's broad response to 9/11, it was able to exploit the poignancy of that event. "The traumatic effect of 9/11 brought a temporary surge of patriotism," observed General Newbold. "And love is blind. For members of Congress, the media, and the general public, the most important thing to do was support the government" (interview with the author on August 9, 2015). For the profit-driven news media, the market imperative not to offend one's customers, therefore, became a market imperative not to question the commander-in-chief in wartime (Exoo 2010). As a result, even though "evidence disputing ongoing official claims about the war was often available to the mainstream press in a timely fashion" (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2007, 13), few journalists chose to report it. For those who did write stories challenging the administration's narrative, "they typically saw their reports relegated to the back pages, if they were published at all" (Nacos et al 2011, 99). And just as challenging a wartime president makes for bad business, cheerleading can enhance profits. The network that best grasped

this was Fox News, which nearly tripled its profits in just one year after 9/11 (Exoo 2010, 168).

In short, by linking its unconstrained policy preference in Iraq to national values, myths, and the threat triangle, the Bush administration had discovered a mechanism to link forcible regime change in Iraq to the identity, hopes, and worst fears of average Americans. The result was increased and more robust public support for forcible regime change and, as a result, a general retreat by the opposition party and the mainstream news media from their traditional “watchdog” functions. Had the administration failed to find or exploit this mechanism, I contend that the residual risk at the moment of Bush’s war decision would have been at least as constraining as it was when the administration first went public with its unconstrained policy preference in early 2002. An alternative policy outcome—either amendment or abandonment of the administration’s unconstrained policy preference—is both conceivable and theoretically supported.

4.5.3 Summary of Counterfactual Analysis

“All causal statements,” writes Levy (2008, 641), “generate counterfactuals about what would happen if certain variables were to take on different values, and all non-experimental methodologies must deal with this in one way or the other.” This section has been my effort to “deal with this.” If, as I contend, the salience and credibility (i.e., the resonance) of the Bush administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign explains the policy outcome—implementation without amendment of the administration’s unconstrained policy preference—then it should also hold that failure of executive rhetoric to resonate would have resulted in a different outcome. The counterfactual

scenarios presented in this section make the case that an alternative policy outcome was at least possible. They also suggest plausible mechanisms, deduced from established theories, linking the failure of the administration rhetorical mobilization campaign with unmitigated residual risk of domestic sanction at the moment of Bush's war decision.

4.6 Rhetorical Mobilization and the Iraq War: Summary

This chapter, together with Chapter 3, takes on a basic historiographical question: was the Iraq War inevitable or contingent. Some maintain that the al Qaeda attacks in September 2001 made the Iraq War inevitable. Neither the rhetorical mobilization campaign I described in the previous chapter nor the observed change over time in the distribution of domestic preferences, according to this argument, had any bearing on Bush's war decision. International threats—the convergence of mass-casualty terrorism with an unstable tyrant in possession of stockpiles of WMD—were sufficient to explain the administration's decision to invade.

The rhetorical mobilization model makes a case for contingency. While international dangers may explain the Bush administration's preference for war, they are insufficient to explain its decision to implement that preference. As the administration's unconstrained preference entered the public discourse, the post-9/11 foreign policy consensus became increasingly polarized. Recognizing the political and military risks of leading the nation without a strong domestic consensus, the administration organized for, planned, and implemented a complex rhetorical campaign. By the end of the campaign, at the moment of the President's war decision, domestic consensus was robust and likely sources of opposition had been convinced, coopted, or coerced into support or

acquiescence. As a result, the administration perceived little risk of domestic sanction as it implemented its unconstrained policy preference, unadulterated by domestic concerns. The 2004 presidential election validated administration perceptions. With the cost of the Iraq War mounting, the administration's rationale for war in question, and the likelihood of a clean victory evaporated, presidential candidate Kerry, who voted for the Iraq War resolution, could criticize the President's prosecution of the war, but not the decision to fight it (Krebs & Lobasz 2007).

In this chapter I have argued that the administration's rhetorical campaign was the cause of the observed change over time in the strength of domestic consensus over forcible regime change in Iraq. Using criteria borrowed from social movement theory's conceptualization of collective action framing to measure the resonance of presidential rhetoric, I have argued that the administration's rhetorical campaign was both salient and credible as measured by the six factors that account for variation in resonance.

I have also argued that a resonant rhetorical mobilization campaign was a necessary condition for President Bush's decision to implement its policy preference without amendment or compromise. I supported my case for necessity by considering a "minimal rewrite" counterfactual world in which the administration's rhetoric failed to resonate. Examining each criteria of resonance, I offered a theoretical basis for concluding that the perceived risk of domestic sanction at the moment of the President's war decision in March 2003 would not have receded and may well have increased over the course of the campaign to sell the war. Given an un-remediated degree of residual risk, I contended that it is plausible that the administration would have decided either to

amend or abandon its Iraq policy preference. In short, the Iraq War was not inevitable. It was contingent on the efficacious deployment of rhetoric.

In the next chapter I will attempt to bolster my contention that efficacious rhetoric is a necessary condition for war by examining the Roosevelt administration's attempt to marshal domestic support for its unconstrained preference to enter the Second World War as a full belligerent. The Roosevelt case provides variation on the dependent variable. Unlike the Bush case, Roosevelt's ultimate war decision was a highly diluted version of its unconstrained policy preference. If the rhetorical mobilization model has explanatory power, we should expect to find, as we did with the Bush case, that the historic events of that period map onto the directed acyclic graph I presented in Chapter 2. As we examine the content of the executive rhetoric during this period, we should also expect to find evidence that Roosevelt's rhetorical mobilization campaign failed to resonate according to some or all of the criteria of resonance.

Chapter 5

The Second World War: Roosevelt's Search for Domestic Consensus

The rhetorical mobilization model claims that international threats and opportunities that sometimes prompt leaders to adopt policy preferences for war are insufficient to explain their ultimate policy decisions. Leaders will act on their preferences only if they can reasonably expect access to the necessary moral and material resources of the state (Taliaferro, Lobell & Ripsman 2009; Zakaria 1998). The chief instrument for securing this access is rhetoric. By building domestic consensus around the leader's policy preference and isolating domestic rivals, successful rhetorical mobilization campaigns mitigate the political and military risks of war. The result is an increased likelihood that the leader's unconstrained policy preference, war or aggressive policies that increase the likelihood of war, will become the ultimate policy of the state. When, however, rhetorical mobilization campaigns fail to resonate with domestic audiences, the likelihood that the leader will act on his or her aggressive preferences is diminished.

In Chapters 3 and 4 I examined through the lens of the rhetorical mobilization model the Bush administration's 2003 decision to invade Iraq. The value of the dependent variable for the Iraq War approached a perfect "1"; the administration's war decision was virtually indistinguishable from its unconstrained preference. This outcome, I argued, was the result of a sophisticated and highly resonant (i.e., salient and credible) rhetorical mobilization campaign that created a favorable distribution of domestic preferences, mitigating the risk to the Bush administration of domestic sanction as the costs of a prolonged war mounted.

The primary challenge in defending this assertion was demonstrating that the independent variable, the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, was doing the causal work I claim. Because the Bush administration's war decision was effectively indistinguishable from its unconstrained policy preference, it would be a reasonable rejoinder to my argument that the administration's sophisticated rhetorical campaign was entirely epiphenomenal, that it had no bearing on Bush's decision to invade Iraq. The Iraq War, some may argue, would have unfolded when and how it did regardless of the efficacy of executive rhetoric. In other words, the executive's preference for war—provoked by the amalgam of international threats and opportunities that the administration presented before and after the 2003 invasion—*was*, in fact, sufficient to explain President Bush's ultimate war decision.

I addressed this challenge to my model in two ways. First, in Chapter 3, I mapped the Bush administration's decision-making process onto the decision-making model I presented in Chapter 2. I offered evidence that the risk of domestic sanction initially constrained the administration's policy choices, that the administration engineered and executed a sophisticated rhetorical mobilization campaign to mitigate this risk, and that, at the moment of its war decision, the administration perceived (correctly) a favorable distribution of domestic preferences. With the risk of domestic sanction diminished, the Bush administration executed its policy preference without major compromises to mollify domestic adversaries. I further addressed the challenge that executive rhetoric has no bearing on war decisions in Chapter 4 by measuring the resonance of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign according criteria suggested by social movement theorists to measure the efficacy of activist rhetoric. Given the high degree of salience

and credibility of the Bush administration's rhetorical campaign, the near perfect correspondence of the administration's unconstrained policy preference with its ultimate war decision is the outcome that my model predicts. Indeed, had the administration backed away from or significantly modified its preference after planning and executing such a resonant rhetorical campaign, we would have had cause to reject the model.

The next step in addressing the challenge that the efficacy of executive rhetoric has no causal bearing on war decisions is to examine a case in which the dependent variable takes on a different value, that is, a case in which the executive's ultimate war decision falls short of its unconstrained policy preference for war. If the rhetorical mobilization model has causal validity, then analysis of executive rhetoric should reveal a low-resonance rhetorical mobilization campaign. If, however, analysis suggests a rhetorical campaign that is both salient and credible, then once again we have cause to reject the rhetorical mobilization model.

With the fall of France in June of 1940, the Franklin Roosevelt administration reluctantly came to grips with two hard facts: the Atlantic sea lines of communication, upon which America's economy and security rested, depended on Britain's survival as an independent democratic state, and Britain's survival as an independent democratic state depended on America's entry into the war. Roosevelt and Churchill both understood that if the US continued to stand aloof, Nazi command of Europe, Northern Africa, the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas, and the Atlantic Ocean were near certainties. Both leaders also believed that Hitler's ambitions would not stop at the shorelines of the Western Hemisphere.

Yet despite the magnitude of the stakes, America remained in the bleachers for nearly 18 months after Axis powers occupied France, little more than spectators to the most serious threat to the nation's existence since the founding.⁶⁶ Moreover, nearly 18 months after Axis powers occupied France, there were no indications that the US would *ever* take the field. America's entry into the Second World War, in other words, was far from inevitable. Although Roosevelt's long campaign to nullify the Neutrality Acts had, by November 1941, yielded the repeal of *some* of its provisions, US neutrality remained the law of the land as late as December 7. The Roosevelt administration's war decision in March of that year, Lend-Lease, ended any pretense of genuine neutrality. It fell radically short, however, of its unconstrained policy preference to enter the war as a full belligerent.

Structural theories of international relations easily explain Roosevelt's unconstrained preference to join the fighting. Not only had the distribution of power in Europe become precipitously imbalanced, but Roosevelt and his closest advisers also believed that America's survival as an independent, liberal, and wealthy state was on the line. They cannot, however, explain the administration's war decision. Why, after Germany had forcibly eliminated liberal democracy from the European continent, with Britain's fall nearly certain, and with the US facing a precipitous and unrecoverable decline in relative power should England fall, did the administration fail to convert its unconstrained preference for war into state policy? Why, in short, did the US fail to behave like a rational, survival-seeking actor in an anarchic international system?

⁶⁶ During Germany's Spring 1940 campaign, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes wrote in his diary: "There is no doubt in my mind that this country is in the most critical situation since we won our independence" (cited in Olson 2013, 96). In his December 1940 Fireside Chat, Roosevelt acknowledged: "Never before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilization been in such danger as now" (Roosevelt December 29, 1940).

One possible explanation for Roosevelt's war decision is that the Axis powers never actually posed a serious threat to US security. Because Germany lacked both the means and the will to attack the American homeland directly, argues Russett (1972), US interests would have been better served through classic buck passing. Britain and the Soviet Union, supplied with American hardware, would ultimately defeat Hitler while the US preserved its power to take the lead in reconstruction.⁶⁷

This is an unsatisfactory explanation. Even if we accept the questionable premise that Britain could have survived without US military intervention, few believed this at the moment of Roosevelt's war decision. After witnessing blitzkrieg, even the staunchest opponents of war *assumed* Britain's eventual defeat and built their case on the further assumption that the US could establish a workable *modus vivendi* with fascist dominated Europe (Burns 2012 [1956]; Dallek 1995; Olson 2013). Mearsheimer's (2001) contention that the Atlantic Ocean would ensure America's safety is also unsatisfactory. It neglects the fact that the Atlantic Ocean itself was the prize. A former Assistant Secretary of Navy, Roosevelt understood better than most that Britain's fall virtually assured Axis command of the Atlantic sea lines of communication and, as a result, control over resources vital to America's economic and physical security. Finally, the isolationist mood of the nation is commonly offered as an explanation for US inaction during the first two years of WWII. But this answer only prompts more vexing questions: what explains the persistence of this mood in the face of an existential threat?

⁶⁷ Soviet entry into the war has no influence on my analysis. When the administration announced its war decision in March 1941, only Germany (and perhaps its allies) knew that Operation Barbarossa (the June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union) would draw the Soviets into the war on the side of the Allies. The Soviet Union's entry into the Second World War rekindled the Roosevelt administration's hopes that the Allies could defeat Germany without US intervention, the Red Armies initial performance on the battlefield quickly dashed those hopes (Burns 2012 [1956]; Dallek 1995).

Following Rose (1998, 168), the purpose of this chapter and the next is to specify the unit-level variable(s) that, in this case, “deflect[ed] foreign policy from what pure structural theorists might predict.” I argue that the Roosevelt administration’s decision to adopt “all methods short of war” rather than entering the war as a belligerent—Roosevelt’s unconstrained preference and the policy that “structural theorists might predict” given such a conspicuous threat to state survival—resulted from a deficient rhetorical mobilization campaign. Perceiving an unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences at the moment Roosevelt first signaled his unconstrained preference, the administration orchestrated and implemented a rhetorical campaign to mobilize support for war. That campaign, however, failed to resonate. As a result, at the moment of decision, Roosevelt perceived that the residual risk of domestic sanction if it decided to lead the nation to war remained intolerable. The administration decided, therefore, to amend its preference for war in favor of providing material support for the anti-German coalition.

In Chapter 6, I examine the content of the administration’s rhetorical campaign to offer an explanation for why the administration’s rhetoric failed to affect the distribution of domestic preferences regarding its German policy. First, however, this chapter will trace the administration’s decision-making process from the moment Roosevelt abandoned his preference to keep America out of the Second World War until March 1941, when Congress codified Roosevelt’s ultimate war decision by passing the Lend-Lease Act. My description of the administration’s rhetorical mobilization process mirrors the four-part structure of Chapter 3. In Section 5.1, I establish my starting point, the moment when events in Europe drove the administration to adopt its policy preference

for war. I then turn in Section 5.2 to the administration's assessment of the pre-campaign distribution of domestic preferences. Section 5.3 examines how the Roosevelt administration, like the Bush administration, organized for, planned, and implemented a rhetorical mobilization campaign that included all of the elements of issue framing suggested by social movement theorists: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational framing, and counter framing. I conclude Chapter 5 with an analysis of the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences and the residual risk of domestic sanction that prompted Roosevelt to amend his unconstrained policy preference.

5.1 Roosevelt's Unconstrained Policy Preference: War

The purpose of this section is to describe how and establish when the Roosevelt administration settled on its unconstrained preference for war.

As with the Bush case, establishing this date with precision is problematic. Any democratic leader who has settled on an unconstrained policy preference for war has incentives to keep her preference as private as possible until she is assured broad public support (see Schuessler 2010, 140-143). Until a leader has built a consensus around her unconstrained preference for war, opposition parties and other political opponents have incentives and opportunities to realize political gains at the leader's expense by giving voice to the public's rational presumption against war (Schuessler 2010, 143; Schultz 2001, 82-83). Understanding this, savvy leaders like Roosevelt "obscure the fact they are open to war" for as long as possible as they incrementally build domestic consensus around their unconstrained preference (Schuessler 2010, 143).

Because of Roosevelt's caution about getting out too far in front of the electorate regarding the crisis in Europe and paying the political price at the hands of the non-interventionist caucus in Congress, there is little hard evidence pointing to a precise moment of decision; Roosevelt left several smoking guns but no true confessions. As a result, there remains little scholarly consensus regarding when or even *if* Roosevelt favored full-scale intervention. Indeed, some scholars reject the claim that Roosevelt *ever* sought to commit America to another major war in Europe. Reynolds (1981, 288), for example, argues that Roosevelt's policy preference never went beyond providing the Allies with "arms not armies," and did not change until December 1941 (cited in Schuessler 2010, 148). Other scholars—and many of Roosevelt's contemporary critics—believe that the administration was maneuvering the nation into the war even before the outbreak of hostilities in the fall of 1939. Chamberlain (1994, 19-22), for example, concludes that "promises to 'keep America out of foreign wars' were a deliberate hoax on the American people, perpetrated for the purpose of ensuring Roosevelt's reelection and thereby enabling him to proceed with his plan of gradually edging the United States into war." Mearsheimer (2011, 47) cites Roosevelt as an exemplar of presidents who lie "in the hopes of dragging a reluctant American public into war."

Following primarily Burns (2012 [1956]), Dallek (1995), and Olson (2013), I argue, contrary to Chamberlain, that Roosevelt's hopes to preserve US neutrality were sincere at the outbreak of the war. America, Roosevelt hoped, could conserve its economic strength and then take the lead in Europe's reconstruction after the European democracies had defeated the German Reich.⁶⁸ However, "Roosevelt's intention to

⁶⁸ Russett (1972) presents an argument that this—along with softening its Japan policies to prevent outbreak of war in the Pacific—would have been the optimal policy choice for advancing US interests.

pass the buck to the European democracies suffered a major blow with the fall of France in June 1940” (Schuessler 2010, 147; see also Legro 2005). Contrary to Reynolds, therefore, I argue that as soon as it had become clear that the fall of France was inevitable, Roosevelt and his advisers recognized that the only alternative to US military and naval intervention was Axis domination of Europe, Northern Africa, the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas, and the Atlantic Ocean. While acknowledging the scholarly controversy, I argue that the Roosevelt administration settled on its unconstrained preference for war in May or June of 1940.

5.1.1 Roosevelt’s Unconstrained Policy Preference: Fall 1939 to Spring 1940

On the day that Britain and France declared war on Germany, President Roosevelt scheduled a Fireside Chat to assure the American public that the US would not be dragged into the war. “I trust that in the days to come our neutrality can be made a true neutrality” (Roosevelt September 3, 1939). Three weeks later he reiterated this commitment: “Our acts must be guided by one single hardheaded thought—keeping America out of this war” (Roosevelt September 21, 1939).

In the fall of 1939, Roosevelt had ample incentives to let his European allies deal with Hitler. Although Roosevelt had long been an internationalist, he had subordinated foreign policy to domestic economic concerns for all of his first term and most of his second (Olson 2013, 32). The prospect of a costly war threatened to overturn hard won domestic gains and disrupt the progress of the nation’s economic recovery. It also threatened Roosevelt’s tenure in office. The American electorate had no appetite for a second European war. Given the experience of the First World War, few doubted that

World War Two would set new and terrible standards for violence. The average citizen's presumption against war, in other words, was never more rational. Exacerbating natural inclinations to avoid the carnage was a widespread Anglophobic sentiment stemming from a growing conviction Britain had duped the US into the First World War. Finally, following the assumptions of rationalist theories of international politics (e.g., Fearon 1995), no rational leader would accept the risks and costs of war if an acceptable political outcome could be achieved by other means such as allowing other states—England and France in this case—to take those risks and pay those costs.

It is important to remember, however, that for the Roosevelt administration, an acceptable political outcome necessarily included regime change in Germany. As he openly expressed as early as 1937 in what became known as his “Quarantine Speech,” Roosevelt recognized that a durable peace was impossible as long as Hitler's government controlled Germany.

“It ought to be inconceivable that in this modern era, and in the face of experience, any nation could be so foolish and ruthless as to run the risk of plunging the whole world into war by invading and violating, in contravention of solemn treaties, the territory of other nations that have done them no real harm and are too weak to protect themselves adequately. Yet the peace of the world and the welfare and security of every nation, including our own, is today being threatened by that very thing” (Roosevelt, October 5, 1937).

Germany's 1938 Annexation of the Sudetenland, argues Schuessler (2010, 146), convinced Roosevelt that “Hitler wanted nothing less than world domination and that after subduing the European continent he was sure to turn his sights on the United States.” In fall 1939, shortly after the outbreak of war, Roosevelt shut down suggestions from both London and Berlin that the US broker a mediated settlement. In a letter to his ambassador to Britain, Roosevelt made his preference for regime change clear. “The

people of the United States would not support any move for peace initiated by this Government that would consolidate or make possible the survival of a regime of force and aggression” (quoted in Dallek 1995, 206).

As war broke out on the European continent, therefore, the Roosevelt administration held *two* foreign policy aims: toppling Hitler *and* keeping American troops out of the fighting. If the combined allied forces could defeat Germany without American boots on the ground, then the administration would realize both of its objectives.

5.1.2 Roosevelt’s Unconstrained Policy Preference: Spring 1940 to Dec 7, 1941

In September 1939, achieving both foreign policy objectives, regime change and US neutrality, was not an unrealistic ambition. By June 1940, however, the administration recognized that its dual objectives were no longer compatible. It could maintain US neutrality. It could, potentially, achieve regime change in Germany. It could not, however, do both. Roosevelt, therefore, abandoned his preference to keep the US out of the war and settled on a policy preference for full US belligerency in order to save Britain and topple Hitler.

Four observations support this claim. First, Germany’s spring campaign had revealed the magnitude of the power imbalance in Europe. The first eight months of the Second World War, the so-called “Phony War,” witnessed little actual fighting whereby the warring states could update their information regarding the true fighting capacity of the other side. Germany’s springtime invasions of Denmark, Norway, the Low Countries, and France erased that uncertainty dramatically and revealed Germany’s vast

superiority on land and in the air. They also offered evidence that Germany's military innovations during the interwar period, strategic and tactical, had rendered traditional defenses obsolete. As German forces prepared to enter Paris, it was clear that the European democracies posed no threat to Hitler's reign. The question now facing Washington was not whether the Allies could achieve regime change in Germany without US military support, but rather whether the European democracies could *survive* without US military support. Given the profound strategic mismatch that Germany's spring offensive confirmed, most of Roosevelt's advisers agreed that the answer was a definitive "no." The administration was confronted with a new choice: enter the war as a full belligerent or accept a revised global order dominated by a European superpower united under Hitler.

Roosevelt's most trusted advisers and his democratic counterparts in Europe made certain that Roosevelt fully understood the implications of Germany's spring campaign. "There is no doubt in my mind," warned Interior Secretary and key adviser Harold Ickes after observing the efficacy of Germany's revolutionary blitzkrieg tactics, "that [America] is in the most critical situation since we won our independence" (cited in Olson 2013, 98). Returning from his March 1940 mission to Europe to explore the possibility of a negotiated peace, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles reported to Roosevelt that Germany had no incentive to negotiate. Hitler understood that Germany could achieve all its ambitions by force. According to Welles, only the prospect of a total US military commitment would induce Hitler to consider a settlement (Olson 2013, 96).

Europe's remaining democratic leaders shared similarly bleak assessments with Roosevelt. On 18 May, French Premier Paul Reynaud warned the President through the

US Ambassador to Paris, that without US military intervention the war would end in less than two months with “an absolute defeat of France and England” (Dallek 1995, 221).⁶⁹ Churchill agreed. “A declaration that the United States will, if necessary, enter the war might save France,” he explained in a letter to Roosevelt. “Failing that, in a few days French resistance may have crumbled and we shall be left alone” (quoted in Dallek 1995, 231). Churchill further warned Roosevelt that once France fell, the British public would likely demand Churchill’s ouster and replace his government with one that was willing to accept terms from Germany. In that event, wrote Churchill, Roosevelt would then be faced with “a United States of Europe under Nazi command far more numerous, far stronger, far better armed than the New world” (quoted in Davis 1993, 558).

For leading non-interventionists, even the prospect of Britain’s defeat was insufficient to justify the costs of war. If America makes itself impregnable and preserves democracy by staying away from foreign wars, non-interventionists maintained that the US would continue to flourish even while Europe tears itself apart (Olson 2013, 226). The Roosevelt administration rejected this conclusion as absurd. “If Great Britain goes down,” Roosevelt later explained publicly in his December 29, 1940 Fireside Chat, “the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, and the high seas—and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere.” Even if the US could avoid a hot war with Germany indefinitely after Britain’s defeat, Roosevelt understood that the existence of a fascist European superpower would transform the US into a security state, precipitating the collapse of liberal democracy in America (Dallek 1995, 214). He also understood that if

⁶⁹ It is clear that Roosevelt fully comprehended the strategic implication of a French defeat. In response to Reynaud’s plea, since he could offer no US military assistance, Roosevelt urged Reynaud to ensure that the French fleet did not fall into German hands.

London fell, the German Navy, fortified with prizes seized from the British and French fleets, would soon control the Atlantic sea lines of communication.⁷⁰ In this event, Germany could slowly erode US strength by denying it access to vital raw materials (Olson 2013, 130). “Our world trade,” wrote Roosevelt in March, “would be at the mercy of the [German-Russian] combine” (quoted in Dallek 1995, 214).

Roosevelt, moreover, did not share with leading non-interventionist’s their confidence in the “stopping power of water” (Mearsheimer 2001). An invasion force launched from European ports could, he believed, negotiate a German-controlled Atlantic with near impunity, land that force with little resistance in South or Central America, and thus establish a beachhead in the Western Hemisphere (Olson 2013, 131). In short, Germany’s spring campaign provided Roosevelt and his advisers with incontrovertible evidence that England could not survive without US intervention and that, without England, American civilization was in peril.

The second article of evidence suggesting the Roosevelt administration had settled on an unconstrained preference for war by June of 1940 was the acceleration of its war planning following Germany’s spring offensive. In the 1920s and 1930s, the War Department maintained as many as 15 contingency plans, ranging from reasonably plausible contingencies like war with Japan (Plan Orange) to extremely unlikely possibilities such as war with Britain (Plan Red). As the outbreak of WWII became imminent, the War Department’s Joint Planning Board developed a new series of five contingency plans—the Rainbow Plans—based on the possibility of US intervention in a two-front war in Europe and Asia. The Rainbow plans were more relevant than the

⁷⁰ Olson (2013, 130-31) argues that the US could potentially maintain control of the Atlantic sea lines, but only if it transferred the bulk of its Pacific fleet to the Atlantic. This, however, would leave US interests in the Pacific vulnerable to the Japanese fleet.

color-coded war plans to the current crisis, but, like the color-coded plans, described options for US intervention in the most general possible terms. They were drafted as guides to US strategic thinking, not blueprints for military action.

The fall of France, however, prompted a new War Department planning effort based on one of the Rainbow Plans, Rainbow 5, which called for offensive operations by US forces in Europe and Africa.⁷¹ The result was a level of detail that was unprecedented for a nonbelligerent (Schuessler 2010). War Department planning produced two noteworthy outcomes. The first was a 12 November 1940 memo, drafted by Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark, which outlined in detail what would later become America's "Europe-first strategy" for the Second World War. Stark's "Plan Dog Memo," so called because it proposed "Option D" (the Europe-first strategy), won Roosevelt's implicit approval and guided execution-level military planning until December 1941 (Dear & Foot 2002; Ketchum 1989).

The Plan Dog Memo also captured key elements of the administration's post-blitzkrieg strategic thinking. "Should Britain lose the war," Stark advised, "the military consequences to the United States would be serious" (Stark 1940). Stark further explained that Britain's survival depended on the "complete, or at least partial collapse of the German Reich." In order to accomplish this, the US would need to provide not only naval assistance, which would likely be the initial force that the US would contribute to the war, but it would also need to deploy "large air and land forces to Europe or Africa, or both, and to participate strongly in this land offensive." Significantly, Stark

⁷¹ It is not clear whether the White House directed the War Department to mature its contingency plans or if this was a War Department initiative. Since the War Department reported its findings in November 1940, we can assume that, at a minimum, there was coordination between the White House and the war planners.

maintained that pursuing this option “is likely to be the most fruitful for the United States, particularly if we enter the war at an early date.”⁷²

The second outcome of the post-blitzkrieg planning effort was a major planning conference with British and Canadian war planners from January to March 1941. The “ABC Conference,” so called because of the participation of American, British, and Canadian planners, was a series of secret discussions to coordinate the US entry into World War II.⁷³ The report, which Roosevelt tacitly approved in March, outlined war objectives, sequencing, and force contributions.

Every state maintains contingency plans to guide initial strategic thinking in the event of an international crisis. When war planners review and revise these contingency plans, typically at specified intervals, it is not an indication of increased likelihood of or interest in war. However, when military staffs convene major, non-routine planning efforts in order to update plans with execution-level detail, it reveals the intentions of the leaders. “Such detailed planning,” writes Schuessler (2010, 155), “belied FDR’s assurances that the United States would definitely remain out of the fighting...” As was the case in 2002 when the Joint Staff advised US Central Command to update its Iraq war plan, the War Department’s decision to mature Rainbow 5 reflected the administration’s intent to prepare the nation for war.

⁷² Stark’s emphasis on the importance of an early entry into the war offers evidence against a common realist explanation for America’s slow entry into the war: that Roosevelt was holding out until US mobilization had improved America’s power position relative to the Axis powers. In fact, Stark recognized that Germany’s consolidation of its military victories was easily offsetting any US absolute power gains. If Britain had fallen, Germany’s gain in power relative to the US would have been profound and, arguably, unrecoverable.

⁷³ Schuessler (2010) emphasizes the administration’s desire to keep the ABC Conference secret in order to conceal from the public and from non-interventionist opponents Roosevelt’s unconstrained preference. In order to ensure the secrecy of the ABC Conference, British and Canadian war planners wore civilian clothes and had cover stories for their status and action (Reynolds 1981, 117; Schuessler 2010, 155).

A third piece of evidence revealing Roosevelt's unconstrained preference for war in June 1940 is the administration's knowledge of, and cooperation with, British intelligence activities operating covertly in the US to foment American pro-war sentiments. The most prominent of these was the British Security Coordination (BSC), which took residence in the Rockefeller Center in the spring of 1940. For 18 months, the BSC "declare[d] war on all of Britain's enemies in the United States—whether German, Italian, Vichy French, or American isolationists (Olson 2013, 115)." The BSC's chief targets were American antiwar groups and non-interventionist members of Congress. Historian Nicholas Cull describes the BSC as "one of the most diverse [and] extensive...undercover campaigns ever directed by one sovereign state at another" (cited in Olson 2013, 116).

Yet the administration did far more than turn a blind eye. Rather than arresting or deporting the British spies known by US counterintelligence to be operating on US soil, targeting American citizens, and attempting to influence US foreign policy, Roosevelt directed his FBI chief, J. Edgar Hoover, to establish "the closest possible marriage between the FBI and British Intelligence" (Hinsley & Simpkins 1990, 143). The FBI offered BSC operatives access to secure communications networks and classified information (Olson 2013, 119). The BSC reciprocated by providing the FBI with intelligence on US citizens, some of which was fabricated to manipulate American public opinion. This degree of cooperation is not consistent with a president who was, as some historians suggest, trying to keep his foreign policy options open (see for example Reynolds 1982; Steele 1985). Indeed, by lending support to a foreign intelligence service that he could, perhaps, influence but not control, Roosevelt was willingly and knowingly

cooperating with a sophisticated effort orchestrated by a foreign government for the purpose of *narrowing* his options. Roosevelt, in other words, was either hopelessly naïve, politically reckless, or fully supportive the BSC's ultimate objective: drawing the US into the war. Only the third explanation is plausible.

The final and most convincing evidence that Roosevelt had abandoned neutrality was his June 1940 cabinet shake-up. On June 18, four days after German forces entered Paris unopposed, Roosevelt asked for the resignation of his staunchly non-interventionist Secretary of War, Harry Woodring. His choice to succeed Woodring was Henry Stimson, a leading Republican and committed interventionist. Roosevelt also fired his Secretary of the Navy, Charles Edison, and replaced him with another prominent Republican, Frank Knox. Knox, who was the publisher and owner of the pro-interventionist *Chicago Daily News*, was among the most hawkish voices in the media. With the Stimson-Knox appointments, observes Roosevelt scholar Robert Dallek (1995, 231), Roosevelt had replaced “the two most isolationist members of his Cabinet with two of the country’s most pro-Allied Republicans.”

These appointments had two effects. First, by firing Woodring and Edison, Roosevelt had purged his Cabinet of the last dissenting voices regarding America’s German policy. But, significantly, Roosevelt did not replace Woodring and Edison with “yes men.” Stimson and Knox had been sharply critical of the administration for its timid European policies, and Roosevelt had no expectation that cabinet positions would soften their critiques. “Over the next eighteen months,” writes Olson (2013, 292), “the two men were relentless in urging the president to adopt more aggressive policies, joining Harold Ickes and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau...in doing so.” Roosevelt’s decision to

welcome to his team two of the nation's most ardent interventionists is, again, an action that is inconsistent with a president who is hoping to keep the nation out of the war.

The second effect of the Stimson-Knox appointments was that they signaled to perceptive observers that Roosevelt had abandoned neutrality. For both Stimson and Knox, advocacy for US intervention in the war had been a very public enterprise prior to their appointments. Since the outbreak of the Second World War, both men had publicly championed repealing the Neutrality Acts, shipping large numbers of late-model planes to England, instituting compulsory military training for fighting-age men, building a million-man army, and standing up the world's largest air force. They had also publicly endorsed convoying war materials to Britain, a policy that virtually guaranteed a violent incident at sea if not a full out naval war. On the day before Roosevelt made his offer, Stimson had delivered a nationally broadcast speech calling for full repeal of neutrality legislation and delivery of arms and munitions to England in US shipping protected by the US Navy. Before accepting Roosevelt's offer, Stimson asked the President if he had read the speech. Only when Roosevelt replied that he had and that he "was in full accord with it," did Stimson agree to accept the appointment (Olson 2013, 205). By welcoming to his Cabinet such vocal proponents of these aggressive policies, Roosevelt signaled his concurrence with them.

Roosevelt did not *want* war in the same way that Hitler wanted war. He did not covet other nations' territory. He held no imperialistic ambitions and had no international scores to settle. On the contrary, he feared that war would derail his domestic agenda. Had the strategic situation radically changed in favor of the Allies, it is likely that Roosevelt would have updated his policy preference and recommitted to keeping

America out of the fighting. By June 1940, however, with the fall of France imminent and inevitable, the administration had justifiably lost faith in this unrealistic prospect. Recognizing that the emergence of a European superpower united under a Nazi flag threatened America's survival as a liberal republic, Roosevelt fired the non-interventionist members of his Cabinet and began looking for allies—to include foreign intelligence services that were actively targeting American citizens—to counter America's non-interventionist sentiments.

June 1940 also marks the beginning of the Roosevelt administration's efforts to marshal domestic support for his unconstrained preference for war. The administration initiated its rhetorical mobilization campaign on June 10 in the University of Virginia's Memorial Gym. Addressing the graduating class of 1940 as well as a national radio audience, Roosevelt's speech attacked the non-interventionist platform, pledged his commitment to aiding the European democracies, and announced an unprecedented peacetime arms buildup not only to support foreign sales, but also to prepare America's military for the fight Roosevelt believed the US would have to fight.

“[W]e will extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation; and, at the same time, we will harness and speed up the use of those resources in order that we ourselves in the Americas may have equipment and training equal to the task of any emergency and every defense.”

My primary reason for marking Roosevelt's University of Virginia speech as the opening statement of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign is the contemporary response to this speech. Conceivably the administration considered either Roosevelt's 16 May Message to Congress on Appropriations for National Defense or his 26 May Fireside Chat as the launch of its campaign to prepare the American public for war. Both speeches conveyed the administration's recognition that Germany's spring

offensive had changed their strategic calculations. But it was not until Roosevelt's commencement address in Charlottesville that contemporary commentators recognized that the administration had abandoned its policy preference for maintaining neutrality. British propagandist John Wheeler-Bennett described the speech as "the first gleam of hope" (quoted in Olson, 128). *Time* magazine recognized that the University of Virginia speech marked the end of US neutrality. "The US has taken sides...Ended is the utopian hope that [it] could remain an island of democracy in a totalitarian world" (cited in Olson, 128).

For the pro-interventionist editors at *Time*, the isolated government in London, and the besieged British people, the content and tone of the University of Virginia speech was a welcome shift in executive rhetoric. For most Americans, however, the hawkish tenor was not at all welcome. In the next section I examine domestic attitudes in the spring and early summer of 1940, both the general public and the political elite, regarding the question of US intervention in the Second World War.

5.2 Pre-campaign Distribution of Domestic Preferences

To proponents of US intervention in World War Two, Roosevelt's preoccupation with domestic opinion was a source of intense frustration. Reporting to London on the likelihood of US intervention, one official from the British embassy in Washington observed that Roosevelt and his Secretary of State Cordell Hull were "anxious to do what they can to help, but are obsessed by the risk of going too far ahead of public opinion and losing control of Congress" (quoted in Olson 2013, 34).

If indeed Roosevelt's interest in domestic opinion was an obsession, it was a rational obsession argues Dallek (1995). As Woodrow Wilson's Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the First World War, Roosevelt was at the center of the administration's campaign to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Wilson's failure to secure a domestic consensus for his foreign policy agenda doomed the campaign to failure (see Putnam 1988). The resulting international political disaster taught Roosevelt a fundamental lesson of international politics that informed his foreign policy decision making throughout his presidency: "an effective policy abroad depended on a stable commitment at home" (Dallek 1995, 227).⁷⁴ For Roosevelt, a sympathetic citizenry was an essential precondition for escalating US support to the Allies. Moving too far ahead of public opinion on US intervention, Roosevelt warned the British ambassador, risked creating "a 'battalion of death in the Senate like Wilson did over the League of Nations—a group which will exploit the natural human reluctance to war" (quoted in Ketchum 1991, 355).

Because Roosevelt placed such a high premium on aligning foreign policy with domestic sentiments, the administration was meticulous in its "day-to-day accumulation of facts on what people were thinking" (Dallek, 264). The administration "deliberately constructed and carefully maintained" three primary "channels to the public mind" (Steele 1974, 195). First, Roosevelt personally read at least six newspapers per day. Second, recognizing that publishers' views heavily biased reporting in these papers, Roosevelt encouraged the American people to write him letters so that he might gauge

⁷⁴ Roosevelt's inclination to align policy with public feeling was reinforced in 1937 when he proposed legislation to enlarge the Supreme Court without first building public consensus. The legislation was crushed in Congress, with more Democrats than Republicans voting down the bill. Olson (2013) argues persuasively that Roosevelt's reticence to lead public opinion in the direction of his unconstrained preference to support the Allies stems from his "court-packing" failure. Olson (2013, 57) describes it as the "biggest mistake of his presidency," and argues that "the measure—and the battle over it—would greatly strengthen FDR's political enemies and leave him so unsure of his standing in the country from then on, he would be reluctant to move more than a few millimeters ahead of public opinion."

the average citizen's unadulterated opinion. Roosevelt's staff analyzed, on average, five to eight thousand communications per day⁷⁵ and coded each correspondence as favorable or unfavorable to the administration's various policy preferences (Steele 1974, 202). Roosevelt personally read a random sampling from the daily correspondence. Finally, the Roosevelt administration relied on polling. Prior to 1940, polling data were unscientific and unreliable. By 1940, however, organizations like Gallup and Roper had "all but revolutionized the concept of public opinion" by applying scientific methods (Steele 1974, 205-06; see also Cantril 1980; Katz & Cantril 1937). Roosevelt enjoyed immediate and privileged access to these data.

From these insights into the public mood, Roosevelt understood that the increasingly dire news from Europe in the spring of 1940 and the mounting evidence of Roosevelt's unconstrained preference to intervene in the crisis—often served to the public with a sensational spin by Roosevelt's non-interventionist opponents—had caused America's foreign policy consensus to splinter. Prior to May 1940, writes Olson (2013, xvi-xvii), "most Americans had viewed the war in Europe as if it were a movie—a drama that, while interesting to watch, had nothing to do with their own lives. But the shock of Germany's blitzkrieg demolished that belief" (see also Ketchum 1989, 375). Just as Germany's spring campaign prompted the Roosevelt administration to revise its unconstrained policy preference, it also prompted every American to take notice and take sides.

⁷⁵ This was 10 times the average correspondence that his predecessor, Herbert Hoover, received (Steele 1974, 202).

5.2.1 Distribution of Domestic Preferences: Public Opinion

For some Americans, the events of May and June had revealed the enormity of the Nazi threat, the scope of Hitler's ambitions, and the urgent need of US intervention in the war. The raucous response to Roosevelt's remarks at the University of Virginia reflected this attitude. The following day, *The New York Times* reported:

As the president neared the end of his speech the cheering became general and members of the faculty stamped their feet and applauded. Wherever Mr. Roosevelt mentioned this nation's determination to preserve free institutions and liberties and perpetuate democracy within our borders, those on the platform and in the audience forgot academic decorum in spontaneous approbation (Belair, June 11, 1940).

If the reception in Memorial Gym to Roosevelt's most bellicose speech since 1937 were a reliable gauge of domestic sentiment, then the administration would likely have judged the risk of domestic sanction for joining the fight in Europe as tolerable, and geopolitics, not domestic politics, would have been the chief determinant of Roosevelt's war decision.

The mood in Charlottesville, however, was hardly representative of the nation as a whole in June of 1940. Isolationist tropes that had emerged and flourished in the interwar years reentered the public discourse. Non-interventionist commentators reminded the American public that the First World War had been a "grotesque disaster" (Dallek 1995, 103).⁷⁶ America had been tricked into intervening in 1917 by a sophisticated British propaganda machine and by European elites who were eager to spill American blood to settle ancient quarrels (Olson 2013, xvii). Equally influential was the "merchants of death" hypothesis,⁷⁷ the idea that Americans had been played for "saps and suckers" by bankers and arms manufacturers who fomented war to boost profits (Burns 2012 [1956],

⁷⁶ A 1937 Gallup poll reported that 70 percent of the respondents thought it had been a mistake for the US to enter World War I.

⁷⁷ The epithet "merchants of death" comes from the title of Engelbrecht & Hanighen's 1934 expose of the munitions industry.

253).⁷⁸ So while once again a few bankers and munitions makers stood to benefit from US intervention in a second European war, the losers would be “the mass of Americans who would pay with their lives, their money, and their democratic institutions” (Dallek 1995, 103).

Describing the isolationist mood of the country, historians William Langer and Everett Gleason write, “Americans, having once believed, erroneously, that war would settle everything, were now disposed to endorse the reverse fallacy that war could settle nothing” (quoted in Olson, 28). Public opinion polling conducted by Hadley Cantril’s Office of Public Opinion Research (OPOR) captured this mood. Most Americans (over 75 percent) had faith in an Allied victory in the fall of 1939 as war broke out in Europe (see Cantril 1948; 1980). Germany’s spring campaign, however, prompted a precipitous drop in the average American’s confidence. By mid May, only 39 percent of respondents believed that the Allies would defeat Germany. That number fell to 32 percent after France’s surrender in June.

So too did the public’s readiness to support what many perceived to be a losing cause. By late May 1940, 65 percent of those surveyed by OPOR responded that it was more important for the United States to stay out of the war than to help England defeat Germany. Responding to the prompt, “If the question of the United States going to war against Germany and Italy came up for a national vote within the next two or 3 weeks,” only 15 percent responded in late May that they would vote to go to war. A month later, after the fall of France, that number dropped to 12 percent. When asked more directly

⁷⁸ From September 1934 to February 1936, the Nye Committee investigated the “merchants of death” hypothesis. Although found little hard evidence linking the US decision to intervene in the First World War with lobbying efforts from bankers or munitions makers, the hearings had the effect of publicizing the belief.

“do you think the United States should declare war on Germany and Italy and send our army and navy abroad to fight?” only four percent in late May responded that they did, three percent after France’s surrender.

Mailrooms across Washington confirmed the polling data. Following the British and French declarations of war, Americans, by the hundreds of thousands, wrote letters and telegrams to their senators, congressmen, and president urging them to keep America out of the fighting. Some members received so much anti-war mail that it had to be delivered by hand trucks (Olson 2013, 65).

The emergence of grassroots non-interventionist groups both reflected and inflamed the general public’s isolationist mood. Among these groups, the most influential were organized by the populations most likely to pay the highest price if America joined the fighting: draft-age men and their families. The Congress of American Mothers, American Mothers’ Neutrality League, and other women’s groups formed a loose but vocal coalition that staged loud protests and inundated Congress and the White House with correspondence and phone calls. A group of Yale students established The America First Committee to organize the non-interventionist activities of college students across the nation. Arguably the most powerful of the grassroots non-interventionist groups, The America First Committee welcomed as members the “big man on campus” from top universities across America. Supporters included Sargent Shriver, John F. Kennedy, and Gerald Ford. Describing his interest in joining The America First Committee, CBS correspondent Eric Sevareid writes, “We were young, and to those just beginning to taste the wonderful flavors of life, the idea of death was a stark tragedy of unutterable horror... We began to detest the very word ‘patriotism,’ which we considered

to be debased, a cheap medallion with which to decorate and justify a corpse” (Sevareid 1946 quoted in Olson 2013, 220-21).

On the day that Roosevelt launched his rhetorical mobilization campaign, few Americans were, using the President’s language, “neutral in conscience” (Roosevelt September 3, 1939). Most hoped for an Allied victory (85 percent according to one poll taken shortly after war was declared), and polling data reflected virtually no pro-German sentiment (Olson 2013, 65). But the widespread public sympathy for the plight of the Western European democracies did not translate to public support for forcible intervention. According to *The Nation* editor Freda Kirchwey, “What a majority of the American people want is to be as unneutral as possible without getting into the war” (quoted in Olson 2013, 130). Indeed, the average American’s desire to intervene in “the hell broth that was brewing in Europe” (Ernest Hemingway quoted in Olson 2013, 28) was inversely proportional to the urgency of France and Britain’s need for US military intervention. As hope for an Allied victory waned, so too did the American public’s interest in attempting to rescue their fellow democracies. As one French journalist observed: “This country is literally drunk with pacifism. The war as an absolute evil in itself has become a mysticism...To spare our boys has taken on the value of a national mission” (quoted in Olson 2015, 54).

5.2.1 Distribution of Domestic Preferences: Elite Opinion

As with the general public, Roosevelt’s increasingly explicit interventionist preferences troubled elite consensus. Unlike the general public, however, the political elites in the US did not wake up in the spring of 1940 to a crisis in Europe. As early as 1935, events

in Europe were polarizing elite opinion. In 1937, Roosevelt first attempted to alert the nation to the gathering threat of Nazism.

It seems to be unfortunately true that the epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading. When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread, the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease.

We are determined to keep out of war, yet we cannot insure ourselves against the disastrous effects of war and the dangers of involvement. We are adopting such measures as will minimize our risk of involvement, but we cannot have complete protection in a world of disorder in which confidence and security have broken down (Roosevelt October 5, 1937).

The volume and intensity of criticism that Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech" invoked surprised Roosevelt and his national security team (Dallek 1995; Krebs 2015b; Olson 2013; Schuessler 2010, 2015). From this point forward until December 1941, elite consensus in the US over the crisis in Europe was split into two distinct and hostile camps: interventionists and non-interventionists.⁷⁹

By his June 1940 University of Virginia speech, Roosevelt faced a loose but powerful confederation of non-interventionists in Congress (both houses and both parties), the news media, and the military. Non-interventionist elites rallied around and broadcast a national security frame founded on three premises (see Dallek 1995; Krebs 2015a, 2015b; Olson 2013). First, European leaders along with bankers, arms dealers and other "merchants of death" had played the Wilson administration and the American people for suckers in 1917. There was no substantive difference, they argued, between then and now. Second, the European democracies, because of their unjust treatment of Germany at Versailles, bore responsibility for the current crisis. They should, therefore,

⁷⁹ Many authors refer to non-interventionists during this period as "isolationists." While indeed some non-interventionists (people who did not support US intervention in the Second World War) were isolationists (people who supported US withdrawal from world affairs to include the fighting in Europe), many were strong internationalists on economic and political issues.

handle it without asking American boys once again to spill their blood on European battlefields to solve ancient and interminable European quarrels. Finally, and crucially, even if the fascists swallowed up the European democracies, America, “surrounded by its oceanic moats,” was safe and could flourish as a liberal democracy regardless of the outcome in Europe (Krebs 2015b, 70). This framing of the crisis in Europe remained influential until the Pearl Harbor raid.

In Congress, a non-interventionist caucus initially converged in the mid 1930s around the debate over proposed legislation to codify US neutrality. The Neutrality Act, signed in 1935 and revised in 1936, 1937, and 1939, imposed a mandatory embargo on all “arms, ammunition, or implements of war” on all belligerents. Roosevelt balked. Although he welcomed embargo authority, he was frustrated by the inflexibility of the legislation, which did not give him the power to discriminate between aggressor and victim (Burns 2012 [1956], 259). The administration petitioned for discretionary power. “History is filled with unforeseeable situations that call for some flexibility of action,” Roosevelt protested. “It is conceivable that situations may arise in which the wholly inflexible provisions of section I of this Act might...drag us into war instead of keeping us out” (Roosevelt August 31, 1935). Congress, however, would not yield. Despite his opposition to the bill on strategic grounds, Roosevelt, who was pursuing the “peace vote” in 1936 and therefore had little room for maneuver politically, signed the bill.

From their initial enactment in 1935 until their repeal in late 1941, the Neutrality Act pushed Congress and the administration deeper into opposing corners with the president seeking to weaken and ultimately repeal the legislation and an increasingly non-interventionist Congress working to strengthen it. Significantly, congressional opposition

to Roosevelt's interventionist preferences crossed party lines. Each of the Neutrality Acts (1935, 1936, 1937, and 1939) passed despite large Democratic majorities in the House and Senate.

Although both houses of Congress were solidly non-interventionist, the "real stronghold of isolationism" in Congress was the Senate (Olson 2013, 65). After the outbreak of war in Europe, Republican Senators William Borah, Hiram Johnson, Gerald Nye, and Arthur Vandenberg launched a national radio campaign. They assured the public that the war was just another European power struggle and that Germany lacked both the will and the capacity to threaten "fortress America" (Dallek 2013, 197, 200). While Roosevelt's Republican opponents were more vocal, influential Senate Democrats lent credibility to Republican rhetoric. In a public statement released two weeks after Roosevelt's University of Virginia speech, Democrat Key Pittman, chairman of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urged the British government to surrender. "The probability of Hitler's domination of Europe is evident," Pittman concluded. "It is no secret that Great Britain is totally unprepared for defense and that nothing the United States has to give can do more than delay the result" (quoted in Perret 1985, 28).

Media elites in the spring of 1940 campaigned on both sides of the intervention debate. Herbert Agar's *Louisville Courier-Journal* not only advocated for repeal of the neutrality laws and material support for the Allies, but also was among the few newspapers that went so far as to demand US entry into the war. In May 1940, after witnessing the German blitzkrieg, *New York Herald Tribune* columnists Dorothy Thompson and Walter Lippmann wrote, "...the least costly solution in both life and welfare would be to declare war on Germany at once (cited in Olson 2013, 146).

Publisher Henry Luce (*Time*, *Fortune*, and *Life*) and CBS correspondent Edward R. Murrow were “unapologetic” in their advocacy for immediate US military intervention. “The American refusal to be ‘drawn in,’” wrote Luce, “is a kind of failure to realize how deeply we *are* in, whatever we say or do” (cited in Olson, 194).

These journalists and publishers, however, represented a minority among the media elite. Publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst was a committed and outspoken non-interventionist. The *Chicago Tribune*’s Robert McCormick, a classmate of Roosevelt at Groton who, according to Olson (2013), nurtured a personal animosity toward the President and opposed Roosevelt on every major policy from the New Deal forward, was particularly energetic in his opposition to Roosevelt’s preferred German policy. During the debates over Lend-Lease, for example, *Chicago Tribune* columns and editorials referred to the proposed bill only as “the war dictatorship bill” (Olson 2013, 278). Like McCormick and Hearst, the publishers of *The New York Daily News* and *Washington Times-Herald* were also aggressively non-interventionist and strong backers of the America First Committee.

Nor did Roosevelt enjoy the support of the military elite in the spring of 1940. Many of America’s top-ranking officers, particularly in the Army, blamed the Roosevelt administration for underfunding the military in favor of its domestic programs (Olson 2013, 29). They were not inclined, therefore, to lend their voices and credibility to Roosevelt’s insistence that Germany posed a threat to the Americas. The US officer corps generally admired the professional competence of the *Wehrmacht*, held their British and French counterparts in low esteem, and, like many Americans, blamed the current crisis on British and French treatment of Germany at Versailles. Retired officers like

General Hugh Johnson, a former Roosevelt ally,⁸⁰ voiced these concerns publicly. In spring 1940, Johnson joined leading non-interventionists in Congress in a national radio campaign to counter the administration's heightened rhetoric (Dallek 1995, 231). For active duty officers, opposition to the Commander-in-Chief was necessarily more measured. "[A] number of high-ranking military officers," writes Olson (2013, 100), "began conducting their own private guerilla campaigns to do what they could to shut the president down." Some, for example, quietly sought to empower non-interventionists in Congress by leaking classified information (Olson 2013, 100).

The US military's non-interventionist leanings emanated from the top. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall disapproved of Roosevelt's unconstrained policy preference until just prior to the Pearl Harbor raid (Olson 2013, xix).⁸¹ After the France's exit from the war, Marshall believed that Britain's defeat was imminent and that any arms that the US provided England would end up in German hands. He therefore urged Roosevelt to cut off *all* aid (Olson 2013, 129). Although Marshall was never directly defiant himself, he protected those on his staff who were such as General Hap Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces who actively and vocally opposed Roosevelt regarding the transfer of aircraft to Britain (Olson 2013, 300). Marshall, moreover, welcomed onto his personal staff fiercely non-interventionist advisers who

⁸⁰ Johnson had participated in New Deal planning and had helped draft several of Roosevelt's key speeches during the president's first term. Roosevelt's court packing attempt in 1937 prompted a falling out. Johnson openly denounced the effort.

⁸¹ Although in the spring of 1940 Marshall disapproved of US military intervention in the war, he reversed his opposition to peacetime conscription. In July 1940 he testified to Congress on behalf of Roosevelt's initiative to reinstate the draft.

took active measures to frustrate the administration's efforts to generate more aggressive support for the Allies.⁸²

A further complication as Roosevelt considered the distribution of elite preferences in the spring of 1940 was celebrity power. Charles Lindbergh's commitment to the non-interventionist cause was a product of a deep affinity for Germany,⁸³ his sincere belief that German airpower was unstoppable,⁸⁴ and an abiding sense that his celebrity status conveyed a duty to "exercise a constructive influence in America" (Olson 2013, 17-23). Like many advocates of non-intervention observing Germany's spring 1940 offensive, Lindbergh believed that the defeat of the Allies was imminent and that US neutrality was the only way to ensure that "at least one strong Western nation would remain to protect Western civilization" (quoted in Olson 2013, 23).

In May 1940, convinced that administration's increasingly aggressive rhetoric was intended to prepare the nation for war, Lindbergh made his first of many nationwide radio broadcasts. He insisted that there was no danger of war unless the administration's "hysterical chatter of calamity and invasion" incited it. "If we desire peace," Lindbergh implored, "we have only to stop asking for war...Let us turn again to America's traditional role—that of building and guarding our own destiny" (Lindbergh May 19, 1940, quoted in Olson 2013, 103). Lindbergh's radio addresses in the spring and summer

⁸² Among those who Marshall recruited to advise him were retired General Stanley Embick and Colonel Truman Smith. Olson (2013, 300) describes Embick as "arguably the most isolationist-minded officer in the entire US Army." Smith, Marshall's leading German expert, developed a close personal friendship with Germany's military attaché and actively supported the America First Committee by providing them with names of other high-ranking officers who opposed US intervention. See Olson 2013, 300.

⁸³ Of the German people, Lindbergh wrote: "I cannot help liking the Germans...They are like [Americans]. We should be working with them and not constantly crossing swords. If we fight, our countries will only lose their best men. We can gain nothing...It must not happen" (quoted in Olson 2013, 18).

⁸⁴ After touring air facilities in Britain, France, and Germany, Lindbergh concluded: "Germany now has the means of destroying London, Paris, and Prague if she wishes to do so. England and France together have not enough modern war planes for effective defense or counterattack" (quoted in Olson 2013, 17).

of 1940 “generated a spontaneous deluge” of letters to the White House and Congress demanding American neutrality (Dallek, 200; 225).

To summarize, Roosevelt had learned hard lessons early in his political career about taking bold steps in the international arena without first securing a consensus at home. As a result of those experiences and the emergence of new methods for gauging domestic opinion, the Roosevelt administration tracked domestic attitudes, those of average citizens and political elites alike, closer than any president up to that time. What this analysis revealed to the administration was that the same international events that had caused Roosevelt to abandon his faith that the US could remain neutral and survive as an independent and liberal state had dangerously polarized the distribution of domestic preferences. While some Americans recognized that the US could no longer remain aloof as Germany eradicated liberal democracy from the European continent, most embraced the non-interventionist narrative that “foretold an unsullied America standing tall despite the death, devastation, and dictatorship surrounding it” (Krebs 2015b, 152-53). As Roosevelt addressed the University of Virginia’s graduating class, his unconstrained preference to join the Allies faced a hostile Congress, enjoyed few backers in the news media, garnered resistance from the military’s top officers, and created a political enemy out of “the only man in the country who could rival Roosevelt in commanding the public’s attention” (Olson 2013, 70).

In short, in the spring of 1940, the administration faced a constrained decision-making environment. For Roosevelt, the political and military risk of implementing his unconstrained preference without amending the polarized distribution of domestic preferences was intolerable. As predicted by the rhetorical mobilization model, therefore,

the administration organized for, planned, and executed a rhetorical mobilization campaign to unify the nation around its unconstrained preference. I describe this campaign in the following section.

5.3 Rhetorical Mobilization

Just before departing for his 10 June speech in Charlottesville, Roosevelt learned that Italy, “yearn[ing] to be in on the kill,” had declared war on France and Britain (Burns 2012 [1956], 421). For Roosevelt, this news “dissipated beyond hope of recovery” two “national illusions”: that France and Britain could survive without all-out support from the US, and that Europe, united under a fascist banner, would seek a *modus vivendi* with the US (Stuckey 2013, 183). By the time Roosevelt arrived on University of Virginia’s historic grounds, he was ready to launch his rhetorical mobilization campaign to marshal domestic support for America’s entry into World War II.

On the train from Washington to Charlottesville Roosevelt inked a new sentence in the margin of the final draft of his speech: “On this tenth day of June, 1940, the hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor.” According to Roosevelt scholar James MacGregor Burns, the president struggled over this revision that brazenly raised the rhetorical stakes. Discretion told him to strike the new and incendiary language, but “the old red blood,” Roosevelt later explained, “said use it” (Roosevelt quoted in Burns 2012 [1956], 421). “Blood,” observes Burns, “won out.”

In this section I examine presidential rhetoric from Roosevelt’s 10 June 1940 “Stab in the Back speech” to his 15 March 1941 address in which he announced his war decision: Lend-Lease. The primary purpose of this section is to provide evidence of an

organized White House effort to amend the unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences discussed above.

5.3.1 Emergence of *ad Hoc* Organizations

Many scholars designate the Roosevelt era as the first modern presidency. This designation concerns, primarily, the expansion of the executive power relative to the other branches. Presidential power during the Roosevelt administration waxed as a result of two national emergencies, the Great Depression and the Second World War, and has never appreciably waned. But the first-modern-presidency label also refers to the relationship between the president and the American people. The emergence and advancement of reliable protocols for systematically gauging public opinion has influenced executive decision making from the Roosevelt administration forward. These advancements have restructured the modern White House. Ever since Roosevelt, US presidents have organized their administrations not only for public relations, but also for public opinion intelligence gathering (Foyle 1999, 2004; Jacobs 1992).

Yet for all its modernity, the public opinion intelligence organization of the Roosevelt White House bore little resemblance to the “permanent campaign” structure and staffing that characterize a truly modern White House (see McClellan 2008). As a result, the Roosevelt administration in spring 1940 was even less prepared to run a rhetorical mobilization campaign than the Bush White House in 2003. The administration’s “wartime public opinion apparatus” (Jacobs 1992), therefore, relied on establishment of *ad hoc* organizations within the White house as well as *ad hoc* partnerships with outside organizations, both non-governmental and non-US, that shared

Roosevelt's unconstrained preference to join the Western European democracies in their fight for survival.

5.3.1.1 *Ad Hoc* Organizations in the Executive Branch

Frustrated by the non-interventionists in Congress and the American public's inability to comprehend the enormity of the Nazi threat, Roosevelt's key advisers urged the President to organize the administration for rhetorical mobilization. In June 1940, the Secretaries of War and Navy presented the Roosevelt with a report from the Joint Army-Navy Board titled "Basic Plan for Public Relations Administration."⁸⁵ As explained in a joint letter, the purpose of the Basic Plan was to organize the government for a systematic effort to "maintain national morale by the adequate presentation of the aims, views, and progress of the nation." Ickes and Hopkins similarly favored establishment within the executive branch of an independent federal agency that would "take the lead in directing the public toward recognition of the immediacy and seriousness of the German threat to American security" (Steele 1970, 1643). Roosevelt's Vice President, Henry Wallace, offered Goebel's Ministry of Propaganda as the model for such an agency (Steele 1970, 1643).

Although none approached the scale and scope that Wallace imagined, the administration commissioned (and decommissioned) several *ad hoc* organizations tasked with preparing the nation for war.⁸⁶ The most extensive and ambitious attempt at

⁸⁵ Although the report was not presented to Roosevelt until June 1940, the Joint Army-Navy Board initiated its analysis in September 1939, immediately after the war began.

⁸⁶ Roosevelt perceived a need to alert the public to the German threat even before settling on his preference for war. In 1938, the administration created the United States Film Service to exploit the propaganda potential of film. Opposition both in Congress and Hollywood ensured this project was short-lived (Steele 1984, 73). The Office of Government Reports (OGR), created by executive order in 1939, enjoyed a longer life (OGR remained active until 1942), but its ambitions and contributions were far more humble than administration interventionists had envisioned. The OCG focused primarily on analyzing and cataloguing

establishing a government propaganda agency was the Bureau of Facts and Figures (BFF). The concept was conceived and proposed in 1940 by a collaboration of interventionist social scientists. Although Roosevelt was slow to act on the proposal, he finally commissioned—“if only to appease his own staff”—the BFF under the auspices of the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) (Steele 1984, 77). The agency’s function, as described by historian Richard Steele (1974, 207) was to “correct the deficiencies in public knowledge of national policy, and to boost morale through the selective dissemination of information.” A memorandum from OCD Director and New York City Mayor⁸⁷ Fiorello LaGuardia to Roosevelt offers a sense for the nature of the information that the BFF selectively disseminated. LaGuardia advised the president that the BFF would provide the public not only with “actual and accurate information,” but also “sugar coated, colored, ornamental matter otherwise known as ‘bunk’” (quoted in Steele 1970, 1649). The BFF, in short, came closer than any other government agency to leading the type of overt propaganda campaign that had infamously served the German war effort.

Ultimately, however, the administration’s attempts to create a national propaganda agency were disappointing to Ickes, Hopkins, Wallace, and others who feared the administration was losing its information war with the non-interventionists. The primary obstacle to the success of these *ad hoc* governmental organizations was that none enjoyed enthusiastic backing from the top. Roosevelt found the concept of overt, government-sponsored, “morale-building” programs unappealing and politically risky. It conjured for him the propaganda operations that preceded America’s entry into the First World War, which, by 1940, many Americans had come to view as a tragic mistake

the daily news while providing the news media with easy access to government data and defense-related stories.

⁸⁷ LaGuardia performed both duties simultaneously.

(Steele 1970). Roosevelt feared that the American public would easily see through LaGuardia's "bunk" and that his non-interventionist opponents would hold up agencies like the BFF as evidence that Roosevelt, like Wilson in 1917, was manipulating the American public into another costly European war (Steele 1970, 1640-42). In October 1941, Roosevelt relieved the OCD of its propaganda function.⁸⁸

5.3.1.2 *Ad Hoc* Partnerships

Although reluctant to establish a national propaganda agency, Roosevelt agreed with his advisers regarding the urgent need to organize for rhetorical mobilization. Rather than risking public hostility toward an overt propaganda arm, therefore, the administration quietly established *ad hoc* partnerships with foreign and non-governmental organizations that shared its interventionist preference.

One of the leading private groups with which the administration quietly cooperated was the Non-Partisan Committee for Peace Through Revision of the Neutrality Law. Organized at Roosevelt's request by William Allen White, a publisher and political leader who was well respected in the predominately isolationist Midwest, the Committee drafted editorials, purchased newspaper ads, and made radio broadcasts appealing for the end of US neutrality. During the German blitzkrieg, White also commissioned, with the administration's discreet support, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies. The White Committee, as it was called, organized

⁸⁸ The BFF did not entirely disappear, however. The BFF became the Office of Facts and Figures, an independent agency that reported directly to the President "for the purpose of facilitating the dissemination of factual information to the citizens of the country on the progress of the defense effort and on the defense policies and activities of the Government" (Executive Order 8922, October 24, 1941).

politicians, academics, businessmen, members of the press, and celebrities⁸⁹ in support of their cause: “all aid short of war.” According to Olson (2013, 89), the White Committee “Serv[ed] in effect as an unofficial public relations agency for Roosevelt and his administration.”

Another private group through which the White House indirectly conducted its rhetorical mobilization campaign was the Century Group. Founded in 1847, Century Group membership rolls included prominent lawyers, journalists, and members of the Hollywood elite.⁹⁰ It also included seven US presidents, one of whom was Roosevelt himself. Far more aggressive than the White Committee’s commitment to “all aid short of war,” the Century Group explicitly advocated for Roosevelt’s unconstrained preference, America’s entry into the war as a full belligerent, and enlisted its prominent publishers and journalists to mobilize the American public to this end. Century Group member Herbert Agar took a leave of absence as publisher of the *Louisville Courier-Journal* to spearhead the Century Group’s campaign. In *The Darkest Year: Britain Alone* (Agar 1972, quoted in Olson 2013, 145), Agar writes: “We (the Century Group) wanted war with Germany and we strove to promote it. We were not content with giving or selling arms to our friends in order that they might die in our defense.”

As with the White Committee, Roosevelt and his advisers worked with and through the Century Group to sell the American public on the need to join the fighting. But the administration also insisted on the discretion of his ad hoc partners. If the administration’s collaboration and complicity with the Century Group’s ambitions and

⁸⁹ Boxer Gene Tunney was the most prominent.

⁹⁰ Among the Hollywood elite who became active Century Group members were Walter Wagner (president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences), directors Howard Hawks and William Wyler, studio owner Jack Warner, and actors Humphrey Bogart, Melvyn Douglas, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Helen Hayes, Burgess Meredith, and Edward G. Robinson. See Olson 2013, 361.

operations became public, Roosevelt warned Agar, he would deny it (Olson 2013, 147; 278).

A fourth private organization that played a vital role in the administration's rhetorical mobilization effort was Hadley Cantril's Office of Public Opinion Research (OPOR). Established at Princeton University to study public attitudes, OPOR offered its services to the White House shortly after the outbreak of war in Europe. Roosevelt, who perceived a Republican bias in Gallup Organization polling (Steele 1974, 208), eagerly accepted Cantril's assistance. As a result, the administration benefitted from privileged access to OPOR survey results and even participated in the design of many OPOR surveys. As with the Century Group, both the White House and Cantril insisted on confidentiality regarding their *ad hoc* partnership (Olson 2013, 343).

The administration also initiated *ad hoc* partnerships to mobilize the American public with the generally interventionist film industry.⁹¹ Producers from the three major studios—Warner Brothers, Paramount, and MGM—offered to produce any film, regardless of cost, that the administration believed would further its foreign policy agenda (Steele 1984, 74). For the nearly 40 million Americans per week who went to the movies, films like *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), *The Great Dictator* (1940), *A Yank in the RAF* (1941), *International Squadron* (1941), and *Sergeant York* (1941) vilified the Nazi regime while glorifying “Britain’s civilizing mission” and extoling “the historic honor and courage of the British fighting man” (Steele 1984, 80-81). Likewise, producers of the newsreels that typically preceded these films volunteered their support to the White House. The *March of Time* newsreel series invariably promoted the

⁹¹ For those few in the film industry who were active non-interventionists, jobs became scarce. Actress Lillian Gish, for example, chose to end her association with the non-interventionist America First Committee when she recognized its effect on her career. See Olson 2013, 361.

interventionist cause. Moreover, its producers rejected demands from powerful non-interventionists like Senator Burton Wheeler for “balanced” coverage. The administration’s *ad hoc* partnership with Hollywood was so effective that the British Ambassador to Washington urged British film stars like Cary Grant, Ronald Colman, and Cedric Hardwicke to remain in Hollywood rather than joining the fight directly. It also prompted the German *charge d’affaires* to lodge a complaint with the State Department and non-interventionists in the Senate to initiate hearings. Neither effort was fruitful (see Olson 2013, 361, 370; see also Steele 1984).

While the radio industry also cooperated with the White House, the terms of the industry’s cooperation were more directive than voluntary. The administration’s ability to pressure radio executives through FCC regulations gave the White House considerable leverage that it eagerly exploited (Steele 1984). Shortly after Germany’s invasion of Poland, the White House “put the industry on notice” that if it failed to “serve the nation’s interest in the current emergency, the administration was prepared...to make it behave” (Steel 1984, 76). The result of administration pressure was news coverage that amplified interventionist themes and popular radio dramas like *From Oxford Pacifist to Fighter Pilot*, which historian Richard Steele (1984, 84) characterized as “the most effective kind of broadcast propaganda” that the administration exploited. An August 1941 White House survey of radio broadcasts in the month of July found that 8 hours supported non-interventionist themes compared with 42 hours supporting the administration’s policy preference (Steele 1984, 81).

The most unconventional *ad hoc* partnership that the administration cultivated was with the British Security Coordination (BSC), introduced briefly above. Composed

of over 1000 operatives, mostly Canadians who looked and sounded American, the BSC established its US headquarters in the Rockefeller Center in the summer of 1939. BSC activities in the US included planting pro-British and anti-German propaganda in American newspapers, finding or manufacturing discrediting information on noninterventionists in Congress, and forging documents that hinted at a Nazi fifth column operating in the US.⁹² As discussed above, not only was Roosevelt aware of BSC operations targeting American citizens and feeding the US public and its government with disinformation, he explicitly endorsed it and, through the FBI, sanctioned and actively supported it. Indeed, Olson (2013, 118) describes the BSC as “an active partner of the president.” (For a detailed description of the BSC mission, see Olson 2013; Stephenson 1999.)

Although the Roosevelt administration hoped to obscure the extent of its role in rhetorical mobilization, it understood that efficacious rhetorical mobilization requires the voice of the chief executive, a task that cannot be outsourced. So while Roosevelt feared his efforts to “educate the public” would be perceived by the electorate, and by Congress, as warmongering, he nevertheless carried out this essential duty. In the sections that follow, I examine executive rhetoric during the period of analysis (10 June 1940 to 15 March 1941) and argue that Roosevelt’s rhetoric performed each of the four defining tasks of a rhetorical mobilization campaign—diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational framing, and counter framing.

⁹² In a particularly audacious operation, the BSC forged a map of South America that portrayed the continent divided into four German states. Roosevelt referenced the map in an October 1941 speech for the purpose of countering non-interventionist insistence that Germany had no designs on conquest in the Western Hemisphere. It is unclear whether Roosevelt knew that the map was a BSC forgery. See Olson 2013, 402.

5.3.2 Diagnostic Framing: Just the Facts

As discussed in Chapter 2, an executive attempting to marshal domestic support for war will engage in diagnostic framing in order to construct a shared meaning around the international events that prompted its unconstrained preference for war. Although Roosevelt recognized the need to educate the public regarding the mounting danger to America and the necessity of US intervention, he also feared inciting the non-interventionists in Congress. Roosevelt's approach to diagnostic framing, therefore, reflected the same caution he took in organizing his wartime public opinion apparatus. Historian Richard Steele (1984, 70) describes Roosevelt's diagnostic framing strategy as a "widespread distribution of the facts."

Two facts dominated Roosevelt's diagnostic framing. The first was that Germany would not be satisfied with domination of Europe. Once it defeated Britain and consolidated its political control over the continent, Germany would turn its sights on the Western Hemisphere.

Why should we accept assurances that we are immune? History records that not long ago those same assurances were given to the people of Holland and Belgium and Norway. It can no longer be disputed that forces of evil, which are bent on conquest of the world, will destroy whomever and whenever they can destroy (Roosevelt October 12, 1940).

As Roosevelt explained to the American people during his sixteenth Fireside Chat on December 29, 1940, "The Nazi masters of Germany have made it clear that they intend not only to dominate all life and thought in their own country, but also to enslave the whole of Europe, and then to use the resources of Europe to dominate the rest of the world." The administration also made clear that because the ideological ambitions of the fascists were irreconcilable and liberalism, a victorious Hitler could not seek a *modus*

vivendi with the US. “[T]he Axis not merely admits but the Axis proclaims that there can be no ultimate peace between their philosophy of government and our philosophy of government” (Roosevelt December 29, 1940).

The second fact that comprised the Roosevelt administration’s diagnostic frame was that the Axis powers not only had the *will* to dominate the Western Hemisphere, but that they also had a *way*. Roosevelt started by addressing America’s faith in its own impregnability. Speaking on the occasion of the dedication of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park:

The earth has been so shrunk by the airplane and the radio that Europe is closer to America today than was one side of these mountains to the other side when the pioneers toiled through the primeval forest. The arrow, the tomahawk, and the scalping knife have been replaced by the airplane, the bomb, the tank, and the machine gun. Their threat is as close to us today as was the threat to the frontiersmen when hostile Indians were lurking on the other side of the gap (Roosevelt September 2, 1940).

Not only were German weapons capable of reaching the American Homeland, but also, as Roosevelt explained during a campaign stop in New York City, Germany’s land and air power far outstripped that of the US.

Today our Navy is at a peak of efficiency and fighting strength. Ship for ship, man for man, it is as powerful and efficient as any single navy that ever sailed the seas in history. But it is not as powerful as combinations of other navies that might be put together in an attack upon us. Our Army and our air forces are now at the highest level that they have ever been in peacetime. But in the light of existing dangers they are not great enough for the absolute safety of America at home (Roosevelt October 28, 1940).

Finally, Roosevelt spelled out for the American public the bleakest aspect of the military mismatch that would confront the US if it failed to take action. With the defeat of Britain and the destruction or, worst case, the absorption of the Royal Navy, Germany would also command the Atlantic Ocean. “If Great Britain goes down,” Roosevelt

warned, “the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the high seas, and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere” (Roosevelt December 29, 1940). Even if the US had sufficient power to protect its shores from an invasion force from the sea, German command of the sea meant that the US economy and its access to vital overseas resources would rely on the goodwill of Berlin and the German Navy (Dallek 1995; Olson 2013). “It is no exaggeration to say that all of us, in all the Americas, would be living at the point of a gun; a gun loaded with explosive bullets, economic as well as military” (Roosevelt December 29, 1940).

5.3.2 Prognostic Framing: “Total Defense”

The situation that Roosevelt’s diagnostic frame described was grim. As Roosevelt addressed the graduating class at the University of Virginia, all of the continental democracies except France had fallen, and France’s defeat was imminent. Churchill had advised the administration that, without US military intervention, a similar fate awaited his government. As a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt understood better than most the implications of Britain’s defeat. A German-controlled government in Britain would assure German command of the Atlantic sea lines of communication. Even if Hitler chose not to project German military power into North America, the US would be economically dependent on Germany and its navy. More troubling still, Roosevelt believed that under these circumstances America would be forced subordinate its civil liberties to the imperatives of safeguarding its physical security.

The administration's solution, its prognostic frame, was equally severe. "Total defense" was the polite term the administration used to reference its prognostic frame. A more descriptive label for the measures Roosevelt outlined would have been mobilization for total war. Although Roosevelt did not start using the rhetorical construction "total defense" to describe his prognostic frame until the second major speech of his rhetorical mobilization campaign (July 19, 1940), he introduced the concept in his 10 June address in Charlottesville.

In our American unity, we will pursue two obvious and simultaneous courses; we will extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation; and, at the same time, we will harness and speed up the use of those resources in order that we ourselves in the Americas may have equipment and training equal to the task of any emergency and every defense.

Throughout his rhetorical campaign, Roosevelt emphasized that mobilization would affect "all elements of American life" (Roosevelt August 2, 1940). "The situation demands total defense," remarked Roosevelt to a conference of national civic organizations, "and that means everybody in the country should fit in somewhere and, unless you prepare beforehand to fit them in, you cannot do it after war breaks out." A month later, the president reemphasized the breadth of the mobilization his administration envisioned.

We must prepare in a thousand ways. Men are not enough. They must have arms. They must learn how to use those arms. They must have skilled leaders—who, in turn, must be trained. New bases must be established and I think will be established to enable our fleet to defend our shores. Men and women must be taught to create the supplies that we need... We, in this hour, must have and will have absolute national unity for total defense (Roosevelt September 2, 1940).

The administration's prognostic frame called on contributions and sacrifices from business, labor, agriculture, and the medical profession. Its central concern, however, was the defense-related industries. "Our course is clear. Our decision is made. We will

continue to pile up our defense and our armaments” (Roosevelt October 12, 1940).

During his December 29, 1940 Fireside Chat, Roosevelt advised industry leaders that, “all of our present efforts are not enough. We must have more ships, more guns, more planes—more of everything.”

Total defense, explained Roosevelt, also included mobilization of the manpower to operate the implements of war. Roosevelt’s prognostic frame, therefore, called for instituting the first peacetime draft in the history of the US. In the same radio address in which Roosevelt accepted his party’s nomination for a third term, Roosevelt introduced the public to his rationale.

During the past few months, with due Congressional approval, we in the United States have been taking steps to implement the total defense of America... Because of the millions of citizens involved in the conduct of defense, most right thinking persons are agreed that some form of selection by draft is as necessary and fair today as it was in 1917 and 1918 (Roosevelt July 19, 1940).

On September 11, Roosevelt introduced the Selective Training and Service Act to the American public. “The Nation, through its elected representatives—not just the President all alone, but through the elected representatives in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States—is now adopting the principle of selective universal training of its young men.” The bill was enacted on 16 September. “Forewarned by the deliberate attacks of the dictators upon free peoples, the United States, for the first time in its history, has undertaken the mustering of its men in peacetime” (Roosevelt October 12, 1940).

Intent on preserving his capacity to claim plausibly that he was actively seeking alternatives to war, Roosevelt avoided overt statements of his unconstrained policy preference (Schuessler 2010). He offered routine assurances that the principal purpose of

mobilization was to *decrease* the likelihood of war. On September 28, with US-made warplanes as a backdrop, Roosevelt insisted

They are here upon a peaceful mission. We all hope that their missions will always be in the ways of peace. We shall strive with all our energies and skills to see to it that they are never called upon for missions of war. But the more of them we have the less likely we are to have to use them—the less likely are we to be attacked from abroad.

Yet on several occasions, Roosevelt confided with the American people that the unprecedented peacetime buildup of arms and manpower that the administration's prognostic framing promoted was not merely a show of force, a deterrent measure, or an insurance policy just in case the war in Europe spilled across the Atlantic. The task of saving Britain and safeguarding America, Roosevelt acknowledged in one of his more candid addresses, "must be accomplished, if it becomes necessary, by the armed defense forces of the nation" (Roosevelt July 19, 1940).

5.3.3 Motivational Framing: The End to Business as Usual

The third defining task of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is motivational framing, the executive's explanation of societal contributions required to achieve the objectives laid out in the prognostic frame. The Roosevelt administration's motivational framing targeted two primary audiences.

First, executive rhetoric targeted leaders of war-related businesses and industries. "A free nation has the right to look to the leaders of business, of labor, and of agriculture to take the lead in stimulating effort, not among other groups but within their own groups" (Roosevelt January 6, 1941). His challenge to the leaders of these industries was to retool their business models for war. "This job cannot be done merely by

superimposing on the existing productive facilities the added requirements of the nation for defense.” Roosevelt also made it clear to leaders of defense-related industries that “total defense” *assumed* their full cooperation. “On the same principle [of total defense],” Roosevelt explained on September 11, 1940, “no reasonable person can object to giving the government the power to acquire the services of any plant or factory for an adequate compensation.” Accordingly, he warned any business leaders who might refuse “to make [their] services available to the defense needs of the nation” that the government would take what it needed to defend the state. “[T]he principle of eminent domain,” Roosevelt reminded leaders of war-related industries, “is as old as democratic government itself.”

Roosevelt also set out expectations for ordinary laborers in these industries. From the administration’s perspective, the government had supported labor during the early days of the New Deal and now the government was calling in its chits. “As the government is determined to protect the rights of the workers,” Roosevelt explained in his December 1940 Fireside Chat, “so the nation has a right to expect that the men who man the machines will discharge their full responsibilities to the urgent needs of defense.” The administration, in other words, would have little patience for labor disputes that interrupted the manufacture of critical war material.

The second target audience was the general public. The president petitioned the American public to “discard the notion of business as usual” (Roosevelt December 29, 1940) and prepare for largely unspecified sacrifices.

That is the fact which dominates our world and which dominates the lives of all of us, each and every one of us. In the face of the danger, which confronts our time, no individual retains or can hope to retain, the right of personal choice, which free men enjoy in times of peace. He has a first obligation to serve in the defense of

our institutions of freedom—a first obligation to serve his country in whatever capacity his country finds him useful (July 19, 1940).

Although the US remained nominally a neutral state, Roosevelt urged Americans to treat the crisis in Europe as an American crisis. “We must apply ourselves to our task with the same resolution, the same sense of urgency, the same spirit of patriotism and sacrifice as we would show were we at war (Roosevelt December 29, 1940). Moreover, Roosevelt warned the American public that every household would feel the burden of America’s response to the crisis in Europe.

The progress of our country, as well as the defense of our country, requires national unity. We need the cooperation of every single American—our workers, the great organizers and technicians in our factories, our farmers, our professional men and women, our workers in industry, our mothers, our fathers, our youth—all the men and women who love America just a little bit more than they love themselves (Roosevelt November 2, 1940).

Finally, Roosevelt acknowledged that the sacrifices that his prognostic frame, total defense, necessitated would not only be broadly shared by American society, but they would also be deep.

It is not in every case easy or pleasant to ask men of the Nation to leave their homes, and women of the Nation to give their men to the service of the Nation. But the men and women of America have never held back even when it has meant personal sacrifice on their part if that sacrifice is for the common good.

But to conserve our liberties will not be easy. The task will require the united efforts of us all. It will require sacrifices from us all (Roosevelt September 2, 1940).

5.3.4 Counter Framing: Roosevelt’s Indirect Approach

Long before the Roosevelt administration had determined its unconstrained policy preference, an existing frame regarding the European crisis had achieved broad acceptance. As discussed, three themes dominated: 1) artful European diplomats and

international “merchants of death” had duped the US in 1917 into accepting Europe’s crisis as its own; 2) the current crisis had its origins in European (primarily British and French) mismanagement and greed at Versailles; and 3) even if the European democracies fell, Germany lacked both the will and the means to threaten the US. In short, writes Krebs (2015b, 82), “Non-interventionists narrated a world in which security was divisible,” in which the US would continue to flourish as a vital democracy regardless of events in Europe. “If the United States could remain prosperous and democratic in glorious isolation in its own hemisphere,” continues Krebs, it did not matter if Germany’s regime was odious or if it had conquered Europe and Asia.”

Analysis of the administration’s efforts to counter this entrenched frame suggests a preference for an indirect approach, targeting the motives and character of non-interventionists themselves rather than their diagnostic framing of the crisis (Steele 1979, 32). According to Roosevelt’s *ad hominem* strategy, two motivations inspired the non-interventionist movement. The first was party politics. The non-interventionists, Roosevelt insisted, were putting party above country. They had closed their eyes to the grave implications of the gathering threat “because they were determined to be opposed to their government, its foreign policy, and every other policy, to be partisan and to believe anything that the Government did was wholly wrong” (Roosevelt May 26, 1940). Although non-interventionism crossed party lines, Roosevelt focused his rhetoric on “the Republican team in Congress.” Republicans, he insisted, were acting as a “Party team” while refusing to see “that what this country needs is an all-American team” (Roosevelt October 30, 1940).

The second branch of Roosevelt's *ad hominem* counter-framing strategy riffed on the American public's fears of a rising "fifth column," foreign agents operating in the US to "cause internal strife...to exploit for their own ends our own natural abhorrence of war...to destroy our unity and shatter our will to defend ourselves" (Roosevelt December 29, 1940). Although the administration had little evidence of covert foreign activities in the US—other than the British efforts, which, as discussed above, the administration actively supported—Roosevelt affirmed that "Your Government knows much about them and every day is ferreting them out" (Roosevelt December 29, 1940). Roosevelt never explicitly accused his non-interventionist opponents of willful collaboration, but he did contend that they were the dupes of foreign agents, acting as their instruments in Congress and elsewhere in the public sphere. Roosevelt warned the American people of the danger posed by foreign agents and their oblivious stooges in his December 29 Fireside Chat.

There are American citizens, many of them in high places, who, unwittingly in most cases, are aiding and abetting the work of these agents. I do not charge these American citizens with being foreign agents. But I do charge them with doing exactly the kind of work that the dictators want done in the United States.

Although Roosevelt typically refrained from naming names, the targets of the President's attacks were generally identifiable to careful listeners. One sidelong reference to Charles Lindbergh in his Third Inaugural (January 20, 1941) offers an example.

There are men who believe that democracy, as a form of government and a frame of life, is limited or measured by a kind of mystical and artificial fate that, for some unexplained reason, tyranny and slavery have become the surging *wave of the future*—and that freedom is an ebbing tide. But we Americans know that this is not true.

Roosevelt's "wave of the future" (*italics added*) was a clear reference for a contemporary audience to Anne Lindbergh's recently published book by that title. The reference was widely recognized and earned the president considerable criticism (Olson 2013, 314).

Despite its demonstrated preference for going after the non-interventionist messengers rather than their message, there are instances in which the administration directly challenged elements of the non-interventionist diagnostic frame. At the University of Virginia (June 10, 1940), Roosevelt directly challenged the isolationist claim that the collapse of democracy in Europe would have no bearing on democracy in America.

Some indeed still hold to the now somewhat obvious delusion that we of the United States can safely permit the United States to become a lone island, a lone island in a world dominated by the philosophy of force. Such an island represents to me and to the overwhelming majority of Americans today a helpless nightmare of people without freedom—the nightmare of people lodged in prison, handcuffed, hungry, and fed through the bars from day to day by the contemptuous, unpitiful masters of other continents.

Roosevelt's December 29 Fireside Chat Roosevelt took on the non-interventionist insistence that German ambitions were did not extend to the Americas.

There are those who say that the Axis powers would never have any desire to attack the Western Hemisphere. That is the same dangerous form of wishful thinking which has destroyed the powers of resistance of so many conquered peoples. The plain facts are that the Nazis have proclaimed, time and again, that all other races are their inferiors and therefore subject to their orders. And most important of all, the vast resources and wealth of this American Hemisphere constitute the most tempting loot in all of the round world.

In the same speech, Roosevelt also attacked the non-interventionist trope of America's invulnerability.

Some of us like to believe that even if Britain falls, we are still safe because of the broad expanse of the Atlantic and of the Pacific. But the width of those oceans is not what it was in the days of clipper ships. At one point between Africa and Brazil the distance is less from Washington than it is from Washington to Denver,

Colorado—five hours for the latest type of bomber. And at the North end of the Pacific Ocean America and Asia almost touch each other.

The persistence of the non-interventionist frame seems remarkable in retrospect. Given the enormity of the Nazi threat, the task of counter framing should have been a minor one for the Roosevelt administration. It is important to remember, however, that the prognostic frame that the non-interventionists favored was passive; it demanded no sacrifices. It took advantage, in other words, of the average citizen's rational presumption against war. Moreover, leading non-interventionists waged their own counter-framing campaign that rejected Roosevelt's insistence that the administration was hoping to keep America out of the fighting. According to the non-interventionist counter frame, Roosevelt was quietly and incrementally maneuvering the nation into war. "[T]hese assertions were troubling to the administration," observes Krebs (2015b, 83), "not only because they resonated, but because they struck uncomfortably close to the truth."

5.3.5 Summary

Up to this point I have traced the Roosevelt administration's decision-making process from determination of its unconstrained policy preference for war to the conclusion of its rhetorical campaign to marshal domestic support for that preference. I have argued that each step in Roosevelt's decision-making process corresponds to a node in the causal graph I introduced in Chapter 2. I have further argued that each node "impl[ies] its successor" in order to make a case for "causal and explanatory adequacy" according to Waldner's (2014) completeness standard (2014, 128). Germany's spring offensive revealed the profound imbalance of power in Europe, prompting the Roosevelt

administration to abandon its preference to remain neutral and settle on an unconstrained preference for war. As executive rhetoric and actions made the administration's unconstrained preference increasingly apparent to the American public, the pre-campaign distribution of domestic preferences became increasingly polarized driving up both the political and military risk of war. Rather than abandoning its unconstrained preference in face of this risk, the administration, as predicted by the rhetorical mobilization model, attempted to drive that risk down. The administration organized for, planned, and executed a rhetorical mobilization campaign in order to construct a pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences that was more unified.

According to my model, a rhetorical mobilization campaign is a continuous variable that varies according to its degree of resonance. As specified above, we can qualitatively measure the resonance (i.e., salience and credibility) of a campaign by examining six factors (centrality, narrative fidelity, experiential commensurability, congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility) suggested by social movement scholarship. In the following chapter I evaluate the resonance of the Roosevelt administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. First, however, I will continue to trace the rhetorical mobilization process to the point of Roosevelt's war decision in March 1941. The remainder of this chapter examines the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences and the residual risk of domestic sanction that the Roosevelt administration perceived at the moment of decision.

5.4 Pre-decisional Distribution of Domestic Preferences and Roosevelt's War Decision

On March 15, 1941, on the occasion of the annual White House Correspondents' Association, President Roosevelt announced "the big news story of the week": his war decision. The address began with a forceful recounting of the administration's diagnostic framing.

We know that although Prussian autocracy was bad enough in the first war, Nazism is far worse in this.

Nazi forces are not seeking mere modifications in colonial maps or in minor European boundaries. They openly seek the destruction of all elective systems of government on every continent—including our own; they seek to establish systems of government based on the regimentation of all human beings by a handful of individual rulers who have seized power by force.

Next, Roosevelt proclaimed that the protracted national debate over America's role in the Second World War had come to a decisive conclusion.

We have just now engaged in a great debate. It was not limited to the halls of Congress. It was argued in every newspaper, on every wavelength, over every cracker barrel in all the land; and it was finally settled and decided by the American people themselves.

Yes, the decisions of our democracy may be slowly arrived at. But when that decision is made, it is proclaimed not with the voice of any one man but with the voice of one hundred and thirty millions. It is binding on us all. And the world is no longer left in doubt.

Finally, the President presented his war decision. "This decision is the end of any attempts at appeasement in our land; the end of urging us to get along with dictators; the end of compromise with tyranny and the forces of oppression."

These ends that Roosevelt described were consistent with the administration's unconstrained preference. The means for achieving them, however, were not. Instead of announcing the deployment of ground, air, and naval forces to fight for England's

survival and, thereby, preserve America as an independent, democratic state, Roosevelt announced the enactment of HR 1776, formally “An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States,” informally the Lend-Lease Act. Lend-Lease was a politically masterful policy that offered the administration a mechanism to continue providing “all aid short of war” despite England’s inability to pay and despite constrictions of neutrality legislation.

Our democracy has gone into action...Every plane, every other instrument of war, old and new, every instrument that we can spare now, we will send overseas because that is the common sense strategy.

The great task of this day, the deep duty that rests upon each and every one of us is to move products from the assembly lines of our factories to the battle lines of democracy — Now!

Despite the triumphalism with which Roosevelt heralded enactment of Lend-Lease, however, neither Roosevelt nor his leading advisers believed that Lend-Lease would appreciably alter the prospects of England’s survival or secure America’s future.⁹³ According to an entry in Stimson’s diary, Roosevelt met with Stimson, Knox, Marshall, and Stark shortly before his public announcement of Lend-Lease. The consensus, which Roosevelt insisted must be kept out of the public sphere, was that *only* America’s entry into the war as a full belligerent could change Britain’s fortunes (cited in Olson 2013, 274-275). Stimson reportedly advised the President that, “Without forcible intervention to stop the German submarines...the dispatch of additional supplies to Britain was like pouring water into a leaky bathtub” (Dallek 1995, 260). Even if ships carrying American war material could survive the gauntlet of German U-boats patrolling the Atlantic,

⁹³ Churchill, too, was doubtful. Although the Prime Minister praised Lend-Lease in public, he was privately as uninspired by the long-term prospects of the new policy as Roosevelt and his advisers. In a note to Roosevelt, Churchill shared his ambivalence toward Lend-Lease: “Remember, Mr. President...we do not know what you have in mind, or exactly what the United States is going to do, and we are fighting for our lives” (cited in Olson 2013, 287).

Roosevelt and his advisers accepted as a simple strategic fact that Britain could not defeat an army ten times its size (Olson 2013, 274).

In other words, Roosevelt's war decision to make the US the "arsenal of democracy" instead of its champion, did not signal a change in the administration's unconstrained preference. Instead, it signaled the administration's recognition that it was still operating in a constrained decision-making environment. Its 10-month rhetorical mobilization campaign had failed to alter appreciably the distribution of domestic preferences. Because the administration—and Roosevelt in particular—perceived that the residual risk of domestic sanction remained too high to implement its unconstrained preference, the administration chose to amend its policy preference.

Roosevelt had ample evidence to support its perception that its rhetorical mobilization campaign had failed to create a permissive decision-making environment. OPOR—Roosevelt's chief source of polling data—conducted a continuous survey of US public opinion on various wartime issues from fall 1939 until the end of the war (for a summary, see Cantril 1948). OPOR's survey suggested that the public's enthusiasm to join the fighting had changed little during the interval from Roosevelt's June 1940 Charlottesville address to his March 1941 announcement of Lend-Lease. According to OPOR polling, the average American had grown *increasingly* fearful that the US would enter the war during this interval (approximately 70 percent at the beginning of March compared with 48 percent in mid June). Forty percent of Americans still embraced the non-interventionist trope that World War I was a mistake compared with 45 percent when the Roosevelt administration launched its rhetorical mobilization campaign. Most significantly, the American public remained strongly opposed to a US declaration of war

with Germany, the administration's unconstrained policy preference. In June 1940, only nine percent of Americans surveyed supported a US declaration of war with Germany. On the eve of Roosevelt's war decision in March 1941, OPOR reported a two percent *drop* in public support.

There was similarly little change in elite opinion over the period of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. Non-interventionists in Congress remained motivated and influential as the legislative battle over Lend-Lease illustrates. Convinced that the fight over the proposed legislation was "their last major chance to stop the United States from becoming a fully committed partner...in Britain's fight against Hitler," the non-interventionist caucus launched a major offensive (Olson 2013, 277). Most Republicans in Congress cooperated with the effort to kill Lend-Lease, but committed non-interventionists in the Democratic Party also joined the fight. Lend-Lease "will plow under every fourth American boy," declared Montana Democrat Burton Wheeler, (quoted in Dallek 1995, 258). Although ultimately they failed to stop Lend-Lease, their efforts made an impression on the American public. Following the debate, observes Olson (2013, 277), there was a significant uptick in American First Committee membership as well as establishment of hundreds of new chapters.

Lowell Mellett, who led Roosevelt's effort to track media responses to White House policies, reported to Roosevelt in March 1941 that mass media opinions regarding US intervention in Europe were essentially static (Steele 1984, 87). Those who favored America's entry into the war continued to add their voices to the administration's campaign. The film and radio industries, for example, were delivering on promises of programming that was favorable to the administration's unconstrained preferences.

Journalists who had supported more aggressive policies in Europe continued to do so. Indeed, several interventionist Journalists had started actively complaining about Roosevelt's failure to educate the public on the scope of the Nazi threat. In general, however, news coverage and editorial content continued to reflect the American public's strong non-interventionist bias (see Steele 1984, 87).

By March 1941, some high-ranking military officers had become more sympathetic to the interventionist argument. Admiral Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations, is a notable example. In spring 1940, Stark had frustrated the administration by opposing its policy of transferring aging destroyers to the Royal Navy. In June, Stark had joined Marshall in advocating for cutting off all aid to England. By late 1940, however, Stark was convinced that US security depended on Britain's survival. Not only did Stark become an advocate for Roosevelt's unconstrained preference, he also argued for America's immediate entry into the war (Stark 1940). Stark recognized that despite America's impressive mobilization efforts, the fall of Britain and the Royal Navy would produce an unrecoverable relative power disadvantage.

Admiral Stark's conversion notwithstanding, the officer corps in March 1941 remained solidly non-interventionist. Army Chief George Marshall, observes Olson (2013, 298), "played a complex role in the internecine bureaucratic battles" waged over America's role in the war. While he never actively opposed the administration policies and was a vocal supporter the president during the Lend-Lease debates, he staunchly supported his Army Air Force commander, General Hap Arnold, in his outspoken opposition of many White House national security policies. As noted above, Marshall

also continued to populate the top levels of his staff with committed isolationists, German apologists, and active supporters of the America First Committee.

In sum, the distribution of domestic preferences was nearly as polarized and it had been in June of the previous year when the administration initiated its campaign to sell its unconstrained preference for US military intervention in Europe. The residual risk of domestic sanction for committing the nation to “Britain’s war” had not appreciably changed. Rather than implementing its unconstrained preference, the policy that most structural theories of international relations would likely predict, the administration revised its policy preference in favor of a policy that would demand relatively little sacrifice from the American people and would, therefore, enjoy broad domestic support.

In this regard, Lend-Lease is an instance of pitch-perfect foreign policy decision-making. Lend-Lease not only appealed to those who favored more aggressive support to Britain, but also to many non-interventionists who accepted Roosevelt’s characterization of Lend-Lease as his ultimate policy decision (Dallek 1995, 256). Although uncompromising isolationists criticized Lend-Lease as too aggressive, many more rejoiced in the news that America had been spared the horror of a second European war.

5.5 Summary

I have argued that the astonishing success of Germany’s spring campaign into Western Europe prompted the Roosevelt administration to update its policy preference. As Germany’s vast strategic advantages became evident, the administration recognized that England—like France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Poland, and Czechoslovakia—would not survive without US military intervention. It also recognized

that the loss of a friendly British government and its navy augured a profound shift in the balance of power in the North Atlantic that placed at risk America's economy, its national identity, and, potentially, its sovereignty. As structural theories of international relations predict, Roosevelt accepted as a fact of geopolitics that war had become a tragic necessity. Yet 18 months after Germany marched on Paris, the US remained a nonbelligerent. Structural theories cannot adequately explain this outcome.

The rhetorical mobilization model gives us theoretical leverage on this puzzle. Drawing on his experiences in the Wilson administration, Roosevelt was keenly aware that effective foreign policy required a solid domestic consensus. He was also keenly aware that there was little domestic support for his unconstrained policy preference. Weighing the risks of allowing Britain to fall against the risks of domestic sanction for committing the state to a costly war against its will, the Roosevelt administration organized for, planned, and executed a rhetorical campaign to create a more favorable distribution of domestic preferences for his unconstrained preference. Analysis of presidential speeches during the period in question reveals that executive rhetoric performed each of the four defining tasks of rhetorical mobilization as theorized by social movement theory's conceptualization of collective action framing: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, motivational framing, and counter framing.

Yet the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign had little influence on the distribution of domestic preferences. The objective of the next chapter is to explain why.

Chapter 6

Rhetorical Mobilization for the Second World War: Roosevelt's Case for Intervention

The German blitzkrieg in the spring of 1940 revealed the extent of the strategic mismatch in Europe. By his 10 June commencement address at the University of Virginia, the Roosevelt administration had concluded that France's defeat was a foregone conclusion and that Britain's survival depended on America's entry into the war as a full belligerent. It had also surmised the implications for US security if Great Britain were allowed to fall. A European superpower united under a German hegemon would have both the motivation to project its power into the Western Hemisphere and the capability to do so. Without the Royal Navy patrolling the North Atlantic, Germany would enjoy uncontested command of the seas and would pose an unrelenting threat to America's access to the interstate commerce vital to its security. Even if Germany and the US, the last remaining democratic power, could find a *modus vivendi*, Roosevelt believed the quality of democracy in America would be profoundly and adversely influenced. The US would, of necessity, exist as a security state (Dallek 1995; Olson 2013). "To survive in such a world, we would have to convert ourselves permanently into a militaristic power on the basis of a war economy" (Roosevelt December 29, 1940).

Given the magnitude and imminence of the Nazi threat to America's survival as an independent, democratic state, the Roosevelt administration, following the dictates of "hard-headed self interest" (Roosevelt October 30, 1940) in a self-help world, abandoned its preference for US neutrality and settled on its unconstrained preference for war. Yet 18 months after Germany launched the spring campaign that eradicated democracy from

the European continent, America was still a non-belligerent. The administration, rather than acting on its unconstrained preference for war—the outcome that most structural theories of international relations would predict—chose to amend its preference in favor of Lend-Lease, a policy in which Roosevelt and his advisers had little confidence.

The rhetorical mobilization model, as the previous chapter argued, gives us theoretical leverage on this puzzling policy choice. As the administration's unconstrained preference to join the fighting became increasingly apparent to the public, the domestic consensus splintered. The prospect of war in Europe drove Americans, opinion leading elites and average citizens alike, into hostile, interventionist or non-interventionist camps. Recognizing the political and military risk of leading the nation into war without a strong domestic consensus, the Roosevelt administration, as my model predicts, organized its “wartime public opinion apparatus” (Jacobs 1992) and launched a rhetorical mobilization campaign to create a more favorable distribution of domestic preferences. Analysis of executive rhetoric from June 10, 1940 to March 15, 1941 reveals a systematic effort to create a shared meaning around the crisis in Europe (diagnostic framing), propose the administration's favored solution (prognostic framing), mobilize collective action in support of its proposed solution (motivational framing), and demobilize its domestic opponents (counter framing).

Analysis of public and elite opinion, however, reveals little change in the public mood over the course of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. Despite Roosevelt's efforts to alert the nation to the enormity of the Nazi threat and the urgent need for US intervention, the distribution of domestic preferences was nearly as polarized in March 1941 when Roosevelt announced his war decision as it was in June 1940 when

he initiated the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign in Charlottesville. Perceiving that its rhetorical mobilization campaign had not satisfactorily mitigated the risk of domestic sanction, the administration amended its unconstrained preference for war in favor of a war decision that demanded relatively little from the American people or Congress.

The purpose of this chapter is to offer an explanation for why Roosevelt's rhetorical mobilization campaign failed to "manufacture consent" (Herman & Chomsky 1988) for the administration's unconstrained preference. In section 4.1, I analyze the content of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign through measures of efficacy drawn from social movement scholarship (esp. Benford & Snow 2000; Snow & Benford 1988). I argue that while Roosevelt's rhetoric scores high in some measures of resonance, the president conspicuously avoids rhetoric that connects the Nazi threat to the daily lives of American citizens (experiential commensurability). Additionally, analysis of executive rhetoric during the period of interest reveals a gap between Roosevelt's words and the administration's actions (congruency). Finally, Roosevelt failed to isolate his highly credible critics (reputational credibility) or discredit their diagnostic framing of the European crisis (empirical credibility).

6.1 Resonance

In this section I evaluate the resonance of the Roosevelt administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. My evaluative criteria, again, are two variables adapted from social movement scholarship for an international relations application: salience and credibility. A *salient* campaign links international threats and opportunities with the

national values (centrality), national myths (narrative fidelity), and the everyday concerns of the electorate (experiential commensurability). A rhetorical campaign is *credible* when a leader's rhetoric is consistent with its actions (congruency), when readily observable facts are consistent with a leader's diagnostic framing (empirical credibility), and when a leader enjoys a reputation for expertise in foreign policy relative to his/her chief domestic opponents (reputational credibility).

My dataset includes all of President Roosevelt's prepared addresses, public and broadcast, delivered during the period that comprises the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. As I argued in Chapter 5, I maintain that Roosevelt's 10 June 1940 "Stab in the Back" speech marks the commencement of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. The campaign concludes with Roosevelt's formal announcement on March 15, 1941 of the enactment by Congress of its war decision, the Lend-Lease Act.

In my Bush case study (Chapters 3 and 4), I include in my dataset remarks from three press conferences. I chose to omit all press conferences from my Roosevelt dataset. Although some presidents, like Bush, use press conferences to deliver carefully crafted messages orchestrated by their communications team, Roosevelt's press conferences all had an improvisational quality (whether or not they were genuinely improvisational is a matter of speculation; I found no evidence to suggest otherwise). Even his December 17, 1940 press conference that explicated the logic of Lend-Lease more coherently than his formal announcement of the policy on March 15, his assurance to the press that "I haven't prepared any of this" seems authentic (Roosevelt December 17, 1940). Since I am

limiting my dataset to prepared remarks, even this highly consequential press conference is, therefore, disqualified.

Because the Roosevelt dataset (33 speeches) is substantially smaller than the Bush dataset (170 speeches), automated content analysis was not essential. The task of manually coding each of Roosevelt's speeches was neither overly time consuming nor as subject to coding errors as the Bush dataset. Nevertheless, in the interest of ensuring parallel methodologies for each case study, I employed the same automated content analysis process and then repeated the coding process manually. Although manual coding yielded additional quotations that coded positive for one of the six factors of salience and credibility, there were no cases in which manual coding resulted in a change in the coding of the overall speech.⁹⁴

The first step in the content analysis of my dataset was creating and analyzing a training set in order to discover how (or if) Roosevelt attempted to establish, through executive rhetoric, salience and credibility. As with the Bush case, I selected six speeches that were identified either by contemporary commentators or by more recent scholarship as significant foreign policy statements. The speeches I selected were: Address at the University of Virginia (June 10, 1940); Radio Address to the Democratic National Convention Accepting the Nomination (July 19, 1940); Address on Hemisphere Defense, Dayton, Ohio (October 13, 1940); Fireside Chat (December 29, 1940); Annual Message

⁹⁴ The number of quotations coded positively within a given speech may offer insights to the speaker's intentions. Repetition of themes and messages suggests their importance to the speaker and increase the likelihood of their reproduction civil dialogue. Otherwise, I do not pay particular attention to frequency of a given signifier. As discussed in Chapter 2, a single quote or phrase (such as "axis of evil") in a president's speech may be reproduced uncountable times in the news media, popular culture, or casual conversations over the course of a rhetorical mobilization campaign. Therefore, I treat each speech as an event, not each occurrence of a given signifier within a speech.

to Congress on the State of the Union Address (January 6, 1941); and Address at the Annual Dinner of White House Correspondents (March 15, 1941).

Having selected a training set, I analyzed each speech in order to deduce the administration's rhetorical strategy, that is, the themes and messages the administration relied on to establish salience and credibility. Based on this analysis, I created dictionaries of signifiers, key words and phrases associated with each of the six factors. I then applied these dictionaries (with the help of the automated content analysis program Atlas.ti) first to the training set and then to the entire dataset.

Before reporting my findings, one additional methodological clarification may be helpful. As I argued in Chapter 2, it would be inappropriate and logically incoherent to apply the same signifier dictionaries I used in the Bush case to the Roosevelt dataset. Any two speakers can employ radically different rhetorical strategies to accomplish the same rhetorical task, in this case, the task of establishing salience and credibility of a policy preference for war. Although Roosevelt and Bush used similar language to signify, for example, centrality (liberty, freedom, democracy, tyranny), Roosevelt also relied on explicitly Judeo-Christian references to alert his audience that fundamental American values were at stake. Speaking at the dedication of Great Smokey Mountains national Park in September 1940, Roosevelt warned his audience, "If the spirit of God is not in us, and if we will not prepare to give all that we have and all that we are to preserve Christian civilization in our land, we shall go to destruction." Such a rhetorical strategy would not have been appropriate in 2003 when the Bush administration had to confront and deflate accusations of crusading. Looking to another example, narrative fidelity, signifiers in the Bush case such as Reagan, Kennedy, Truman, Roosevelt, and

World War II were, for obvious reasons, unavailable to Roosevelt's speechwriters for conjuring national myths and establishing narrative fidelity.

The following sections report my findings.

6.2 Salience

In this section I analyze the salience of the Roosevelt administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign according to three measurements of salience suggested by social movement scholarship and discussed in detail in Chapter 2: centrality, narrative fidelity, and experiential commensurability.

6.2.1 Centrality

Centrality is a measure of the degree to which rhetoric engages the values and beliefs of the target audience. I have hypothesized that executive rhetoric is more likely to resonate if it plausibly communicates an association between target audience values and beliefs and the international threats and opportunities that prompted the leader's preference for war. If a population believes that international events place their deeply held values at risk, then they will be more willing to abandon the status quo and take the positive measures specified in the leader's prognostic and motivational frames. Hypothesis H1.1 predicts that *rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to core values and beliefs of target audiences increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.*

Lend-Lease was a politically masterful strategy for sustaining the lifeline of US material support to Britain despite inflexible neutrality legislation and an impoverished British treasury. It was also, however, a substantial amendment to Roosevelt's unconstrained preference. Indeed, despite the exuberance with which Roosevelt announced his war decision, the administration had little faith in its efficacy. H1.1 would be supported, therefore, if Roosevelt's rhetorical mobilization campaign failed to relate international threats and opportunities to the core values and beliefs of the American people. My analysis of the dataset does *not* support H1.1. Roosevelt's rhetorical mobilization campaign was rich in the language of fundamental American values and beliefs.

Krebs (2015b, 76) correctly observes a distinct shift in Roosevelt's rhetoric coincident with the launch of the German blitzkrieg and, especially, after the fall of France. "He began to represent America not just as another law-abiding country, but as a nation possessed of a distinctive history, mission, and values." Executive rhetoric also began to represent Hitler's Germany as a threat "less to the physical security of the homeland than to its values." After Paris fell, writes Krebs, Roosevelt "increasingly narrated the Second World War "as a battle between democracy and dictatorship, freedom and slavery." Events in Europe starting in May 1940 had opened space for "alternative narratives" (Krebs 2015b, 75). The blitzkrieg had not only eradicated democracy from continental Europe, it had also, using the terminology of the rhetorical mobilization model, undercut the empirical credibility of the non-interventionist diagnostic frame.

But it was not the collapse of the non-interventionist narrative that prompted the shift toward value-laden language that Krebs observes. Indeed, the non-interventionist narrative still commanded considerable popular appeal on the morning of December 7, 1941. The shift in executive rhetoric, as I have argued, resulted from the shift in the administration's unconstrained preference, its acknowledgement of the need for domestic consensus, and its recognition of the efficacy of values language.

Each of the six speeches in the training set reflects this shift. In Charlottesville, for example, Roosevelt described German aggression as abandonment “with deliberate contempt” of “all the moral values to which even this young country for more than three hundred years⁹⁵ has been accustomed and dedicated.” Roosevelt enumerated those values in his 19 July radio address to the Democratic National Convention in which he accepted his party's nomination for a third term.

It is not alone a choice of Government by the people versus dictatorship. It is not alone a choice of freedom versus slavery. It is the continuance of civilization as we know it versus the ultimate destruction of all that we have held dear—religion against godlessness; the ideal of justice against the practice of force; moral decency versus the firing squad; courage to speak out, and to act, versus the false lullaby of appeasement.

In Roosevelt's 15 March speech announcing his war decision—the “aid to democracies bill” as the President called it—he reemphasized that the Nazi government was “not seeking mere modifications in colonial maps or in minor European boundaries,” but were openly seeking “the destruction of all elective systems of government on every

⁹⁵ Roosevelt's word choice is interesting here. Rather than dating US nationhood to its Declaration of Independence from Great Britain, he recognizes that American values originated in England and were imported to North America by 17th century British colonists. This treatment of the US-UK relationship in the executive rhetoric of this period is typical. Roosevelt found frequent occasions to highlight political, strategic, and cultural affinities while downplaying the fact that the US and the UK were belligerents in two wars with one relatively recent near miss.

continent—including our own.” The US must, therefore, make itself, using the language of centrality, the “arsenal of democracy.”

Analysis of the training set suggests the following words and phrases as signifiers for centrality: bondage, decency, democracy, dictator, enslavement, free/freedom/free peoples, God/godlessness, humanity, independence, liberty, oppression, religion, rights, slave/slavery, tyranny, and worship. I found that each of the six training set speeches contained numerous centrality signifiers. Turning to the full dataset, I found, after eliminating false positives, that 28 of Roosevelt’s 33 prepared speeches contained signifiers for centrality. The density of centrality signifiers is also impressive. They appear in 262 quotations.

6.2.2 Narrative Fidelity

I turn next to *narrative fidelity*, the proposition that when the executive successfully links its rhetorical mobilization campaign with widely embraced cultural myths, target audiences are more likely to act in accordance with the executive’s prognostic and motivational framing. This proposition yields my second salience hypothesis (H1.2): *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that characterize (fail to characterize) the executive’s policy preference as consistent with prominent national myths increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.* Given the outcome, a significantly amended war decision, H1.2 would be supported if Roosevelt’s rhetorical mobilization campaign failed to draw upon nationalist mythology. My analysis of the dataset supports hypothesis H1.2, but only weakly.

It is evident that Roosevelt and his speechwriters recognized the value of establishing narrative fidelity. The fall of France precipitated a shift in executive rhetoric not only toward value-laden language, as discussed above, but also toward increasing reliance on national myths. Despite America's neutrality, Roosevelt portrayed events in Europe as "part of the larger sweep of US history, a third foundational moment after the War of Independence and the Civil War" (Krebs 2015b, 76). During his 19 July address to the Democratic National Convention, for example, Roosevelt urged his audience to reject the tyranny that "has replaced a more human form of government" in most of Europe.

We in our democracy, and those who live in still unconquered democracies, will never willingly descend to any form of this so-called security of efficiency, which calls for the abandonment of other securities more vital to the dignity of man. It is our credo—unshakable to the end—that we must live under the liberties that were first heralded by Magna Carta and placed into glorious operation through the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights.

Roosevelt's allusions to the Civil War were powerful indicators of the administration's assessment of the stakes. During the 10 June address that launched the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, Roosevelt put on notice America's draft-aged population. Like those who arrived at adulthood in the 1860s, the contribution this generation would make would be extraordinary.

There was such a time again in the seemingly endless years of the War Between the States. Young men and young women on both sides of the line asked themselves, not what trades or professions they would enter, what lives they would make, but what was to become of the country they had known.

However, despite evidence that the Roosevelt communications team recognized their persuasive power, I found that its use of nationalist mythology was sporadic and sparse. This finding is consistent with H1.2. Based on my analysis of how the

administration leveraged narrative fidelity in the training set, I created a dictionary of the following signifiers: Constitution, forefathers, founders/founding fathers, Gettysburg, Jamestown, Lincoln, Magna Carta, Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, War of American Independence, War between the States, Washington, world war,⁹⁶ 1798, 1917, and 1918. I found seven quotations in four of the six training-set speeches that contained one or more of these signifiers in the appropriate context, suggesting, again, that the Roosevelt communications team recognized the rhetorical value of establishing narrative fidelity. Looking at all of the presidential speeches during the period, however, only 11 speeches coded positive for narrative fidelity with 26 quotations containing one or more narrative fidelity signifier.

One explanation for Roosevelt's parsimonious use of nationalist mythology is that the administration was hamstrung by a scarcity of appropriate analogues. Esch (2010) describes two archetypal myths that are deeply entrenched in the American psyche: the myth of "American Exceptionalism" and the myth of "Civilization vs. Barbarism." Roosevelt could, and did, access the former with references to the ideals of America's founding. Myths of Civilization vs. Barbarism, however, presented the administration with an interesting problem. The War of American Independence and the US Civil War were inaccessible for this purpose. For the former, references to the time when US-UK relations were not always amicable could have fueled the Anglophobia that the administration communications team was aggressively attempting to curb. In the case of the latter, allusions to the Civil War in this context would likely alienate a large segment

⁹⁶ "World war" appears in the training set, but not as a signifier for narrative fidelity. I included it in my dictionary primarily because it was one of the few signifiers in the Bush dictionary that was available to Roosevelt. When I applied "world war" to the entire dataset, I found one additional quotation in a speech that I had already coded as positive for narrative fidelity (Roosevelt's address at Arlington Cemetery, November 11, 1940).

of the US population. The First World War would seem to be a natural resource for a Civilization vs. Barbarism myth. Not only did the Wilson administration depict the war in these terms, but it also represented a victorious US-UK partnership and America's emergence as a global power. However, for reasons discussed above, World War I was no more accessible to Roosevelt than the Vietnam War was to Bush in 2003, or any other US president since 1968. By 1940, the First World War had become for many Americans a cautionary tale against intervening in wars in which US survival not directly at stake.

6.2.3 Experiential Commensurability

The final salience variable is *experiential commensurability*, the measure of the degree to which executive rhetoric relates to the everyday concerns of target audiences. I hypothesize (H1.3) that *Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to the everyday experiences of the general population increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force*. If H1.3 has explanatory value, we would expect to find few or no references in the dataset relating the Nazi threat to the lives of average Americans. This is consistent with my findings.

Drawing on analysis of how Roosevelt employed experiential commensurability in the training set, I created a dictionary of the following signifiers: American civilization, attack, bombed/bomber, danger, dictator, dominate, masters, modern warfare, nightmare, no freedom/without freedom, puppet, prison, and slave/slavery. I then applied the dictionary to the dataset. After eliminating coding errors, I found that

Roosevelt made attempts in only six speeches⁹⁷ during the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign to relate the Nazi threat to the everyday experiences of the average American citizen. Moreover, none of these speeches were committed to the purpose of warning the American public that a Nazi victory over Britain would directly affect their lives. Experiential commensurability signifiers were isolated and sparse. Indeed, in the entirety of Roosevelt's speeches from June 10, 1940 to March 15, 1941, only 14 quotations containing experiential commensurability signifiers.

The scarcity of language that personalized the Nazi threat is a surprising finding. In the administration's *best-case* scenario for America after Britain's defeat—a virtual inevitability if the US failed to act—every American household would feel the pinch of a new, Nazi-dominated, world order. This best-case outcome envisioned an America that was economically dependent on a hostile and vastly more powerful government in Berlin. In a speech that Roosevelt drafted but never delivered for fear of accusations of warmongering, the President predicted that the US economy, “faced with competition by government-controlled and government-subsidized trade arising out of every part of a dictator-dominated Europe,” would be incapable of competing (Dallek 1995, 213-14). Roosevelt also envisioned an American society in a permanent state of emergency in which the average citizen would be forced to tolerate a permanent “suspension” of civil liberties. Yet Roosevelt chose not to deliver this speech for fear his rivals in Congress and the news media would label him a fear monger.

In the administration's worst-case scenarios, the Nazi threat would affect the average American to the same extent and in the same manner that it had affected the

⁹⁷ Those six addresses were delivered on June 10, August 2, September 2, December 29, January 6, and March 15.

average Dane, Norwegian, Dutchman, and Frenchman. The administration had far less confidence in the “stopping power of water” (Mearsheimer 2001) than his non-interventionist opponents. Whether the Nazis launched their invasion from North Atlantic launching pads in the Azores or the “soft underbelly” of the Western Hemisphere’s in South or Central America, the administration knew that the homeland was vulnerable to the same fate as the European democracies. He also understood that Hitler would have little interest in seeking a *modus vivendi* with the last remaining democratic power, allowing it to turn its economic power into military power capable of contesting German hegemony and dominance of the seas. In short, rhetorically linking the Nazi threat to the daily lives of average Americans required little in the way of hyperbole.

American citizens with relatively fresh memories of the sacrifices that total war demands generally had a good sense for the implications of a second European war to their personal lives. They did not, however, comprehend how profoundly their lives would be disrupted if the US *failed* to join the fight. “An adequate narrative,” writes Krebs (2015b, 96), “would have made clear how the nation would be physically vulnerable to Axis predation and why the United States would not remain a thriving city of liberty on its lonely hill.” Roosevelt’s rhetorical mobilization campaign failed to deliver on experiential commensurability.

That is not to say, however, that Roosevelt *never* shared with the American public his sense of vulnerability or his fear that a Nazi victory in Europe would profoundly change the fabric of American society. Indeed, the administration launched

its rhetorical mobilization campaign in June 1940 with a vivid depiction of the dystopic future that Britain's defeat would herald.

Some indeed still hold to the now somewhat obvious delusion that we of the United States can safely permit the United States to become a lone island, a lone island in a world dominated by the philosophy of force.

Such an island may be the dream of those who still talk and vote as isolationists. Such an island represents to me and to the overwhelming majority of Americans today a helpless nightmare of a people without freedom—the nightmare of a people lodged in prison, handcuffed, hungry, and fed through the bars from day to day by the contemptuous, unpitying masters of other continents (Roosevelt June 10, 1940).

Roosevelt's address at the dedication of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, offers a classical example of experiential commensurability. In this speech, Roosevelt asks his audience to imagine how a German victory would affect the simple, taken-for-granted pleasure of visiting a national park.

But there is a second danger—a danger from without. I hope, for example, that one hundred years from now the Great Smoky National Park will still belong in practice, as well as in theory, to the people of a free nation. I hope it will not belong to them in theory alone and that in practice the ownership of this Park will not be in the hands of some strange kind of Government puppet subject to some strange kind of an overseas overlord. I hope the use of it will not be confined to people who come hither on Government specified days and on Government directed tours. I hope the trees will not be slaughtered by the axe in order that a Government may conduct wars of aggression against other nations. I hope that roads and paths and trails will still be built in the cause of the liberty of recreation, and not confined to the ulterior purposes of a war machine controlled by an individual or by an oligarchy (Roosevelt September 2, 1940).

The administration's rhetorical mobilization strategy also included reminders that modern weaponry has rendered "the danger from without" frighteningly proximate to the average American.

But the width of those oceans is not what it was in the days of clipper ships. At one point between Africa and Brazil the distance is less than from Washington to Denver, Colorado five hours for the latest type of bomber. And at the North end of the Pacific Ocean America and Asia almost touch each other.

Even today we have planes that could fly from the British Isles to New England and back again without refueling. And remember that the range of the modern bomber is ever being increased (Roosevelt December 29, 1940).

Roosevelt further informed the American public of the “ease with which our American cities could be bombed by any hostile power which had gained bases in this Western Hemisphere” (Roosevelt December 29, 1940). If Germany could establish a beachhead in the Brazil or Mexico, for example, then the *Luftwaffe*’s modern bombers could “cause a certain amount of damage in Omaha, St. Louis, and Kansas City, and that probably that section of the Middle West would be more dangerous to live in, in case of attacks, than Duchess County, New York” (Roosevelt August 2, 1940).

When Roosevelt chose to employ experiential commensurability to make his case for war, he offered sophisticated and plausible narratives that linked events in Europe with the daily lives of average Americans. The infrequency with which he made this choice, therefore, is a puzzle.⁹⁸

6.3 Credibility

The second measurement of resonance that I have borrowed from social movement scholarship is credibility. Social movement scholars argue that three primary factors determine the credibility of a social movement activist’s collective action frame: congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility. The rhetorical mobilization model hypothesizes that these factors also determine the credibility of a leader’s rhetorical campaign to marshal domestic support for war. In this section I

⁹⁸ This is especially puzzling given Roosevelt’s penchant for and skill in relating complex domestic policies (e.g., the New Deal) to the average American.

evaluate the credibility of the Roosevelt administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign according to these three variables.

6.3.1 Congruency

The rhetorical mobilization model claims that when there are visible inconsistencies between what the executive says and what it does, the rhetorical mobilization campaign is likely to lose both credibility and supporters. As stated in hypothesis H2.1: *If executive actions that contradict the assertions of its rhetorical mobilization campaign are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory actions become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.* For the Roosevelt case, H2.1 would be supported if we find evidence of executive actions and behaviors during its rhetorical mobilization campaign that were apparent to the American public and that contradicted Roosevelt's rhetoric.

I contend that the administration's necessarily public efforts to mobilize the nation's material and manpower for war contradicted Roosevelt's public insistence that his policy priority was keeping America out of the war. The President, writes Schuessler (2010, 153), "maneuvered the country in the direction of open hostilities while assuring a wary public that the United States would remain at peace." This contradiction, I maintain, validates hypothesis H2.1.

Within days of Germany's invasion of Poland and the subsequent outbreak of the Second World War, the Roosevelt administration, seeking relief from the foreign policy constraints of the neutrality laws, called Congress into special session. Roosevelt won a

major revision. “Cash and carry” allowed the sale of non-war materials to belligerent states, a revision that primarily benefitted Britain and France. Although cash and carry was a tactical defeat for the non-interventionists in Congress who waged a hard fight against it, some recognized the outcome as a strategic victory. Michigan Republican Arthur Vandenberg recorded in his diary, “Because of our battle, it is going to be much more difficult for FDR to lead the country into war... We have forced him and his Senate group to become vehement in their peace devotions—and we have aroused the country to a peace vigilance which is powerful” (cited in Olson 2013, 93).

Vandenberg was right. In order to achieve this important legislative victory, it was necessary “to obscure the belligerent drift of US policy” (Schuessler 2010, 153). Roosevelt emphasized—and perhaps overemphasized—his preference to preserve US neutrality. “I have said not once, but many times, that I have seen war and that I hate war. I say that again and again... As long as it remains within my power to prevent, there will be no black-out of peace in the United States” (Roosevelt September 1, 1939). While his preference for neutrality may well have been genuine in the fall of 1939, the “gap between rhetoric and reality... widened after the fall of France” when the administration abandoned its preference to maintain neutrality (Schuessler 2010, 153).

Conceivably, the administration could have taken advantage of the startling events in the spring of 1940 to extricate itself from the “rhetorical trap” (Goddard 2009) Vandenberg describes. Indeed, Ickes, Morgenthau, Stimson, and leading interventionists in the media advised Roosevelt that the time was right to alert the public to the dire need for forceful US intervention (Olson 2013). Instead, Roosevelt doubled down on assurances of the administration’s pacific intentions. Why?

One plausible explanation is the 1940 election. The Republican nominee, Wendell Willkie, was a principled politician who often displayed a willingness to forgo political advantage when issues of genuine national security were at stake.⁹⁹ But he was still a tough minded politician and he was intent on defeating Roosevelt. Recognizing that his only path to victory “was to attack [Roosevelt] where he was most vulnerable—on the war,” Willkie, who generally favored interventionist policies in Europe, reinvented himself as the peace candidate (Dallek 1995, 249; Olson 2013, 257). A third term for Roosevelt, Willkie warned, would mean war by April (Dallek 1995, 249).

Willkie’s strategy was effective. By mid October, Roosevelt’s once-commanding lead “melted away” (Olson 2013, 257). As polls indicated that Willkie had taken the lead in the Midwest and was closing the gap in the Northeast, Roosevelt responded by attempting “to outdo [Willkie] in making sweeping pledges of peace” (Olson 2013, 258, 260). In Philadelphia (October 23, 1940), Roosevelt proclaimed “To Republicans and Democrats, to every man, woman and child in the nation I say this: Your President and your Secretary of State are following the road to peace.” Likewise in Buffalo (November 2, 1940): “Your President says this country is not going to war.”

Yet at the same time that Roosevelt was pronouncing “sweeping pledges of peace,” his administration was putting America “on a full war footing” (Dallek 1995, 251). In the spring and summer of 1940 the administration established an Office of Emergency Management, revived the Advisory Commission of National Defense (later the Office of Production Management), and activated the Army’s General Headquarters all in an effort to facilitate and oversee full-scale mobilization. In June 1940, Roosevelt

⁹⁹ Willkie, for example, spoke out in favor of selective service despite the political advantage he would have gained in opposing Roosevelt on this issue. After the election, Willkie frustrated Republicans in Congress by declaring his support for Lend-Lease. See Olson (2013, 216, 280-81).

fired his vocally non-interventionist Secretaries of War and Navy and welcomed to his cabinet Stimson and Knox, both vocal interventionists. Appropriations for industrial mobilization “came faster than the Army could absorb them,” writes military historian Frank Schubert (2015, 12). The administration asked for and received over \$8 billion in 1940 and \$26 billion in 1941, “dwarfing the half billion dollars that had been allotted for expansion early in 1939. By the time of Pearl Harbor, Congress had spent more for Army procurement than it had for the Army and the Navy during all of World War I” (Schubert 2015, 12). In September, Roosevelt introduced in Congress the first peacetime conscription in US history. America’s first draftees drew their numbers on October 29, just a day before Roosevelt promised a crowd in Boston that, “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.”

Some of the administration’s efforts to mobilize material and manpower were conducted quietly. The administration went to extravagant lengths, for example, to keep its secret talks with British war planners (the “ABC Talks”) out of the public’s scrutiny.¹⁰⁰ For the most part, however, the administration orchestrated the most complex and comprehensive mobilization in US history in full public view and under the spotlight of angry non-interventionist protests. Nevertheless, Roosevelt insisted throughout the rhetorical mobilization campaign that the “supreme issue” for him was keeping Americans out of the fighting in Europe. “Rearmament, aid to Britain, the destroyer deal, hemispheric unity—all these he had proclaimed as means of keeping America out of war,” writes Burns. “The cardinal aim was not American security, not democratic survival, not destruction of Nazism, but peace” (Burns 2012 [1956], 456).

¹⁰⁰ British military planners wore civilian clothes and operated under official covers as “technical advisers to the British Purchasing Commission” (Schuessler 2010, 155; see also Reynolds 2002, 117).

For Steele (1970, 1653), the profound inconsistencies between what Roosevelt said and what the administration did, the administration's failure, in other words, to maintain congruency, "made it unnecessarily difficult for him to secure an effective propaganda program even after he had apparently decided to do so."

6.3.2 Empirical Credibility

The second measure of the credibility of an executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign is empirical credibility, the degree to which executive rhetoric is consistent with the publicly available facts of the case. Hypothesis H2.2 states that *if facts that contradict the executive's diagnostic frame are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory facts become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.*

I argue that the Roosevelt case should increase our confidence in the explanatory and predictive power of hypothesis H2.2. Facts that contradicted the Roosevelt administration's diagnostic frame were presented and debated in the public sphere throughout the period of rhetorical mobilization. Although history has discredited the facts of the non-interventionist case, the argument that leading non-interventionists offered the American public was sophisticated and reasoned. Moreover, it was presented by highly credible champions (more on the credibility of the leading advocates of non-interventionism below).

As discussed in Chapter 5, two facts dominated Roosevelt's diagnostic frame: first, that the Nazi regime had the will to dominate the Western Hemisphere and second,

that it had the means. The non-interventionist argument went after both of these assertions. First, it rejected Roosevelt's claims that German ambitions extended beyond the European continent. Like 1914, the Second World War was a war to settle ancient disputes, grab territory, and establish regional dominance. It was also about rectifying the unjust peace settlement that the British and French imposed on Germany at Versailles (Olson 2013, 79; see also Burns 2012 [1956]; Dallek 1995). "We refuse to fight another balance of power war," declared *The Harvard Crimson* in a 1940 editorial (cited in Olson 2013, 222).

Non-interventionists bolstered their contention that Germany had no designs beyond Europe by offering a pragmatic hypothetical. What if Hitler's fascist dreams did extend to the Western Hemisphere as the Roosevelt administration maintained? Those ambitions, the non-interventionists argued, would be forever relegated to a long and growing to-do list. Once Britain fell, Germany would have to confront the same monumental task that has faced every conqueror since Darius and Xerxes: governing the conquered territory and putting down nationalist resistance movements (Dallek 1995; Krebs 2015a, 2015b; Olson 2013).

Regarding the administration's claims that Germany possessed the military means to bring physical harm to the homeland, proponents of non-intervention enjoyed a devastating rhetorical advantage. The assertion that large bodies of water limit the power projection capabilities of states—what Mearsheimer (2001) conceptualizes as "the stopping power of water"—was essentially an iron law for an early 1940s audience. The military history of humanity had confirmed its veracity, and Roosevelt offered no proof that anything had changed. In a letter to William Allen White, Roosevelt vented his

frustration at the durability of the idea that the Atlantic Ocean was an impenetrable defense against foreign invasion. “What worries me especially is that public opinion over here is patting itself on the back every morning and thanking God for the Atlantic Ocean. We greatly underestimate the serious implications to our future” (quoted in Dallek 1995, 21).

We can affirm with the benefit of hindsight that the non-interventionists had it wrong. The facts they offered to counter Roosevelt’s diagnostic framing of the European crisis failed to account for the unprecedented depravity of the Nazi regime and the revolution in military technology and tactics that the Germany military had introduced. Nevertheless, the non-interventionists “offered a legitimate alternative” that eroded the credibility of Roosevelt’s diagnostic framing and “remained a potent political force through December 1941” (Krebs 2015a, 23).

6.3.3 Reputational Credibility

An additional explanation for the staying power of the non-interventionist diagnostic framing of the crisis in Europe is the stature and, in one case, the celebrity of its leading advocates. This brings us to the third and final measure of the credibility of an executive’s rhetorical mobilization campaign: reputational credibility. I hypothesize that *the greater (lesser) the foreign policy credibility of the primary opposition to the executive’s preferred policy, the more (less) likely it is that the executive will amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.*

Well before Roosevelt had settled on his unconstrained preference to join the fighting in Europe, the emerging crisis had already inspired a committed and organized

contingent of foreign policy elites ready to put down any nascent interventionist impulse, even if that impulse originated in the White House. Respected statesmen with sterling foreign policy credentials led a powerful non-interventionist caucus in Congress, and particularly in the Senate. Among these was Gerald Nye, a Republican from North Dakota who, since taking office in 1925, had served on the Senate Foreign Relations, Appropriations, and Defense Committees. Inspired by Engelbrecht & Hanighen's (1934) exposé *Merchants of Death*, Nye convened and led from 1934 to 1936 a special Senate committee¹⁰¹ to investigate claims that the munitions industry had helped foment wars for profit. Nye was also instrumental in establishing the America First Committee and led a spirited though unsuccessful attempt to reign in the film industry, which, according to Nye, was "trying to make America punch drunk with propaganda to push her into war" (quoted in Olson 2013, 370).

Joining Nye were the ranking members of Foreign Relations Committee, William Borah (R-Idaho) and Hiram Johnson (R-California). Borah, who chaired the Foreign Relations Committee during the Coolidge and Hoover administrations, had served in the Senate since 1907. Johnson, who took his seat in the Senate in 1917, had previously served as California's governor (1911-1917). Arthur Vandenberg, a Michigan Republican who also served on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, had supported Roosevelt's New Deal legislation but strongly opposed administration efforts to revise neutrality legislation.

Although Roosevelt generally enjoyed the support of his party when the votes were counted, the non-interventionist impulse in Congress crossed party lines. Nevada Democrat Key Pittman, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and

¹⁰¹ The Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions (1934-1936).

President Pro-tempore of the Senate, is an example. Given the powerful non-interventionists on his committee, it is not surprising that Pittman was often the bearer of bad news for Roosevelt. But it was also clear that Pittman did not share Roosevelt's internationalist commitment. During Roosevelt's six-year campaign to revise or repeal the Neutrality Acts, Pittman routinely frustrated the President with his inability to deliver his committee's support. Two months after Hitler had seized Czechoslovakia, Pittman informed Roosevelt that he was postponing deliberations on the revision of neutrality legislation because "The situation in Europe does not seem to merit any urgent action" (quoted in Olson 2013, 34). In June 1940, Pittman reportedly urged his counterparts in London to surrender with all haste, noting futility of resistance given Britain's profound lack of preparedness for war (*Time*, July 8, 1940 cited in Olson 129). Montana Senator Burton Wheeler, another Democrat to break ranks with the President, was less circumspect in his opposition than Pittman.¹⁰² Wheeler, who had served in the Senate since 1923, offered some of the most memorable statements against intervention. During the debate over Lend-lease, he declared in January 1941, "will plow under every fourth American boy" (quoted in Dallek 1995, 258).

The non-interventionists in Congress counted as their allies such influential opinion leaders as newspaper publishers William Randolph Hearst and Robert McCormick, industrialists Henry Ford, radio commentator Father Coughlin, retired generals officers Hugh Johnson and Smedley Butler,¹⁰³ and the big man on campus at

¹⁰² Wheeler, who had been a staunch ally during Roosevelt's first term, first broke ranks with the President over Roosevelt's 1937 court-packing attempt. See Olson 2013.

¹⁰³ Although Butler died in July 1940, his 1935 essay and short book *War is a Racket* inspired the non-interventionist movement and has influenced pacifism since its publication. Contributing to Butler's influence is his extraordinary record of valor on the battlefield. He is one of only 19 Americans who was twice awarded the Medal of Honor.

colleges and universities across the country (the America First Committee). No one, however, served a more vital role in legitimating the non-interventionist diagnostic frame than Charles Lindbergh. In a comment to Stimson in May 1940, Roosevelt remarked, “When I read Lindbergh’s speech I felt that it could not have been better put if it had been written by Goebbels himself” (quoted in Olson 2013, 103).¹⁰⁴ Olson (2013, *xvi*) describes Lindbergh as the “unofficial leader and spokesman for America’s isolationist movement.” She also describes Lindbergh as “the only man in the country who could rival Roosevelt in commanding the public’s attention” (Olson 2013, 70).

Indeed, recognizing the dangers of attacking the statements of an American hero, Roosevelt publicly criticized Lindbergh only once, and then only indirectly. Referring to the title of Anne Lindbergh’s *Wave of the Future, A Confession of Faith* (1940), Roosevelt remarked in his Third Inaugural Address, “There are men who believe that...tyranny and slavery have become the surging wave of the future and that freedom is an ebbing tide” (Roosevelt January 20, 1941). Otherwise, Roosevelt, who drew considerable public criticism for his anti-Lindbergh comment (Olson 2013, 314), never personally attacked Lindbergh. Instead he left that politically treacherous task to surrogates like Ickes “who clearly relished the job” (Olson 2013, 376).¹⁰⁵

In short, the reputational credibility of the opposition to Roosevelt’s diagnostic frame was formidable. In the case of Lindbergh, that foreign policy credibility was unjustified, the product of celebrity. In most cases, however, Roosevelt’s interlocutors

¹⁰⁴ Lindbergh delivered the speech to which Roosevelt refers on May 19, 1940 to a nationwide radio audience. Lindbergh’s speech came three days after Roosevelt’s address to Congress requesting appropriations for increased defense spending. Roosevelt’s comment to Stimson was noted by his personal secretary and is held in the President’s Secretary File at the FDR Presidential Library.

¹⁰⁵ Referring to the German Eagle that the *Wehrmacht* awarded Lindbergh during his pre-war visit to Germany, Ickes commented: “he preferred to keep the German Eagle. The colonelcy in our Army he returned to the President of the United States” (quoted in Olson 2013, 376).

were serious statesmen with foreign policy credentials equal to and, in several cases, exceeding those of the President.

Given the stature of his opponents and the weakness of their case, Roosevelt's rhetorical strategy for expanding the gap in reputational credibility in his favor is puzzling. As discussed in Chapter 5, Roosevelt rarely took on directly the non-interventionist diagnostic frame—the “admittedly difficult task of education” (Steele 1979, 32). Instead, Roosevelt chose to go after the loyalty and patriotism of his formidable rivals. Roosevelt's *ad hominem* approach was more than ineffective; it was counterproductive. “[B]y the systematic use of unfounded accusations and innuendo, Roosevelt limited, rather than expanded, the public's understanding of national issues” (Steele 1979, 32). He also allowed a flawed diagnostic framing of a monumental global crisis to flourish long after events warranted.

6.4 Summary of Results

In this chapter I analyzed the content of all of President Roosevelt's public addresses, a total of 33 speeches, delivered during the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, June 10, 1940 to March 15, 1941. I also analyzed executive actions during this period, considered the quality of Roosevelt's leading opponents, and examined the evidence that Roosevelt's opponents made available to the general public. Given the value on the outcome variable in this case—a war decision that was a substantial compromise of the administration's unconstrained preference—we would expect to discover from an analysis of the Roosevelt administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign low scores on some or all of these measurements of salience and credibility.

Table 6.1 summarizes my analysis of the salience of the Roosevelt's rhetoric.

Factor	Signifiers	Number of speeches coded positive
Centrality	Bondage, decency, democracy, dictator, enslavement, free/freedom/free peoples, God/godlessness, humanity, independence, liberty, oppression, religion, rights, slave/slavery, tyranny, worship	28
Narrative fidelity	Constitution, forefathers, founders/founding fathers, Gettysburg, Jamestown, Lincoln, Magna Carta, Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, War of American Independence War between the States, Washington, world war, ¹⁰⁶ 1798, 1917, 1918	11
Experiential commensurability	American civilization, attack, bombed/bomber, danger, dictator, dominate, masters, modern warfare, nightmare, no freedom/without freedom, puppet, prison, slave/slavery	6

Table 6.1 Salience factors in presidential speeches June 10, 1940 to March 15, 1941

Roosevelt rarely attempted to make the administration's diagnostic frame relevant to the everyday concerns of the average American (experiential commensurability). I found

¹⁰⁶ "World war" appears in the training set, but not as a signifier for narrative fidelity. I included it in my dictionary primarily because it was one of the few signifiers in the Bush dictionary that was available to Roosevelt. When I applied "world war" to the entire dataset, I found one additional quotation in a speech that I had already coded as positive for narrative fidelity (Roosevelt's address at Arlington Cemetery, November 11, 1940).

only six speeches in which Roosevelt leveraged experiential commensurability. Within those six speeches I coded only 14 individual quotations as positive for experiential commensurability. Given Roosevelt's sincere personal belief that the end of civil liberties in America was a best-case scenario in the event of Britain's defeat—the end of American independence being a worst-case, but still plausible, outcome—this is a surprising result.

I also found strong support for each of my hypotheses regarding the credibility of the administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign. The administration failed to maintain congruency between Roosevelt's speeches and executive actions during the period of analysis. In 14 speeches, Roosevelt insisted that preserving America's non-belligerent status was, as he claimed on September 11, 1940, his "one supreme determination." While making this claim, the administration was simultaneously leading the most comprehensive peacetime mobilization effort—to include America's first peacetime draft—in US history. Roosevelt's rhetoric also failed to maintain empirical credibility. The administration never effectively dispatched the facts of the non-interventionist diagnostic frame, despite the profound fallacies that Axis behavior would eventually reveal. As a result, Roosevelt never overcame "the doubt of a majority of Americans concerning the origins and purposes of the war" (Steele 1979, 32). Finally, although Roosevelt's foreign policy credentials were impressive, so too were those of his non-interventionist rivals. Far more damaging to the President's reputational credibility was the vocal opposition of a living American icon. Lindbergh's celebrity held together the "hard core" of non-interventionism, "which would otherwise disintegrate from obvious stresses" (Davis 1959, 400 cited in Olson 2013, 311).

In sum, the Roosevelt administration organized for, planned, and executed a low resonance rhetorical mobilization campaign. As a result, the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences remained nearly as polarized in March 1941, at the end of the administration's campaign to sell its policy preference for war, as it was at the beginning of the campaign in June 1940. Assessing the residual risk of domestic sanction as intolerably high, Roosevelt decided to amend its policy preference to enter the war as a belligerent in favor of "all options short of war," a policy concept implemented through the Lend-Lease Act.

6.5 Counterfactual Analysis

Constructing a minimal-rewrite counterfactual for the Roosevelt case is not a difficult task. The question I ask in this section is simply this: what would the world have looked like if Roosevelt had heeded the urgings of his principals and other leading non-interventionists?

From the late 1930s until the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt's top advisers relentlessly pressured the President to "tell the country about the gravity of the situation" (Burns 2012 [1956], 387) and how events in Europe would affect the American public (Krebs 2015b, 89). According to diary entries, Ickes launched his own rhetorical campaign as early as 1938 to incite Roosevelt to take action (Burns 2012 [1956], 387). He often speculated, "that his repeated entreaties on the subject were probably becoming tiresome to the president" (Steele 1970, 1653). Nevertheless, he persisted in his warnings that the administration was losing ground to the non-interventionist "planned campaign of defeatism" (Steele 1970, 1053). After Germany's spring offensive, Treasury Secretary

Morgenthau joined Ickes. “Over the next eighteen months,” writes Olson (2013, 292), “the two men were relentless” in imploring Roosevelt to educate the public concerning the proximity and scope of the threat. Ickes and Morgenthau found an aggressive ally in June 1940, when Secretary of War Stimson joined Roosevelt’s team. “From the day Stimson joined the administration, he acted as a spur to Roosevelt, prodding him to lead rather than follow public opinion” (Olson 2013, 292). A frustrated Stimson warned Roosevelt that “it was useless to expect the people would voluntarily take the initiative in letting him know whether or not they would follow him he did not take the lead” (quoted in Dallek 1995, 264).

Yet this was essentially Roosevelt’s approach to rhetorical mobilization. Roosevelt doubted his power of persuasion. He insisted against the pleadings of his key advisers that if he shared frankly with the American public the enormity of the Nazi threat, “the people simply would not believe him” (Burns 2012 [1956], 388). He also insisted that a hard sell was unnecessary. Events themselves, he believed, would educate the public far more effectively than executive rhetoric. “So they did,” observes Burns (2012 [1956], 400), “but not quickly enough.”

Although theorizing Roosevelt’s reluctance to act on the counsel of his advisers is beyond the scope of my analysis, I will briefly touch on two likely explanations. The first is that Roosevelt was “punch drunk” from a succession of significant political defeats (Ickes quoted in Olson 2013, 64). In 1937, Democrats joined Republicans in denouncing Roosevelt’s “court packing” plan en route to its sound defeat in Congress. That same year, his “Quarantine Speech” that offered the public a glimpse into his inchoate preference to intervene was, to Roosevelt’s surprise, excoriated in Congress and

in the press. In the 1938 election, the Democrats lost 72 seats in the House and seven Senate seats. In short, observes Olson (2013, 64), Hitler's rise coincided with "the lowest point of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency." As a result

Roosevelt lost his previously unquenchable confidence that the American people would always stand behind him. From then on, his actions and decisions would be dictated by an unwonted wariness and caution, a determination never to get too far ahead of public opinion which at that point was still profoundly against American involvement in a European war (Olson 2013, 64).

The second explanation for Roosevelt's reluctance to mount a more aggressive rhetorical mobilization campaign was that the German blitzkrieg, the fall of France, and the emergence of the administration's unconstrained policy preference to join the fight coincided, inconveniently, with Roosevelt's campaign for an unprecedented third term. As discussed above, Willkie, following the advice of party bosses, revived his foundering campaign by reinventing himself as the peace candidate. Rather than following the counsel of his principal advisers and attacking Willkie's new non-interventionist platform, Roosevelt ran to join him on that platform, hoping to deny his opponent the "peace vote." After the election there were many, in Washington and London, who assumed that Roosevelt's victory would free the President to launch a full-throated campaign for intervention. But Roosevelt had dug a rhetorical hole from which he did not feel he could easily escape. Having sold himself as a peace candidate, Roosevelt believed that Lend-Lease was the most aggressive measure he could pursue without inciting non-interventionist outrage (Dallek 1995, 292).

Whatever his reasons, Roosevelt conducted a listless rhetorical mobilization campaign that Krebs (2015a, 27) describes as "abstract, ahistorical, and bloodless." As a result, "the United States supported the Allies far less vigorously and aggressively and

entered the war far later than the president would have liked” (Krebs 2015b, 396).

Phrased in the language of a counterfactual, had Roosevelt heeded the counsel of Ickes, Morgenthau, and Stimson and abandoned his “just the facts” approach to rhetorical mobilization, the pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences would have been sufficiently favorable for the administration to institute its unconstrained preference with little residual risk of domestic sanction.

I can support this claim empirically and theoretically. I draw my empirical evidence from public reaction to Roosevelt’s speeches. His uninspired rhetorical mobilization campaign notwithstanding, Roosevelt was a masterful rhetorician. According to pollster George Gallup, “the best way to influence public opinion” on an issue was “to get Mr. Roosevelt to talk about it and favor it” (quoted in Olson 2013, 344). After his September 1939 address to Congress urging repeal of the arms embargo, post-speech polling suggested that Roosevelt had successfully swayed the previously unconvinced public, with a strong majority coming out in favor of repeal. Likewise in May 1941, responding to the criticism of prominent editorial writers of his failure to shape public opinion, Roosevelt delivered his most aggressive speech since his March Lend-Lease announcement, proclaiming a “national emergency” (Roosevelt May 27, 1941). In this speech Roosevelt outlined in the clearest terms to date what Britain’s defeat would mean for the US economy, America’s security, and the average American. With the exception of hardcore non-interventionists, the public response was decidedly positive. The initial 95 per cent favorable response, observes Dallek (1995, 266), was “one indication of what presidential leadership could achieve.”

But the interventionist spirit that Roosevelt's speech kindled evaporated quickly. When Roosevelt asked Hadley Cantril why, Cantril responded bluntly: "What the people want is to be told what to do" (quoted in Olson 2013, 344). The President had made a clear case for war, but he would not explicitly advocate for his unconstrained preference. "Having sold Lend-Lease to the American people as a way to defeat Hitler without the United States having to go to war," writes Olson (2013, 292), "he was not about to risk getting into the conflict now, especially with the isolationists again on the attack." As Morgenthau observed, Roosevelt "wanted to be pushed into the war [by the American public] rather than lead us into it" (quoted in Burns 2012 [1956], 265). But "the channeling of opinion," writes Burns (2012 [1956], 255), "demanded an active program of education—in short, leadership. Roosevelt only drifted."

Levy (2008) suggests that the validity a counterfactual account is enhanced if analysis can draw on established theory to explain a potential mechanism that connects the reversed value on explanatory variable with a different value on the outcome variable. The rhetorical mobilization model, of course, offers such a mechanism. Looking beyond my own theory, Legro (2000) and Krebs (2015a, 2015b) also offer mechanisms that support my counterfactual claim. Legro argues that changes to long-held collective ideas about international affairs occur in a two-step process. First, the dominant ideas, through social entrepreneurship or exogenous shock, must collapse. The next step is consolidation of a new set of collective ideas. However, Legro adds, there must be at least one challenger to the old ideas or consolidation will not occur; societies will return to old collective ideas as a default.

Germany's spring offensive that culminated in the fall of France was an unexpected failure that should have precipitated the collapse of the non-interventionist trope that US security was unaffected by events in Europe. Had Roosevelt crafted a more efficacious rhetorical campaign, consolidation of the interventionist worldview would have been likely. Instead, the non-interventionist narrative persisted as a default.

Krebs (2015a, 2015b) theorizes a similar mechanism. He maintains that during "settled narrative situations," a dominant narrative sets boundaries on legitimate political discourse. Dominant narratives, however, are fragile. "Large exogenous shocks—wars, natural disasters, economic recessions—can uproot them" (Krebs 2015a, 141). Once dominant narrative has been weakened, the narrative situation becomes "unsettled," creating the opportunity for a competing narrative to emerge as dominant. "During unsettled times," writes Krebs (2015a, 3), "publics are eager for someone to step forward to make sense of confusing global events and restore narrative order" (Krebs 2015b, 133). Krebs further argues that the opportunity for presidential leadership in an unsettled narrative situation is fleeting. When presidents fail "to satisfy the public demand for narrative order," they miss the opportunity to assert (or reassert) their own dominant narrative (Krebs 2015a, 133). Another narrative will fill the void.

Roosevelt missed his opportunity to displace the dominant, non-interventionist narrative. The German blitzkrieg signaled a revolution in warfare for which the western democracies were profoundly unprepared. Photographs of German soldiers on parade on the Champs-Élysées and astonished Parisian witnesses revealed contradictions in the non-interventionist narrative that rendered it vulnerable (Krebs 2015a, 141). These stunning events had destabilized the non-interventionist diagnostic frame that conceived of the

American homeland as impregnable and prognostic frame that prescribed waiting out the storm and returning to ordinary life once the storm had passed. Germany's spring offensive and, particularly, the fall of France had, in Krebs' words, created an "open narrative window" through which Roosevelt could have leapt to marshal domestic support for his unconstrained policy preference to save Britain by joining the fight.

Roosevelt did not leap; at best he cautiously waded. For Krebs (2015a, 2015b), Roosevelt's rhetorical failure was a failure to employ the appropriate rhetorical mode: "argumentation" rather than "storytelling." While I do not dispute this innovative argument, the rhetorical mobilization model maintains that Roosevelt's rhetorical failure was primarily a matter of content, not style.

I argue that four revisions to Roosevelt's rhetorical strategy would have reordered the "narrative landscape" (Krebs 2015a, 2015b), consolidated the interventionist narrative as the new collective idea (Legro 2000), and produced a favorable pre-decisional distribution of domestic preferences in which Roosevelt could have executed his unconstrained preference with little fear of domestic sanction. First, Roosevelt's failure, despite the urgings of his advisers, to give explicit expression to his genuine belief that Britain's fall would profoundly change the lives of every American (experiential commensurability) is a puzzle. Had Roosevelt attended to experiential commensurability, he would have severely undermined the non-interventionist claim that this was yet another European squabble and that average Americans had no skin in the game. Alerting the public to the very real dangers to personal safety and civil liberties in the event of Britain's defeat would have offered average Americans a palpable reason to transcend their rational presumption against war. A "dictator's peace" came with real

costs that Roosevelt understood but chose not to emphasize in his rhetoric (Roosevelt January 6, 1941).

Second, Roosevelt, unnerved by Willkie's rhetorical shift to appeal to isolationist voters, hastened to portray himself as the "peace candidate." Roosevelt's communication team peppered the President's speeches with assurances that Roosevelt's chief foreign policy objective was keeping American soldiers out of the fighting. These assurances, as discussed above, coincided the most comprehensive peacetime mobilization in US history and America's first peacetime draft. Had Roosevelt opted to alert the public to the recklessness of Willkie's isolationism rather than joining him on the peace platform, he would have preserved the congruency of his rhetorical campaign and, assuming victory in November, emerged with a mandate for intervention.

Third, Roosevelt's rhetorical mobilization strategy relied on impugning the character and intentions of leading non-interventionists, highly reputable men who were essentially immune to ad hominem attacks and name-calling. Had Roosevelt focused his rhetoric on the vulnerable facts of the non-interventionist diagnostic frame rather than character of his opposition, those contradictory facts would likely have not persisted as long as they did. It is likely, in other words, that the non-interventionist counter frame would not have compromised as severely the empirical credibility of the administration's diagnostic frame.

Finally, had the administration orchestrated a more salient and credible rhetorical mobilization campaign during the "unsettled times" (Krebs 2015a, 2015b) following the Germany's spring offensive, it would have enhanced the reputational credibility of Roosevelt's rhetoric. The dominant, non-interventionist narrative—that WWII was a

regional conflict that would not affect the homeland unless America was suckered into another bloodbath—offered leading non-interventionists in Congress a “socially sustainable” platform from which to attack Roosevelt’s diagnostic frame (Krebs & Jackson 2007, Krebs & Lobasz 2007). That narrative was vulnerable following the exogenous shock of blitzkrieg. If Roosevelt had better exploited that period of vulnerability that Krebs and Legro theorize and successfully asserted a new dominant narrative that accepted the reality that Britain’s fall directly imperiled America’s economic wellbeing, physical security, and democratic institutions, he would have denied his mainstream opposition “the rhetorical materials out of which to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal” (Krebs & Jackson 2007, 42). “When presidents seize that rhetorical opportunity,” argues Krebs (2015a, 133) other elites, in both government and civil society, find it difficult legitimately to advance alternatives.” Ardent isolationists and pacifists would likely continue to oppose war. However, Roosevelt’s chief opposition—Congressional leaders who enjoyed reputations as serious statesmen—would likely have abandoned their opposition, enhancing the reputational credibility of the administration’s rhetorical campaign.

Roosevelt often shared with his frustrated advisers his faith that events in Europe would speak for themselves. His faith was misplaced. As Krebs (2015a, 141) observes, exogenous shocks are, in a sense, “endogenous and thus constructed.” The American public needed to hear from their president not only his diagnosis of events in Europe and plan for dealing with the crisis, but also Roosevelt’s interpretation of how the events they were witnessing would affect their lives, whether deeply held values were at risk, and how proposed policies squared with the broader narrative of the American people. Given

the magnitude of sacrifices that Roosevelt's unconstrained policy preference entailed, the American public needed assurance that executive rhetoric was aligned with executive actions, that non-interventionist claims of American impregnability were vapid, and, finally, that the Roosevelt's prognostic and diagnostic analyses should be trusted over those of the foreign policy elites that opposed the President. In other words, observes Burns (2012 [1956], 262), as the German army marched into Paris "a decisive act of interpretation was required." Roosevelt, Burns continues, "did not interpret."

6.6 Rhetorical Mobilization and the Second World War: Summary

Resting on a relatively serene spit of land between the Potomac River and the Tidal Basin in Southwest Washington, D.C. is the FDR Memorial. Engraved on the wall of Room 3 is a quotation taken from Roosevelt's 14 August 1936 address in Chautauqua, New York.

I have seen war. I have seen war on land and sea. I have seen blood running from the wounded. I have seen men coughing out their gassed lungs. I have seen the dead in the mud. I have seen cities destroyed. I have seen two hundred limping exhausted men come out of line-the survivors of a regiment of one thousand that went forward forty-eight hours before. I have seen children starving. I have seen the agony of mothers and wives. I hate war.

On June 10, 1940 in Charlottesville, Virginia, the administration launched its rhetorical mobilization campaign to marshal domestic support for war.

Roosevelt's attitude toward war had not changed in the interval between his 1936 Chautauqua and his commencement speech at the University of Virginia. Indeed, having witnessed the carnage of the German blitzkrieg, Roosevelt's abhorrence for war had likely reached a new intensity. Yet Roosevelt and his advisers believed that Britain's defeat was inevitable without American military support and America's survival as an independent, flourishing democracy was at grave risk without the Royal Navy patrolling

the North Atlantic. The administration, therefore, abandoned its preference to maintain non-belligerent status and resigned itself to an unconstrained preference for war.

Ten months after initiating his rhetorical mobilization campaign to marshal domestic support for his unconstrained preference, Roosevelt announced to the White House Correspondents' Association and a nationwide radio audience "The big news story of this week" that after months of deliberation and a "great debate...argued in every newspaper, on every wavelength, over every cracker barrel in all the land," that the American people are now ready to proclaim "with the voice of one hundred and thirty millions" America's role in the Second World War (Roosevelt March 15, 1941). He then described his war decision: Lend-Lease. Structural theories of international politics easily explain Roosevelt's reluctant transformation from peace advocate to war advocate. State survival was at risk. They do not, however, account for Roosevelt's adoption of a course of action that neither he and nor his principal advisers believed would save England from defeat or America from the implications of Britain's defeat.

By theorizing "intervening unit-level variables" that deflected the Roosevelt administration's foreign policy "from what pure structural theorists might predict" (Rose 1998, 168), my model of foreign policy decision-making provides theoretical leverage on this puzzle. The administration's capacity to transform its unconstrained preference for war into large scale collective action depended not only on its ability to marshal the material resources of the state, but also its moral and social resources. Accessing those moral and social resources, in turn, depended on its capacity to craft a rhetorical mobilization strategy that would resonate with the American public. According to the measures of salience and credibility that the rhetorical mobilization model theorizes, the

Roosevelt administration failed to deliver a high-resonance campaign. According to historian Richard Steele (1970, 1053), the Roosevelt's rhetorical campaign was "from the first to last a failure...the president's efforts were slow, confused, and ultimately ineffective." As a result, Roosevelt perceived the distribution of domestic preferences at the moment of his war decision to be prohibitively polarized. Rather than leading America into an unpopular war, Roosevelt amended his unconstrained preference as the rhetorical mobilization model predicts.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

A tragic fact of international politics is that statesmen—driven by fear, by duty to preserve the state, by greed, by humane instincts, by selfish political interests, and by countless other incentives theorized by historians and social scientists—routinely confront international threats and opportunities that prompt them to consider the use of military force. When leaders determine that war is necessary, they turn their immediate attention inward to mobilize the resources of the state. For students of national security, mobilization typically refers to the physical process of assembling and organizing manpower, war materials, labor, and capital. For heads of state, however, this understanding of mobilization is a peripheral enterprise. Their focus, if they are capable statesmen, must be on mobilizing the moral, not the physical resources of the state. The outcome of this aspect of mobilization determines whether or not an unconstrained preference for the use of force becomes actual military operations.

“Manufacturing consent” (Herman & Chomsky 1988) for war is a complex social interaction, the outcome of which is far from certain. The structure of modern warfare, characterized by a radically unequal distribution of costs and benefits among various domestic actors affected by war, makes domestic consent an elusive prize for leaders intent on war. Modern warfare demands the contributions and the sacrifices of whole societies, not princes and their mercenary armies. Leaders who commit their states to war without securing the general consent of the polity, of those who must bear the burden of a leader’s war decision, risk political and military disaster. Because ordinary citizens, not society’s elites, typically are called upon to make the greatest sacrifices during

wartime, securing that consent is problematic. The ordinary citizen's rational presumption against war creates a structural barrier to executive autonomy during war-threatening crises.

I have argued that in democratic societies the chief instrument for overcoming this structural barrier to war is rhetoric. The rhetorical mobilization model theorizes the process by which leaders, through their rhetoric, shape the distribution of domestic preferences in order to neutralize domestic constraints to their decision-making autonomy during war-threatening crises. When an executive reveals its unconstrained preference for war to its domestic audience, the distribution of domestic preferences, because of the average citizens' rational presumption against war, is likely to become polarized. Rather than abandoning or revising its preference for the use of force in the face of domestic opposition or committing the state to war without regard to public sentiments—either of which can result in catastrophic consequences for the state, the leader, or both—the executive will organize for, plan, and execute a rhetorical mobilization campaign to create a more favorable distribution of domestic preferences. Rhetorical mobilization campaigns—a concept adapted from social movement scholarship's conceptualization of “collective action framing” (Snow & Benford 2000)—construct a shared understanding of a national emergency, articulate the executive's favored solution, mobilize collective action in support of that solution, and demobilize domestic opposition.

My model also theorizes the conditions under which an executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign is more or less likely to resonate with domestic audiences. Again drawing on a theoretical framework from social movement scholarship, I have argued that the efficacy—or the resonance—of a rhetorical mobilization campaign is variable. A

rhetorical mobilization campaign that is salient (as measured by centrality, narrative fidelity, and experiential commensurability) and credible (as measured by congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility) creates a permissive decision-making environment by reducing the risk of domestic sanction against an executive that ultimately decides to act on its preference and take the state to war. Domestic opinion in a permissive decision-making environment will have little influence over the ultimate war decision; strategic and political calculations will tend to drive the executive's war decision and the state is more likely to behave like a unitary rational actor capable of setting and pursuing its long-term interests. When, however, rhetorical mobilization campaigns fail to resonate, the residual risk of domestic sanction creates powerful incentives for the executive to amend or abandon its unconstrained preference for war in favor of policies that may deviate from those that "pure structural theorists might predict" (Rose 1998, 168).

Chapters 3 through 6 tested the rhetorical mobilization model empirically. In this chapter I summarize the results by means of a structured, focused comparison of the two cases I selected.¹⁰⁷ Next, I consider alternative explanations for the puzzles that my two cases raise. I conclude with some thoughts regarding the theoretical implications of this analysis.

7.1 Bush 2002-03 and Roosevelt 1940-41: A Structured, Focused Comparison

So far I have relied on within-case methods to evaluate the descriptive and explanatory value of the rhetorical mobilization model. Chapters 3 and 5 employed process tracing to illuminate the intervening variables—and the micro-mechanisms causally connecting

¹⁰⁷ My approach to structured, focused comparison follows George & Bennett (2005, 67-72).

them—that lie between systemic incentives for war and executive decisions to act on those incentives. In Chapters 4 and 6, I employed content to test hypotheses that I adapted from social movement scholarship to explain observed variation in executive war decisions. I also proposed counterfactual accounts to explore my assertion that a resonant rhetorical mobilization campaign is a necessary condition of war.

In this section I take a cross-case approach. First I will conduct a structured, focused comparison between the Bush administration's decision-making process that resulted in Bush's decision to invade Iraq (a war decision that closely approximated the administration's unconstrained preference) and the decision-making process of the Roosevelt administration that resulted in enactment of Lend-Lease (a major amendment to the administration's unconstrained preference). I will then apply the same cross-case method to comparing the content of executive rhetoric during these international crises.

7.1.1 Structured, Focused Comparison of Executive Decision-making Processes

The rhetorical mobilization model specified in Chapter 2 provides the structure for the structured, focused comparison below. Figure 7.1 diagrams my executive decision-making model.

In both of the cases I examine, US presidents were confronted with international threats and opportunities that prompted an unconstrained preference for the use of military force. For the Bush administration, the preference for war was over-determined. Some in the administration genuinely believed the nexus of mass-casualty terrorism and

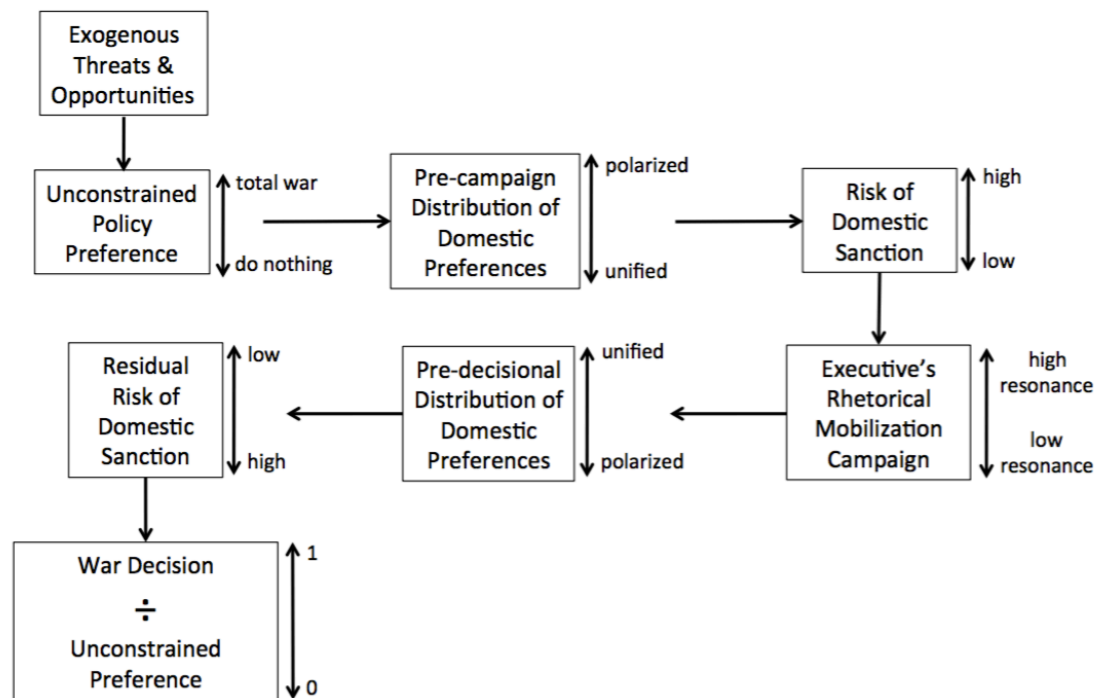


Figure 7.1 Rhetorical mobilization process

an unstable regime with significant WMD capability justified preventive war. Others perceived an opportunity to rid the US of a persistent nuisance while signaling to other troublemakers in the region—and other great powers—that 9/11 had neither cowed the US nor attenuated its interest in the region. Finally, there was a coterie of advisers, primarily high-level deputies in the Defense Department and the Office of the Vice President, who believed forcibly toppling Saddam would herald a democratic era in Iraq and the region.

The Roosevelt administration, by 1937, understood that Hitler's government posed a genuine threat to America's Western European allies. However, it did not settle on its unconstrained preference for war until the spring of 1940 when the German blitzkrieg demonstrated the magnitude of the strategic mismatch in Europe. By early

June, Roosevelt recognized that France was doomed, that Britain would fall without US military intervention. He also understood that German command of the Atlantic sea lines of communication was inevitable with the loss of the Royal Navy, placing the Western Hemisphere and the homeland itself at risk of economic coercion and military invasion.

Both administrations were circumspect in their approach to making their unconstrained preferences public. Because of the average citizen's rational presumption against war and the incentives of political opponents to exploit that presumption, it is common for leaders intent on war to conceal the extent to which they have settled on their policy preference (Schuessler 2010). Despite their caution, however, the unconstrained preferences of both presidents were sufficiently evident to polarize elite and public opinion. In both cases, some Americans favored the aggressive policies that executive rhetoric was suggesting. But there was also a general expectation, both in 1940 and in 2003, that war would cost America dearly. For Roosevelt's domestic audience, expectations of casualties did not require a great act of strategic interpretation. The casualty statistics of the First World War were sufficient harbingers of the cost of a second European conflict. Americans in late 2002 and early 2003 also anticipated a long and costly war (Gershkoff & Kushner 2005). Unlike the Gulf War, the administration's chief demands meant the end of Baathist rule in Iraq. Saddam's regime, which, according to executive rhetoric, was unstable and likely had access to a significant arsenal of WMD, would literally be fighting for its life. By the end of 2002, the administration had already mobilized large numbers of reserve and National Guard personnel, and some in Congress were calling for the reinstatement of the draft in the face of the emerging national emergency (see, e.g., Rangel 2002).

In short, the structural mechanism that creates barriers to executive autonomy during war-threatening crises—i.e., the expectations of uneven distribution of societal costs and benefits that modern warfare entails—was operative in both cases. Significantly, both the Bush and Roosevelt perceived this barrier to their decision-making autonomy and understood that committing a polarized nation to war entailed an intolerable risk of domestic sanction. But rather than amending their unconstrained preferences and adopting policies that would enjoy a greater domestic consensus, both administrations organized for, planned, and executed a rhetorical mobilization campaign, a type of political communication that I have adapted from social movement theory's conceptualization of collective action framing.

Like social movement activists attempting to persuade large audiences to abandon a status quo that it had heretofore tolerated and take action that involves effort and risk, Bush and Roosevelt delivered public addresses, carefully crafted by expert communications teams, that performed four rhetorical functions. First, they communicated a diagnostic frame, their understanding of the international threats and opportunities that have rendered the status quo intolerable. Second, they offered a prognostic frame, a plan for responding to the threats and opportunities outlined in the diagnostic frame. Next, they presented a motivational frame. They outlined for various audiences the efforts and sacrifices that the prognostic frame demanded. Finally, Bush and Roosevelt's public addresses during their rhetorical mobilization campaigns constructed a counter frame to respond to opposing frames, extant or anticipated.

The most obvious divergence in the two cases appears at the war-decision node of the directed acyclic graph above (Figure 7.1). On March 17, 2003, after a six-month

rhetorical mobilization campaign, Bush announced the administration's war decision, a policy that was indistinguishable from its unconstrained preference: forcible regime change. "All the decades of deceit and cruelty have now reached an end. Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing." On March 15, 1941, Roosevelt concluded his administration's ten-month rhetorical mobilization campaign with the announcement of "the big news story of this week" that "our democracy has gone into action." The action to which Roosevelt alluded was enactment of Lend-Lease, a policy that was not only a substantial revision of the administration's unconstrained preference, but also one that neither Churchill, nor Roosevelt's chief advisers, nor Roosevelt himself believed would save Britain. Politically, Roosevelt's war decision was masterful. Strategically, it was a disaster that was narrowly averted only by a series of Axis blunders in late 1941 that brought the war to the US before England's otherwise inevitable defeat.

Moving back in the causal chain from the war decision node, we find another major divergence in the two cases. Throughout President Bush's rhetorical mobilization campaign, the Bush administration observed a steady increase in support for its unconstrained preference and a steady marginalization of opposing voices. At the moment of Bush's war decision, therefore, the administration perceived the residual risk of domestic sanction was sufficiently low to execute an essentially unadulterated version of its unconstrained preference. The Roosevelt administration, by contrast, observed a static distribution of domestic preferences regarding its unconstrained preference to join the fighting in Europe. Although America's attitude toward supporting England became increasingly favorable, public support for war with Germany remained in the single digits

and would not budge. Among political, military, business, and intellectual elites, the administration observed little change in attitudes from the beginning of its rhetorical mobilization campaign in June 1940 until its conclusion in March 1941. Also unchanged was Roosevelt's evaluation of the residual risk of domestic sanction at the moment of his war decision.

In order to explain these divergences, the rhetorical mobilization model contends that students of foreign policy decision making should look for variation in the content and execution of the rhetorical mobilization campaigns themselves.

7.1.2 Structured, Focused Comparison of Executive Rhetoric

In this section I compare the content and circumstances of executive rhetoric during the Bush and Roosevelt rhetorical mobilization campaigns. To structure my comparison I use the three measures of salience and three measures of credibility suggested by social movement scholars. Based on these comparisons, I will also reevaluate the explanatory and predictive value of the six hypotheses proposed in chapter two and initially evaluated in the context of my within-case analyses in Chapters 4 and 6.

7.1.2.1 Comparison of Salience

The first measurement of salience I consider is centrality. The hypothesis I derive from my conceptualization of centrality is:

H1.1: Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to core values and beliefs of target audiences increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.

Our within-case analyses in the previous chapters suggest that H1.1 has little explanatory or predictive value. Both Bush and Roosevelt liberally infused their diagnostic and prognostic frames with value-laden references. Most of the speeches in both datasets contained at least one quotation containing a centrality signifier (57 percent in the Bush dataset and 85 percent in the Roosevelt dataset). Both presidents leveraged national values primarily to foreground the stakes of the national emergency and to distinguish antagonists from protagonists. Indeed, the two dictionaries of centrality signifiers are nearly identical, with the noted exception of Roosevelt's reliance on Christian values that Bush prudently avoided given *al Qaeda* and Iraqi propaganda strategies. In short, based on within-case analysis, there appears to be insufficient variation in the centrality variable to account for the sizeable variation in outcomes.

Although within-case methods tentatively disconfirm H1.1, cross-case analysis suggests its plausibility, if only weakly. The percentages noted above indicate little variation between cases. However, the mechanism I theorize does not rely on percentages. It relies on production and reproduction of the themes and messages crafted to support the executive's unconstrained preference. Each speech that contains a given theme—centrality in this case—not only iterates or reiterates that theme with target audiences, but it also provides opportunities for reproduction in newspaper columns, editorials, talk shows, classroom debates, and dinner table discussions (see Chapter 2).

Comparing the cases with this in mind, there is significant cross-case variation in centrality. Compared with Bush, Roosevelt was relatively inactive in stumping for his unconstrained preference during his rhetorical mobilization campaign. In the course of his 28-week rhetorical mobilization campaign, Bush delivered 170 prepared addresses,

routinely giving two or more speeches in a single day. Roosevelt, by contrast, delivered only 33 speeches over its 41-week rhetorical mobilization campaign. As illustrated in figure 7.2, by the end of Bush's rhetorical mobilization campaign, the Bush administration had made its case that broadly held national values were at stake in 97 distinct discursive events. By the end of Roosevelt's campaign, the American public had heard from their President on only 28 occasions that the Nazi regime, a regime that had eliminated democracy and liberalism from the European continent, was a threat to democratic and liberal values. While each of these speeches was reproduced countless times, the Bush administration provided the media, opinion-leading elites, and average citizens with many more opportunities to reproduce the message of centrality.

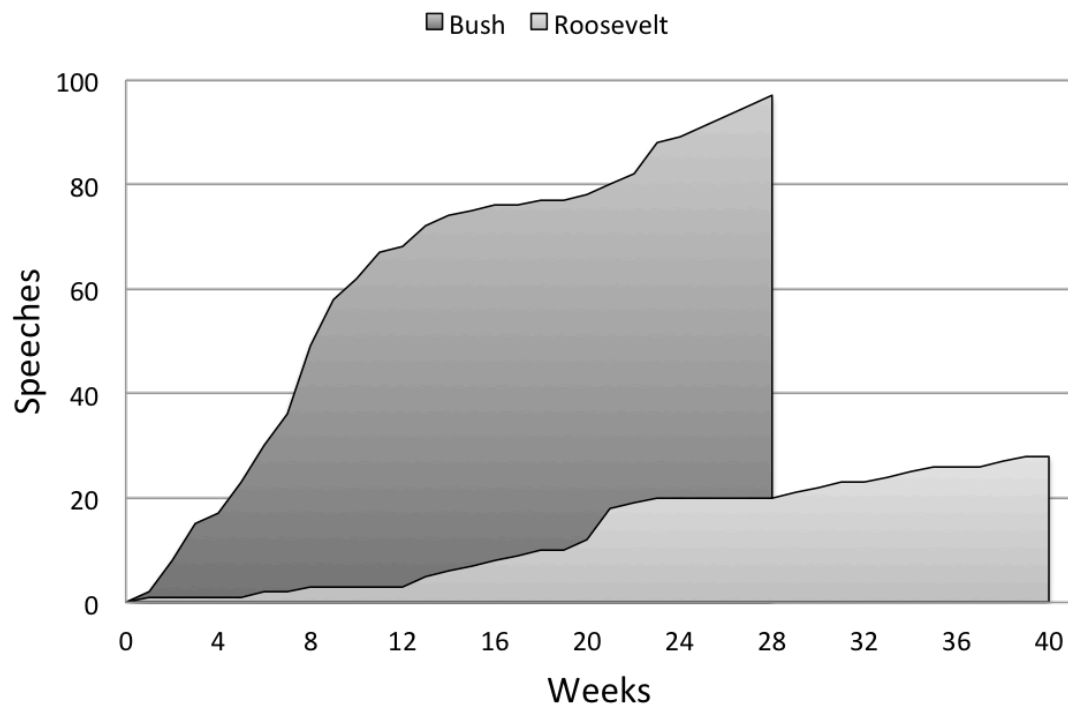


Figure 7.2 Centrality

Although comparatively we can observe significant variation in the degree to which the two administrations exposed the American public to value-language,

individually both cases code positive for centrality according to the criteria for measurement I propose. It is appropriate, therefore, to conclude that our cross-case comparison confirms hypothesis H1.1, but only weakly. It would be a valuable contribution to our understanding of the importance of centrality in executive rhetoric to analyze a case in which the value on the independent variable is negative, in which the executive announced its diagnostic, prognostic, motivational, and counter frames without reference to the values at stake. It is likely that average Americans would roundly reject an executive's call to arms if a leader made no attempt to establish a relationship between broadly held values and the nominal *casus belli*. Unfortunately (from an analytical perspective), no such case exists of which I am aware. Scholars intent on analyzing a rhetorical mobilization campaign in which executives fail to relate international threats and opportunities to the core values and beliefs of their audiences will need to rely, primarily, counterfactuals.

Turning to narrative fidelity, my within-case analyses of our two cases suggested weak support for hypothesis H1.2:

Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that characterize (fail to characterize) the executive's policy preference as consistent with prominent cultural myths increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.

As Esch (2010) convincingly argues, the Bush communications team made extensive use of the myth of "American Exceptionalism" and the myth of "Civilization vs. Barbarism." Bush's rhetoric relied heavily on allusions to great American victories in World War II and the Cold War as "exploitable source domains" for reproducing these myths (Hodges 2011, 20).

The Roosevelt communications team also relied on national myths to win support for military intervention in Europe. In multiple speeches, Roosevelt compared the magnitude of decisions facing Americans with those made by the founding and Civil War generations. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the domain of “exploitable sources” (Hodges 2011, 20) to establish narrative fidelity was severely limited for Roosevelt. The Second World War and Cold War myths that Bush leveraged were, obviously, unavailable. The First World War, which had become the exemplar of the futility of war and the strategic naivety of American policy makers, was just as unusable. Likewise, exploiting myths of Civil War intrepidity in pursuit of a righteous cause risked alienating southern whites, a population that included children and grandchildren of the Confederate generation. Roosevelt did make rhetorical use of America’s founding myth, but again he had to approach this myth with circumspection given the undercurrent of Anglophobia that was evident in non-interventionist rhetoric.

As a result, the Roosevelt administration, unlike Bush, made only sporadic and sparse use of nationalist mythology in the course of its rhetorical mobilization campaign (Figure 7.3).

Our within-case analysis suggested weak support for H1.2. Cross-case analysis strengthens its plausibility. By the end of the Bush administration’s rhetorical mobilization campaign, the Bush communications team had exposed the American public on 52 occasions—and countless more through various means of narrative reproduction—to a narrative in which a US invasion of Iraq is rendered consistent with the national mythos. The Roosevelt administration, by contrast, attempted to establish narrative fidelity in only 11 of its public addresses.

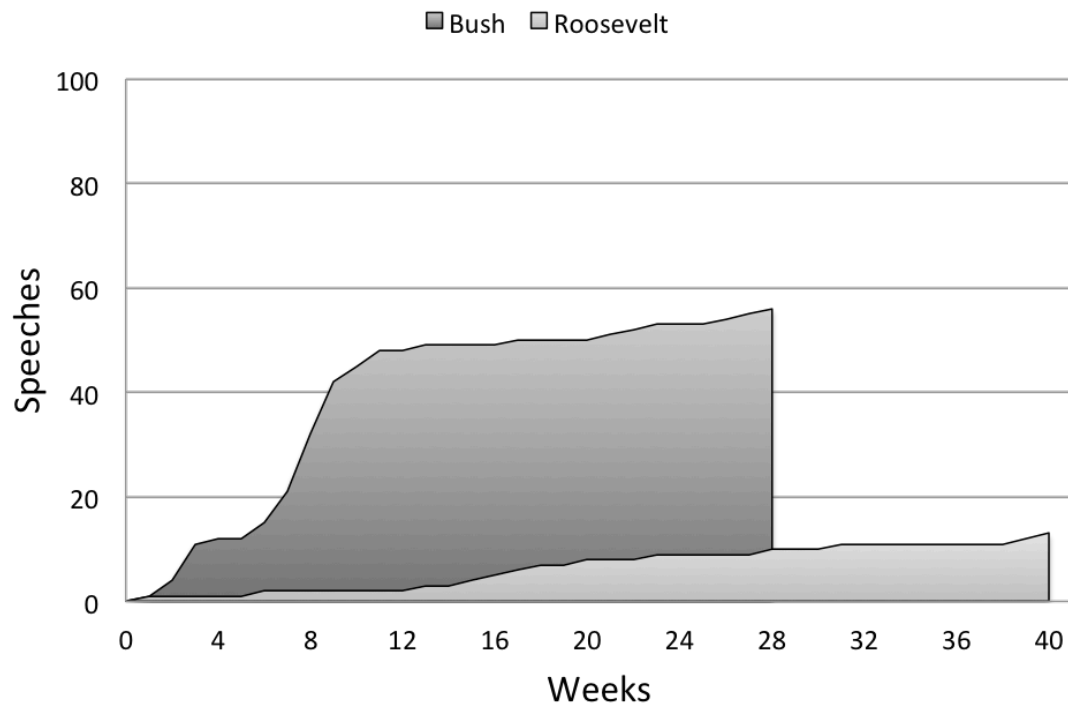


Figure 7.3 Narrative fidelity

From experiential commensurability I derive hypothesis H1.3:

Rhetorical mobilization campaigns that relate (fail to relate) international threats and opportunities to the everyday experiences of the general population increase the likelihood that the executive will choose to implement (amend or abandon) its unconstrained preference for the use of force.

As with our within-case analyses, cross-case comparison strongly supports this hypothesis. Indeed, no other factor reveals a more stark divergence in rhetorical strategies.

Convincing the American public that Saddam's government was a threat to the personal lives and livelihoods of average Americans should have been profoundly difficult. No serious defense analyst, even those convinced, as most were, that Iraq had a mature WMD program, conceived of Saddam as anything more than a reasonably well-

contained regional threat. Convincing the American public that a Nazi defeat of Britain would fundamentally change the lives of virtually every American should have been simple. Even if the non-interventionists were right that a European superpower united under a Nazi government would live harmoniously with a liberal US, no hyperbole was required to comprehend the economic and cultural implications of German command of the Atlantic sea-lines of communication, a foregone conclusion should Britain fall.

Yet Bush's rhetorical mobilization campaign successfully achieved the former task while Roosevelt failed to achieve the latter. A comparison of executive rhetoric explains this unlikely outcome (Figure 7.4). The Bush administration established experiential commensurability by conflating in a single narrative Saddam's "rogue" regime, its mature WMD program, and its links to *al Qaeda* and mass-casualty terrorism. Despite the fact that the intelligence community had rejected the "narrative of the threat triangle," the Bush communications team asserted or implied the threat of terrorists armed with Iraqi WMD in a remarkable 105 of its public addresses. By contrast, Roosevelt attempted to establish experiential commensurability in a meager six speeches.

Roosevelt's just-the-facts approach to diagnostic framing of the crisis in Europe benefitted from the fact that the administration's case did not need to rely, as the Bush administration did, on cascading worst-case scenarios. A simple analysis of Hitler's ambitions and Germany's many strategic advantages accorded the administration's greatest fears with plausibility, if not a degree of inevitability. It is puzzling, therefore, that Roosevelt so seldom chose to share this simple analysis with the American public.

Dallek (1995, 213-14) cites a speech that Roosevelt drafted in 1940 but never delivered. Roosevelt's undelivered speech, more vividly than those that enjoyed an

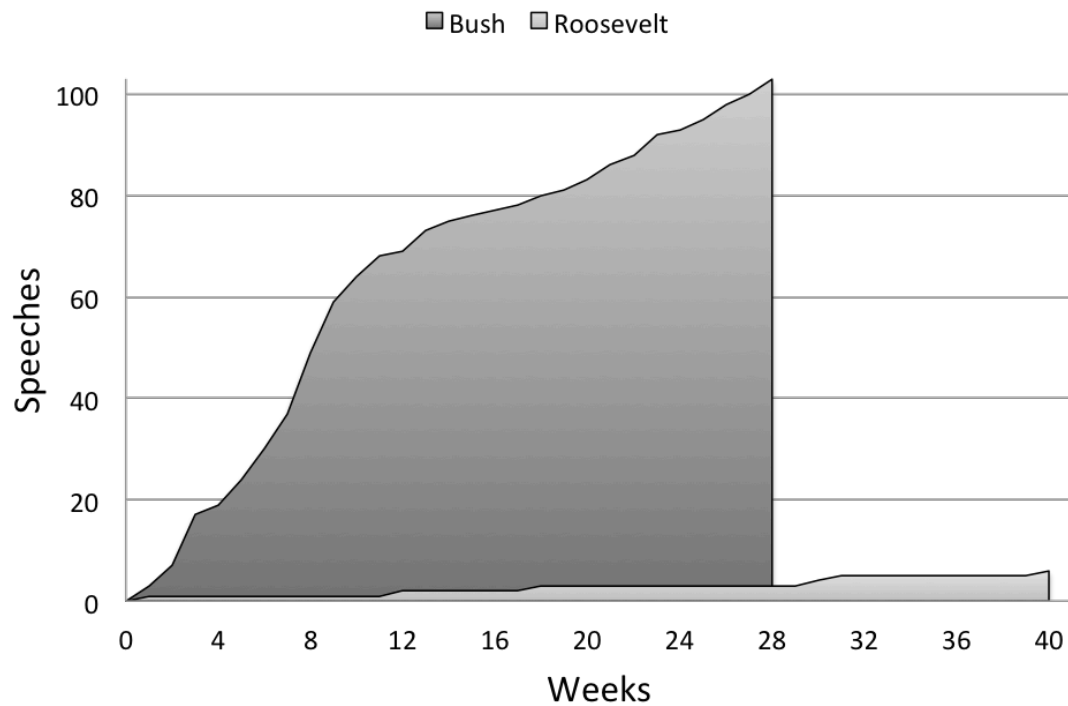


Figure 7.4 Experiential commensurability

audience, imagined the American security, cultural, and economic landscape after Britain's defeat. Roosevelt's decision to scrap this speech, according to Dallek, was based on his fear of eliciting accusations that he was fear mongering. Roosevelt insisted, to the frustration of his advisers, that events would speak for themselves (see especially Burns 2012 [1956]; Krebs 2015a, 2015b; Olson 2013). Accordingly, he presented the American people with the facts of the case rather than a leader's interpretation of those facts in the context of the values, culture, and daily experiences of his listeners. Roosevelt's just-the-facts approach resulted in a rhetorical mobilization campaign that was "abstract, ahistorical, and bloodless" (Krebs 2015b, 80), and, most importantly, ineffectual at amending an unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences.

7.1.2.2 Comparison of Credibility

My model adapts from social movement scholarship three measures of the credibility of executive rhetoric: congruency, empirical credibility, and reputational credibility.

I derive from my conceptualization of congruency hypothesis H2.1:

If executive actions that contradict the assertions of its rhetorical mobilization campaign are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory actions become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.

As discussed above, both administrations took actions that contradicted its rhetoric. Specifically, both Bush and Roosevelt asserted disingenuously a preference to avert war while simultaneously mobilizing for war. A degree of dissonance between words and deeds is essentially inevitable for leaders preparing their nations for war, especially in the early stages of mobilization. Until the executive has established a strong domestic consensus for war, argues Schuessler (2010), it has incentives to obfuscate the degree to which it has settled on war as its policy preference. Too much candor regarding the executive's unconstrained preference, Schuessler argues, could potentially give an early advantage to domestic opponents willing to exploit the public's rational presumption against war.

I argue, however, that there is sufficient variation in congruency between these cases to make hypothesis H2.1 plausible. Three major differences stand out. First, Bush was careful not to overstate his hope for a diplomatic solution. Although Bush insincerely claimed that his administration was seeking non-military solutions while continuing to build up an invasion force in Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Arabian Gulf, he tempered his pacific assertions with significant "buts" that closed the gap

between administration words and deeds. During his 29 January 2003 remarks in Grand Rapids, for example, Bush falsely asserted, “I’m convinced that this still can be done peacefully. I certainly hope so. The idea of committing troops is my last option, not my first.” He then added, “But I’ve got to tell you something. I’ve thought long and hard about this. The risks of doing nothing, the risk of assuming the best from Saddam Hussein, it’s just not a risk worth taking.”

Unlike Bush, Roosevelt, motivated by Willkie’s effective recasting of himself as the peace candidate in the 1940 presidential elections, chose not to equivocate. In his October 30 campaign address in Boston, for example, Roosevelt declared only one day after America’s first draftees drew their numbers in America’s first ever peacetime draft: “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.” Roosevelt’s sweepingly pacifistic pronouncements in the midst of the most comprehensive mobilization in the nation’s history created a degree of cognitive dissonance that was palpable and easily exploited by Roosevelt’s domestic opponents.

Second, just as Bush’s pacific rhetoric was more subtle than Roosevelt’s, so too was his mobilization. US forces had initially drawn down after the Gulf War, but Saddam’s recalcitrance and routine nose thumbing ensured a robust allied presence on well-established bases in the region as well as a regular rotation of Carrier Strike Groups and Amphibious Ready Groups to the Arabian Gulf. Additionally, Operations Northern and Southern Watch created opportunities for sporadic military encounters that had become sufficiently routine as to barely qualify as newsworthy. Finally, the Bush administration insisted—despite the advice of its military commanders—on a downsized invasion force that, famously, paid little attention to post-Saddam governance. In short,

the US had never demobilized from the Gulf War and, in a sense, was still fighting it. As a result, staging the allied invasion force was more of an accretion than a mobilization. For the Roosevelt administration, by contrast, Hitler's rise corresponded with the post-WWI nadir of US military readiness. Mobilization was necessarily abrupt, dramatic, and intrusive in the lives of ordinary citizens.

Finally, unlike Bush, Roosevelt faced an entrenched and organized opposition to his unconstrained preference for war. The anti-war coalition energetically publicized the divergence between Roosevelt's assurances of his intent to keep America out of the war, and administration actions that contradicted these assurances. Leading non-interventionist leveraged Roosevelt's failure to maintain congruency to call his credibility into question.

This final point is closely related to the other two measures of credibility, empirical credibility and reputational credibility. The hypothesis deduced from empirical credibility is:

H2.2: If facts that contradict the executive's diagnostic frame are made public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force. If no contradictory facts become public during the campaign, the executive is more likely to implement its unconstrained policy preference.

Both administrations contended with facts that contradicted their diagnostic frames. For the Bush administration, those facts were ultimately corroborated. Contrary to the administration's narrative regarding Iraq's WMD program—and to the surprise of analysts around the world—Iraq had indeed set aside its WMD ambitions. Furthermore, the alliance between Saddam's government and *al Qaeda* that Feith's Office of Special Programs set out to prove was, as the intelligence community had insisted from the outset

of the rhetorical mobilization campaign, chimeric. The facts that contradicted the Roosevelt administration's diagnostic frame, on the other hand, have largely been discredited. Contrary to the non-interventionist narrative, the US homeland was not impregnable. German command of the Atlantic sea-lanes would have made America vulnerable to economic coercion and its allies to the south vulnerable to military invasion. Furthermore, incipient military tactics and technologies would eventually render the homeland itself vulnerable to bombing raids, missile strikes, and amphibious assaults.

Another, and more important, difference in these cases is *when* these facts that contradicted the executive's diagnostic frame had become the mainstream understanding of the facts of the case. The Bush team enjoyed three rhetorical advantages over those who offered evidence contradicting administration claims. First, they had established the terms of the debate. As discussed above, Iraq was at best a third-tier national security concern until the administration launched its campaign to make Iraq the central battlefield in the broader war on terrorism. Second, the administration's central claim *seemed* right. Although there was considerable debate regarding its extent, few in the intelligence community doubted that Iraq had an active WMD program. Those who questioned conventional wisdom were typically mid-level technocrats who seemed out of touch. Finally, the administration's 24 x 7 rhetorical mobilization campaign was organized to smother contradictory evidence in its crib. As a result of these advantages, the facts that contradicted the administration's diagnostic frame did not become mainstream until after the invasion.

The Roosevelt administration enjoyed none of these advantages. First, the facts that contradicted Roosevelt's diagnostic frame were mainstream long before Roosevelt had settled on his unconstrained preference. Second, it was the contradictory facts, not the administration's claims, that *seemed* right. The Atlantic Ocean had protected the US homeland from European turmoil since Napoleon's fall. Roosevelt's claim that this had changed seemed to many like groundless speculation and fear mongering. Finally, the administration's rhetorical strategy focused on attacking the character and motives of those voiced the contradictory facts rather than going after the facts themselves. Given the sterling public reputations of the leading non-interventionists, this was a political blunder.

In sum, cross-case analysis provides further support for hypothesis H2.2. Despite the validity of the facts contradicting the Bush administration's diagnostic frame, Bush maintained empirical credibility throughout its rhetorical mobilization campaign and into the beginning of hostilities. Despite the weakness of the case against the Roosevelt administration's diagnostic frame, Roosevelt never fully established empirical credibility until the raid on Pearl Harbor caused Americans to rethink their invulnerability to foreign military incursion.

The final measurement of credibility I consider, reputational credibility, helps to explain these counterintuitive outcomes. Hypothesis H2.3 states:

The greater (lesser) the foreign policy credibility of the primary opposition to the executive's preferred policy, the more (less) likely it is that the executive will amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference for the use of force.

Cross-case comparison reveals significant variation in reputational credibility that strongly supports this hypothesis.

The vehemence of the negative public reaction to Roosevelt's 1937 "Quarantine speech" surprised the Roosevelt administration and rallied disparate non-interventionist factions. Although non-interventionism attracted many from the fringe including racists, hardcore pacifists, and Nazi sympathizers, it was hardly a fringe movement. The large center of active non-interventionism included campus leaders, serious intellectuals, and mothers of fighting-aged men. The "Quarantine speech" also identified those in the government who would be carrying the banner for the non-interventionist cause. Leading non-interventionist included members of Congress, from both parties, with foreign policy credentials that rivaled the President's. Other prominent voices opposing Roosevelt's interventionist foreign policy preferences were publishers of opinion-leading newspapers, rock-star industrialists, and retired general officers. Although Charles Lindbergh lacked foreign policy expertise, his status as a hyper-celebrity granted him credibility on virtually any subject on which he chose to comment. It also endowed the non-interventionist movement with a legitimacy that would have otherwise faded long before it did (Dallek 1995; Olson 2013). In short, it is difficult to imagine a more formidable coterie of opponents to Roosevelt's unconstrained preference.

One major disadvantage confronting the Roosevelt administration was that the non-interventionists enjoyed a major head start. Before either Roosevelt or Hitler came to power, the debate over the treatment of Germany at Versailles and America's entry into the League of Nations had spawned an incipient non-interventionist frame regarding America's role in European geopolitics in general. As the expansionist ambitions of the Nazi regime became increasingly evident, non-interventionist framing became increasingly specific: routine European bloodlettings will affect America only if a naïve

US governments are duped into joining the pointless fray by cunning European diplomats.

Unlike the Roosevelt administration, the Bush team confronted no such standing opposition to its policy preference. In a sense, no one saw the Iraq War coming. Prior to the launch of the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign, few—inside or outside the Beltway—considered Saddam as anything more than a middling nuisance (Newbold, interview with author January 9, 2015). Opposing frames had to be created as counter frames, responses to the Bush administration's diagnostic and prognostic framing. As a result, the Bush communications team could craft its diagnostic and prognostic frames in such a way that counter framing would be a politically precarious enterprise, a critique of the Commander-in-Chief's prosecution of a popular war to defend the American homeland (Krebs & Jackson 2007). It was a risk that few politicians were willing to take, and none with the foreign policy credentials of the Bush administration's all-star team that included two former Secretaries of Defense and a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In short, comparing reputational credibility reveals pronounced variation in our two cases and offers additional credence to hypothesis H2.3.

7.1.3 Summary of Cross-case Analysis

The rhetorical mobilization model argues that when an executive, for reasons exogenous to my model, settles on an unconstrained preference for war, its initial exposure of that policy preference to the public will polarize the distribution of domestic preferences. Because those who bear the greatest burden in modern war—the average citizen, not

political, business, and military elites—are also, typically, those who have the least to gain, there exists a rational presumption against war. This presumption acts as a structural impediment to executive autonomy during war-threatening crises. An executive that commits the state to war despite a polarized distribution of domestic preferences risks political sanction and military disaster.

But rather than acquiescing in the public's reluctance to take up arms, the executive—who presumably has a more sophisticated understanding of international threats and opportunities—will organize for, plan, and execute a rhetorical mobilization campaign to remediate that unfavorable distribution of domestic preferences. If successful, domestic opinion will have little influence over the executive's ultimate war decision and the state is more likely to behave like the unitary rational actor that systemic theories of international relations assume. If, however, the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign fails to resonate with the public, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained preference rather than leading the state into a potentially costly war against its will. Under these conditions, the state is likely to behave in a manner that perplexes systemic theorists.

The rhetorical mobilization model also contends that the resonance of rhetorical mobilization can be measured, not by observing outcomes—a circular argument that is not falsifiable—but by observing the content of executive rhetoric and the political context of the rhetorical campaign. Adapting measures of resonance from social movement scholarship for an international relations application, I have posited six hypotheses to explain and predict when a rhetorical mobilization campaign will resonate with a domestic audience.

In Chapters 4 and 6, I used within-case methods to probe the plausibility of these hypotheses. I found strong support for hypotheses H1.3 (experiential commensurability) and H2.3 (reputational credibility). I found support for H2.1 (congruency) and H2.2 (empirical credibility), and weak support for H1.2 (narrative fidelity). Finally, I found no support for H1.1 (centrality); both Bush and Roosevelt rhetorical mobilization campaigns were rich in value-laden rhetoric. This finding supports H1.1 in the Bush case, but not the Roosevelt case.

The structured, focused comparison above gives us reason to update our confidence in the explanatory and predictive value of each of the six hypotheses. In particular, a cross-case comparison of the centrality and narrative fidelity of the Bush and Roosevelt rhetorical mobilization campaigns increase the plausibility of hypotheses H1.1 and H1.2. While centrality and narrative fidelity signifiers appear in a respectable percentage of speeches in both cases, Roosevelt's reluctance to campaign as aggressively for his unconstrained preference as his principal advisers had urged meant that the number of public exposures to national value/national mythos messages was trivial compared with Bush's unrelenting campaign. Table 7.1 summarizes these results.

There are, of course, other theories of international relations that can account for the variation in executive decision making observed in the Bush and Roosevelt cases. In the following section I consider the strength of leading alternatives.

7.2 Alternative Explanations

Mill's (1850) method of difference involves cross-case analysis of two or more cases that are as similar as possible in every way *but* the outcome. If a researcher can then find a

Hypothesis	Associated Factor	Within-case Bush	Within-case Roosevelt	Cross-case
H1.1	Centrality	<i>Supports</i>	<i>Does not support</i>	<i>Supports weakly</i>
H1.2	Narrative Fidelity	<i>Supports</i>	<i>Supports weakly</i>	<i>Supports</i>
H1.3	Experiential Commensurability	<i>Supports strongly</i>	<i>Supports strongly</i>	<i>Supports strongly</i>
H2.1	Congruency	<i>Supports</i>	<i>Supports</i>	<i>Supports</i>
H2.2	Empirical Credibility	<i>Supports</i>	<i>Supports</i>	<i>Supports</i>
H2.3	Reputational Credibility	<i>Supports strongly</i>	<i>Supports strongly</i>	<i>Supports strongly</i>

Table 7.1 Summary of hypothesis performance

condition that is present in one case but not the other, then that condition is potentially a causal factor in the variance of the outcomes. As I argued in Chapters 3 through 6, both the Bush and Roosevelt administrations, in response to international threats and opportunities, weighed their foreign policy options and settled on unconstrained preferences to use military force. Both administrations organized for, planned, and executed rhetorical mobilization campaigns to win domestic support for its preference. Yet we observe striking variation in the outcome variable, the executive's war decision relative to its unconstrained preference. Bush implemented his unconstrained preference

with little regard to domestic pressures. Roosevelt radically amended his unconstrained preference.

I have also argued, per Mill, that there are conditions present in the Bush case that differ from those in the Roosevelt case. Through content analysis (Chapters 4 and 6) and structured, focused comparison of executive rhetoric (Chapter 7), I have demonstrated that the Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign was qualitatively different than Roosevelt's as measured by the six factors of resonance described above. By Mill's methods, therefore, rhetorical mobilization is a candidate causal factor for explaining when domestic preferences will constrain executive war decisions and when it will not.

The shortfall of Mills' approach, however, is that social processes are complex; multiple causal pathways can explain the same outcome (George & Bennett 2005). The burden on the researcher is to eliminate as many alternative causal pathways as possible. In this section I consider two strong alternatives. Although I cannot eliminate either of these causal pathways as viable explanations, I do claim that the rhetorical mobilization model accounts for the anomalies in these explanations and explains more of the observed variation (Lakatos 1970). In contrast to the rhetorical mobilization model, which concentrates on domestic-level variables, the competing explanations I offer introduce international and individual-level factors to theorize war decisions.

7.2.1 International-level Explanation

The first alternative I consider theorizes an interaction between international and domestic-level variables. Jentleson (1992) and Jentleson & Britton (1998) argue that the

“principal political objective” of the military intervention under consideration best explains variation in the degree to which domestic preferences constrain executive decision making during war-threatening crises. These scholars conclude that the American public is more supportive of the use of force to coerce “foreign policy restraint” of an adversary who has taken aggressive actions against the US or an ally than an intervention to coerce “internal political change” in a target state or forcefully intervene for humanitarian purposes.¹⁰⁸ For Jentleson and Jentleson & Britton, the mechanism linking the executive’s *casus belli* explanation with domestic support for forceful intervention is not the content or quality of the executive’s explanation, but rather the nature of the international threat or opportunity that is exogenous to my model. Domestic audiences rationally analyze the purpose of proposed interventions and react accordingly. “Americans do appear to have a much more pragmatic sense of strategy than they are given credit for—an approach to the world that is actually ‘pretty prudent’ when it comes to the use of military force” (Jentleson 1992, 71). Drezner (2008, 63) makes a similar claim, finding that Americans are more supportive of “realist foreign policy objectives” such as security of the homeland or securing critical resources than of “legalistic-moralistic” objectives like promoting democracy or human rights.

Like the rhetorical mobilization model, prudent-public explanations theorize a “two-level game” (Putnam 1988). Leaders intent on using force can succeed in marshaling domestic support for their policy preferences only if the principal political objectives of that use of force falls within the set of foreign policy objectives that the public considers prudent, Putnam’s (1988) “win set.” Unlike the rhetorical mobilization

¹⁰⁸ Jentleson 1992 and Jentleson & Britton 1998 reach the same basic findings. The primary differences are inclusion of a third category of political objective (humanitarian intervention) and some additional quantitative testing.

model, the prudent-public thesis contends that policy objectives themselves, not executive rhetoric, determines the American public's support or non-support of a given policy and, therefore, the size of the win set.

Prudent-public explanations are intuitively appealing. They account well for the structural barriers to executive agency that this dissertation has emphasized. They acknowledge, for example, the public's rational presumption against war. A people will follow their leader into war to defend the state against foreign aggression. But the costs of war are too high and the material benefits are too unevenly distributed to justify idealistic crusading or value-free balance-of-power adjustments. Prudent-public theses also acknowledge that modern warfare demands societal mobilization. Leaders who commit their states to war without marshaling broad domestic support—i.e., leaders with win sets that do not include the use of force—risk political and military disaster. Recent war-threatening crises offer empirical support for the prudent-public thesis. Obama's legalistic-moralistic objectives in conducting punitive strikes in response to Syrian use of chemical weapons in 2013 never gained traction in Congress or with the American people. Nor did Reagan's attempt to coerce internal political change in Nicaragua.

My chief critique of prudent-public explanations is that they fail to account for within-case variation of public opinion over time. A "pretty prudent public" should be able to distinguish in short order—in fact instantly—a prospective response to aggression from a prospective regime promoting intervention or humanitarian response. We should, therefore, expect to see very little variation in the distribution of domestic preferences once the executive has articulated its preference. What we discovered in the cases above,

however, is that public support for intervention is liable to significant change over time. Prudent-public explanations cannot account for this.

Nor can they account for several empirical anomalies. Jentleson and Britton, for example, limit the scope of their inquiries from the post-Vietnam period to the time of writing (1992 and 1998). If we expand that scope marginally in either direction we discover the two cases that most trouble the prudent-public thesis: the same two cases I examine in my empirical chapters. Roosevelt was decidedly unsuccessful in garnering domestic support for the use of force clearly intended to restrain international aggression while the Bush administration won strong domestic support for two invasions *explicitly* launched to affect internal political change. In other words, prudent-public explanations fail to address the empirical puzzle that motivates my research.

The rhetorical mobilization model explains these anomalies. When an executive initially makes public its unconstrained preference for the use of force, domestic consensus will predictably splinter. The general public and their representatives in government will rationally resist abandoning a status quo that it has so far tolerated, taking up arms, and assuming the enormous physical and moral risks that war imposes. Again using Putnam's (1988) term, the executive's win set will always be small at this instant. Unlike the prudent-public thesis, however, the rhetorical mobilization model understands that win set as a dynamic variable. When the executive, like the Bush administration, organizes for, plans, and executes a highly resonant (salient and credible) rhetorical mobilization campaign, it expands its win set and creates a permissive decision-making environment that is unconstrained by domestic considerations. When, however, the executive's rhetorical mobilization campaign fails to resonate, the

distribution of domestic preferences will remain essentially static, as will the political and military risks of war. Under these conditions, the executive is more likely to amend or abandon its unconstrained policy preference. As I argued in Chapters 5 and 6, this was the case for the Roosevelt administration.

7.2.2 Individual-level Explanation

A second competing explanation for variation in domestic influence over decisions to employ force proceeds from the individual level of analysis. Leader-centric explanations argue that the degree to which domestic opinion influences foreign policy decision depends neither on the public's attitudes nor on the executive's efforts to shape those attitudes, but on a leader's beliefs, biases, or psychobiography, particularly as it relates to a leader's tolerance for risk.

The political and military risk of committing the state to the executive's unconstrained preference for war plays an important role in the rhetorical mobilization model's causal logic. I assert that variation in the risk of domestic sanction is a result of variation in the distribution of domestic preferences as it moves between polarization and consensus during the course of a rhetorical mobilization campaign. But risk has causal significance *only* when an agent—the executive in my model—perceives risk, and clearly there is variation in how individuals or groups of individuals perceive risk. My model does not account for this variation. My decision to treat of risk tolerance as a constant may introduce an omitted variable bias.

Foyle (1999) offers a compelling, leader-centric explanation for variation in executive decision making that focuses on this omission. For Foyle, the degree to which

domestic opinion influences foreign policy decisions depends on the leader's beliefs regarding the appropriate role of domestic preferences in matters of state. Foyle categorizes a president's beliefs according to two questions: 1) is it *desirable* for public opinion to influence foreign policy; and 2) is public support *necessary* in order to execute foreign policy? Responses to these questions yield four ideal types: the "delegate" (desirable/necessary; exemplar: Clinton), the "pragmatist" (undesirable/necessary; exemplar: George H. W. Bush), the "executor" (desirable/unnecessary; exemplar Carter), and the "guardian" (undesirable/unnecessary; exemplar Reagan).

Foyle's taxonomy offers a plausible explanation for the observed variation in our two cases. Although Foyle does not examine the Bush or Roosevelt presidencies, a cursory examination suggests variation that accords with Foyle's taxonomy. The Bush communications team and the President himself portrayed Bush as an exemplar of Foyle's guardian, a decisive leader in the Reagan tradition who did not concern himself with public opinion polls. Bush was, famously, "the decider," a president who understood that the buck stopped with him. Roosevelt, by contrast, unabashedly constructed and maintained elaborate and innovative systems to gauge, on a daily basis, public opinion on key issues. As discussed in Chapter 5, a basic tenet of Roosevelt's foreign policy was that "an effective policy abroad depended on a stable commitment at home" (Dallek 1995, 227). It is arguable whether Roosevelt believed it was *desirable* for the public to influence policy, but because he clearly believed public support was *necessary* to successful foreign policy, we should expect him to behave either as a Clintonesque delegate or a pragmatist like George H. W. Bush.

The observed outcomes in both cases are consistent with this cursory analysis. In the Bush case, as a guardian, Bush's unconstrained preference for forcible regime change in Iraq should be sufficient to explain his final war decision to invade. Indeed, "unconstrained" is an unnecessary modifier to a guardian's foreign policy preference; for true guardians, domestic concerns never constrain foreign policy preferences. For Roosevelt, the isolationist mood of the country is also sufficient to explain his war decision. For a delegate or a pragmatist like Roosevelt, war is not a viable option when public opinion is firmly committed to non-interventionism.

Leader-centric explanations like Foyle's offer plausible explanations for observed outcomes in both of our cases. They also provide theory of risk tolerance that my model lacks. They tend to suffer, however, from a profound lack of generalizability. While this is a common critique of the individual level of analysis, it is particularly salient in the cases considered in this dissertation where both risk tolerance and risk itself are dynamic.

In the Roosevelt case, we see variation in risk tolerance not only when comparing Roosevelt to Bush, but also when comparing Roosevelt at t_1 to Roosevelt at t_2 , t_3 , etc. Roosevelt's readiness to accept political risk was a dynamic and volatile variable. Roosevelt's political boldness leading America out of the Great Depression during his first term and leading America in the Second World War has been recognized and celebrated. As Olson (2013) convincingly argues, however, key events in Roosevelt's second term and the election of 1940 eroded Roosevelt's readiness to lead domestic opinion during this crucial time (see previous chapter).

In short, a leader's tolerance for risk is not the static variable that many leader-centric theories assume. Nor is risk itself. Perceived risk of domestic sanction is a

dynamic variable because, as I have argued, leaders act purposively to drive risk down during war-threatening crises. Bush may indeed have been a guardian, using Foyle's (1999) terminology, but this distinction does little to explain his decision to launch the invasion.¹⁰⁹ The Bush administration's rhetorical mobilization campaign was so successful that, at the moment of Bush's war decision, the residual risk of domestic sanction was minimal. The Bush team had successfully reconstructed the distribution of domestic preferences, initially polarized, to create a broad domestic consensus behind its unconstrained preference for war. And indeed, although Bush's legacy is likely to suffer, the administration suffered little domestic sanction when the Iraq War went sour. In November 2004, despite a growing insurgency in Iraq, the coalition's failure to discover the WMD stockpiles it expected to find, the conspicuous absence of spontaneous democracy among the "liberated" Iraqi people, and a formidable Democratic rival, Bush won a second term.

In order to show that risk tolerance has explanatory power in the Bush case, an analyst would have to rely on a counterfactual argument. Would Bush have made the same decision if the distribution of domestic preferences had remained as polarized as it was when the administration initially made public its unconstrained preference? In the counterfactual I present in Chapter 4, I maintain that the answer is no.

In addition to the deficiencies noted, Foyle's (1999) leader-centric argument highlights a persistent shortcoming in the foreign policy decision making research agenda. Like many scholars of foreign policy decision making, Foyle does not

¹⁰⁹ If Bush was indeed a guardian (my assessment, not Foyle's), it also calls into question why the Bush administration invested so heavily in its complex rhetorical mobilization campaign. If Bush were genuinely unconcerned with public opinion, why would he expend so much time and money attempting to influence it?

distinguish war decisions from routine foreign policy decision making. For treaty negotiations and trade deals, Foyle's taxonomy makes sense. We intuitively accept that presidents may differ in their opinions regarding the value and necessity of consulting public opinion when making foreign policy decisions such as these. However, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, war decisions are fundamentally different. A president's unconstrained preference for war is informed by privileged information that the average citizen cannot access. Furthermore, presidents are held accountable, at the polls and in the history books, by their decisions during war-threatening crises. No rational statesmen, therefore, would consider public opinion a "desirable" influence in the context of a war decision. Likewise, no competent executive would fail to recognize that it is "necessary" to understand the distribution of domestic preferences when making a war decision. Unlike treaties, trade deals, and other quotidian foreign policy decisions, successful outcomes in war demand contributions and sacrifices from large swaths of society. Committing the state to war without mobilizing domestic support for war risks political and military disaster. In short, unlike the routine conduct of foreign policy, there is little or no variation in Foyle's independent variables when presidents are making war decisions. War decisions are exceptional.

7.3 Implications for International Relations Theory

My dissertation makes claims that may be of interest to students of public opinion, political communication, and crisis bargaining.

Aldrich et al (2006, 496) issue an important challenge to students of public opinion: "Although evidence suggests that public opinion influences foreign policy, we

know little about precisely when and how this influence is exerted. Scholars need to investigate the point(s) at which public opinion enters the policy-making process.” This is a valid critique of the state of the public opinion literature, particularly as it pertains to foreign policy decision making in wartime and during war threatening crises. For at least forty years, scholars have theorized the waxing and waning of public support for wars *in progress*. Public opinion research—with several notable exceptions discussed in my literature review in Chapter 1—has paid far less attention to the interaction between leaders and their publics during the hours, months, or years that constitute the policy deliberation phase, the period after a threat is recognized but before the first bullet is fired or the first bomb is dropped. Yet, as the case studies I have selected suggest, this is the first and most consequential “point at which public opinion enters the policy-making process.”

My second potential contribution to the public opinion literature concerns the inherent complexity of the relationship between the state’s interests and preferences and those of the average citizen. There is an impressive profusion of excellent studies that support the bottom-up thesis, that public opinion shapes foreign policy decision making (e.g., Aldrich et al 2006; Caspary 1970; Holsti 1992; Key 1961; Mueller 1973; Nincic 1992; Page & Shapiro 1982, 1983, 1992; Popkin 1991; Russett 1990; Shapiro & Page 1988). These studies counterbalance an equally impressive volume of compelling arguments that tell a top-down story, that leaders manufacture consent for foreign policy decisions they have already made (e.g., Almond 1960 [1950]; Cohen 1973; Entman 2004; Herman & Chomsky 1988; Jacobs & Shapiro 1995, 2000; Kull, Ramsay & Lewis 2003; Lippmann 2007 [1922]; Margolis & Mauser 1989; Mearsheimer 2001, 2011; Saunders

forthcoming; Verba et al 1967). I maintain that this radical lack of consensus in the public opinion literature regarding the fundamental question of “does public opinion matter” results, at least in part, from the search for *simple causality* in this complex relationship.

My dissertation contends that it is counter-productive to argue that the directionality of the causal arrow between executive preferences and public opinion points in only one direction. If we accept the premise that the executive and the general public are structurally disposed to holding divergent interests and preferences during war-threatening crises—a premise that I introduce and defend in Chapter 2—and that both citizens of democratic states and democratic leaders have the institutional means to promote their own interests and preferences, then we must acknowledge that executive preferences and public opinion are inherently and irredeemably endogenous. By modeling war decisions as social enterprises in which public and elite interests and preferences are mutually constructed and reconstructed, my model sacrifices the parsimony that a simple causal story might achieve. But the descriptive and explanatory power gained by this approach justifies the loss of parsimony. Rather than insisting that either elite or public preferences are sufficient to explain policy outcomes, the rhetorical mobilization model attempts to systematize the conditions of contingency. Under what conditions will the average citizen’s rational presumption against war constrain democratic leaders? Under what conditions will democratic leaders successfully “manufacture consent” (Herman & Chomsky 1988) for their policy preferences and simply pursue their own interpretations of the national interest as rationalist approaches to international politics assume?

Finally, by foregrounding the structural influences on the formation of interests and preferences, the rhetorical mobilization model underscores the necessity of disaggregating types of foreign policy decisions when theorizing the role of public opinion. The interests and preferences of political actors involved in a war decision, as I have argued, are governed by social structures that are distinct from other foreign policy decisions. Whereas a trade deal or treaty negotiation may profoundly affect specific domestic groups, war decisions potentially impose moral, material, and psychic costs on entire polities. Furthermore, an executive can make a trade deal or treaty agreement with very little direct support from society. US presidents, for example, need to mobilize the support of only 67 senators to ratify a treaty. A war decision, by contrast, may demand mobilization of entire societies. In short, my dissertation suggests that scholars who include war decisions in their investigations of the role of public opinion broadly defined contaminate their datasets. The rhetorical mobilization model argues that scholars who theorize the role of public opinion must treat war decisions as a distinct class of policy making and, significantly, offers an explanation for why it is important to do so.

In addition to its contributions to the public opinion literature, the rhetorical mobilization model may interest the growing number of scholars who share E. H. Carr's (1946) respect for the power of rhetoric. Carr insists that a state's rhetorical power is as important as its military and economic power. The relevance of rhetoric has increased since Carr penned this observation. The number of liberal democratic states has expanded dramatically since the end of the Second World War and continues to grow. So too has the capacity of ordinary citizens around the world to influence the foreign policies of their governments. In autocratic states—far more prevalent in the world that Carr

contemplated—domestic audiences are severely limited in their abilities to deny the executive access to the resources it needs to carry out its policy preferences; the news media are inclined to do as they are told, the military likely owes its legitimacy to the autocrat, and the domestic opposition is likely to be a voiceless outlaw entity. In democratic states, by contrast, citizens are relatively empowered vis-à-vis the executive. In a democratizing world, therefore, rhetorical power—the capacity of the state to leverage rhetoric to marshal domestic support for its foreign policy preferences—should become an increasingly salient determinant of international political outcomes. The size of armies, the gross tonnage of navies, and the throw-weight of nuclear arsenals are only as strategically relevant as the state’s capacity to negotiate access to these elements of national power with increasingly influential citizenries (Taliaferro, Lobell & Ripsman 2009; Zakaria 1998).

The rhetorical mobilization model addresses an important gap in this increasingly important literature. A great deal has been written on the social and psychological affects of various forms of rhetoric on target audiences. The framing literature is particularly rich in this regard (e.g., Iyengar 1991, Zaller 1992, 1994). What is lacking, Chong & Druckman (2007, 117) observe, is research on “the production side of the equation.” What makes one administration’s rhetorical strategy so effective (e.g., Bush 2002-2003) while others (e.g., Roosevelt 1940-1941) fail to gain traction? “Unfortunately, extant work on persuasion provides little guidance on the conditions of strength...they say little about what factors matter when and what makes for a high-quality argument (or frame)” (Chong & Druckman 2007, 117). The rhetorical mobilization model addresses this critique by turning to social movement scholarship, a literature that has a tradition of

asking similar questions. Social movement theory seeks to theorize when, why, and how social movements mobilize, or fail to mobilize, populations for collective action.

Although I am aware of no scholars in this field who have made this claim, I believe that this rich research program offers a useful analog for when, why, and how states mobilize, or fail to mobilize, domestic populations for war.

Finally, the rhetorical mobilization model may contribute important insights to any research program that theorizes the constraining influence of democratic electorates to explain foreign policy outcomes. For example, my model's insistence that democratic constraint is contingent, not a given, suggests a potential critique of bargaining literature. Domestic audience behavior plays a crucial causal role in several prominent theories of interstate bargaining (see Fearon 1994; Powell 1990; Putnam 1988; Schelling 1960, 1966; Schultz 1999, 2001). Yet, the bargaining literature has paid little attention to the forces that shape the foreign policy attitudes and behaviors of key domestic groups during interstate bargaining. Citing Putnam's (1988) "two-level game," his conceptualization of the interaction of domestic and international politics, Hudson (2013, 8) laments, "The formidable task of weaving these threads together has been stymied by the insistence on retaining the state as a 'metaphysical' actor."

Fearon (1994), for example, argues that leaders signal their intentions to potential adversaries by "going public" and generating "audience costs," the political price leaders would pay for escalating during crisis bargaining and then backing down. The rhetorical mobilization model, which theorizes a domestic "bargaining" process running in parallel with interstate bargaining, complicates Fearon's mechanism. Indeed, Fearon makes an assumption he does not defend: a favorable distribution of domestic preferences. If going

public generates public *opposition* to the executive's policies or robust counter framing campaigns from powerful domestic opponents, the executive's capacity to signal resolve is severely handicapped, not enhanced (Baum 2004).

The rhetorical mobilization model also troubles Schultz's theory of crisis bargaining. Unlike Fearon, Schultz does include an explicit domestic component. Because democracies permit public contestation, argues Schultz, it is difficult for democratic states to conceal their preferences; they should, therefore, enjoy advantages in making their coercive threats credible. One of the signaling mechanisms that Shultz theorizes is "confirmatory effects": in a democracy, support from an opposing party for the government's preference for war provides a reliable signal that the government's threat are credible and its confidence in a successful outcome is genuine (Schultz calls this "double voicing"). The rhetorical mobilization model suggests that opposition support for policy may reveal less about a state's capabilities and intentions than it does about the executive's effectiveness in isolating its domestic opposition (Krebs & Jackson 2007). The 2002 Iraq War Resolution garnered impressive bipartisan support in both houses,¹¹⁰ yet double voicing seemed to have little effect on Saddam's low estimation of the sincerity of Bush administration threats.

For Putnam (1988), bargains struck at the international level have no meaning unless they can also be ratified domestically. The executive, therefore, must play, and win, at two tables: an international and a domestic table. The focus of the bargaining literature in international relations scholarship has been on the former. The rhetorical mobilization model theorizes the latter. An executive intent on leveraging military force

¹¹⁰ The Iraq War Resolution passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 296-133 and the Senate by a vote of 72-23.

to strike international-level bargains—either through coercive diplomacy or battlefield victory—must ensure that its domestic audience is prepared to “ratify” the executive’s coercive policy,” that is, to provide willingly the moral and material support needed to make coercive threats credible and victory in war possible.

This dissertation has examined how leaders attempt to shape domestic preferences during war-threatening crises to ensure their “win-sets,” the set of international-level policy options that are capable of achieving domestic-level support (Putnam 1988), include their unconstrained preferences. A rhetorical mobilization campaign that is salient and credible expands Putnam’s win set, creating a permissive decision-making environment in which domestic preferences will have little influence over the executive’s ultimate war decision. When rhetorical mobilization campaigns fail to resonate, however, domestic preferences are more likely to be the ultimate determinate of foreign policy. When rhetoric fails to mitigate the risk of domestic sanction, the executive is more likely to perceive its unconstrained preference for war as lying outside the win-set and either amend or abandon its unconstrained preference for war.

7.4 Next Steps

For researchers interested in advancing these ideas, my primary recommendation is additional case study research to evaluate the generalizability of the rhetorical mobilization model. I further recommend case selection oriented to addressing two primary questions that my research has left unexamined. First, how generalizable is my model as a theory of US foreign policy decision making, and second, does my model help

to explain foreign policy decision making during war-threatening crises outside of the US?

Regarding generalizability in the US context, I chose not to consider cases prior to the Second World War. My rationale was my concern that the FDR presidency represented a watershed in ways that are endogenous to my causal variable. As discussed in Chapter 5, some historians refer to the Roosevelt administration as the first modern presidency, not only because of the expansion of executive power witnessed on Roosevelt's watch, but also because of advances in systematic polling and the rise of mass media. Since Roosevelt, presidents have enjoyed, to a degree unprecedented in US history, the capacity to understand the public mood and influence it by speaking directly to the citizenry.¹¹¹

An excellent case for testing the plausibility of our six hypotheses prior to these fundamental changes in the nature of the presidency is the Wilson administration's campaign to marshal domestic support for the First World War. The many similarities between the Wilson and Roosevelt cases, including the primary belligerents, the general isolationist mood of the nation, and even the presidents' party, would allow a researcher to focus attention on the explanatory power of executive rhetoric. By examining cases on both sides of the Roosevelt administration, a watershed presidency, we can better understand whether the effect of rhetorical mobilization on war decisions is a feature of modernity or a quality inherent in US foreign policy decision making.

¹¹¹For Tulis (1987) it was not FDR, but the presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson that transformed the relationship between the public and the president. Tulis focuses on Roosevelt and Wilson's efforts to bring the public into the policy making process as a means of pressuring Congress. While Tulis's argument is compelling, neither TR nor Wilson benefitted from, as FDR did, reliable polling or broadcast media.

Another watershed—which, in this instance, my cases straddle—may also limit claims of generalizability in the US context. Institution of the all-volunteer force has potentially influenced, in ways we do not fully understand, one of the load-bearing structures of my causal argument: the average citizen’s rational presumption against war. Kant’s fundamental intuition regarding the pacific tendencies of democratic states rests on this presumption (Doyle 1986; Kant 1983 [1795]). Because in democratic states those who fight their nations’ wars can hold accountable those who commit them to these wars, democratic leaders will tend to resort to war only after they have exhausted all other policy options. Since the burdens of war are typically heavier on the general population of a state than on its elites, populations with a voice, the franchise, will punish leaders who wage wars without clear justifications.

In the case of the Iraq War, as with other post-Cold War U.S. military interventions, Kant’s intuition is strained. Justifications for preventive wars like the Iraq War are, by definition, indirect and rarely unambiguous. Kant’s mechanism, therefore, should have asserted a powerful constraining influence. Although I have argued that the resonance of Bush’s rhetorical mobilization campaign neutralized this influence, it is also likely that the existence of a large and capable professional military tempered the constraining influence that Kant theorizes.

The U.S. public today manages a wartime burden that is profoundly, and by design, undemanding. In 1973 President Nixon announced the end of military conscription in the U.S., severing the link between citizenship and military service. Since then, the burden of war has been shouldered by “a class of military professionals who see themselves in many respects as culturally and politically set apart from the rest of

society” (Bacevich 2005, 27-30). While the average American is likely to profess support for those who fight the nation’s wars, he or she is not likely to have ever personally served or even have close friends or family members who have served. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman observed that not only did the burden of fighting the Iraq War fall on “a small cadre of Americans” with whom most of us have no association, but that the “message from the White House has been: ‘You all just go about your business of being Americans, pursuing happiness, spending your tax cuts, enjoying the Super Bowl halftime show, buying a new Hummer, and leave this war to our volunteer Army. No sacrifices required” (cited in Bacevich 2005, 29). Unlike the Second World War in which no American was entirely unaffected, the Iraq War was essentially transparent to most Americans who, through over a decade of war, suffered few personal inconveniences.

The extent to which the all-volunteer force has enervated the structural and normative presumptions against war is unclear. The extent to which it is a confounder in my model, therefore, is also uncertain. As Bacevich and Friedman note, the average citizen bore a light burden during the Iraq War. However, three considerations suggest that this concern has little impact on my model. First, Bacevich and Friedman’s critiques address the Iraq War as it unfolded. The average American in 2002 and 2003, during Bush’s rhetorical mobilization campaign, could not have foreseen a no-sacrifices-required war. Indeed, prior to the invasion, the average American expected a long and costly war (Gershkoff & Kushner 2005). Second, the average citizen, ultimately, did not experience a no-sacrifices-required war. The burden of the Iraq War for the average citizen has escalated since 2005 when Bacevich and Friedman penned their critiques. As

unforeseen consequences of the Iraq War have become increasingly manifest—the rise of Islamic State (ISIS), for example—the full potency of the Kantian mechanism may yet be demonstrated. Although the Iraq War did not truncate Bush’s presidency, most agree that it severely damaged his legacy as well as the foreign policy credibility of the Republican Party. Finally, while the all-volunteer force has, by and large, been sufficient to deal with America’s wars since its institution in 1973, there is no expectation among war planners or national security experts that another great power war could be waged successfully without full societal mobilization.

Nevertheless, the argument that the institution of an all-volunteer force has weakened the average citizen’s rational presumption against war—and, thereby, weakened the fundamental assumption of my model—merits analysis. Additional case studies would help evaluate whether this is a valid critique of my model. The Reagan administration’s Central American policy in the 1980s would be a useful case in this regard. The Reagan administration abandoned its initial policy preference despite the “great communicator’s” rhetorical mobilization campaign that foregrounded the minimal risks to the average citizen. Not only was the draft a thing of the past, but the President’s preferred policy required rebel, not American, boots on the ground. Yet domestic opinion remained intransigent. Likewise, the public resistance to the Obama administration’s preference to punish the Assad regime for transgressing the chemical weapon “redline” in 2013, suggest that the average American citizen’s presumption against war has been little affected since 1973.

The second question regarding our confidence in generalizing the rhetorical mobilization model is whether it has explanatory power *beyond* the US context. The

proposition that the rhetorical mobilization model generalizes in the case of non-US democracies should be relatively uncontroversial. Any executive that institutionally shares political power with its citizens cannot retain power if, as a matter of routine, it overtly ignores popular will.

I also suggest that the rhetorical mobilization model may offer deductive insights for non-democratic states as well. The tools available to an autocrat for manipulating a private citizen's foreign policy preferences may be radically different than those available to a democrat. Threats of physical coercion and imprisonment, for example, can provide compelling reasons for citizens to embrace their leaders' unconstrained preferences. But these are not the primary tools that autocratic leaders who have settled on war reach for to marshal domestic support. Like their democratic counterparts, they turn to rhetoric. Like Roosevelt and Bush, Hitler and Saddam offered dotting crowds their diagnoses of international threats and opportunities, prognoses for a national response, expectations for the average citizens' contributions, and reasons to reject opposing positions. Complex propaganda machines—led by Goebbels in the case of Nazi Germany and represented by Muhammad Saeed al-Sahhaf (“Baghdad Bob”) in the case of Baathist Iraq—provide *prima facie* evidence that autocrats take rhetorical mobilization of their populations just as seriously as democratic leaders. Mapping the rhetorical campaigns of autocrats like Hitler or Saddam onto the rhetorical mobilization model would provide additional insights into the generalizability of the model and plausibility of the six hypotheses this dissertation has presented.

7.4 The Importance of Rhetoric: Beyond Theory

From September 2002 to March 2003, the Bush administration orchestrated a rhetorical mobilization campaign to marshal domestic support for its unconstrained preference to invade Iraq and forcibly change Iraq's Baathist regime. The *success* of that campaign empowered the administration to launch America's first preventive war—a war that many scholars of international law have characterized as illegal—with little risk of domestic sanction. It was also a war that has proliferated unintended and unwelcome consequences that continue to vex leaders in every region of the world.

From June 1940 to March 1941, the Roosevelt administration orchestrated a rhetorical mobilization campaign to marshal domestic support for its unconstrained preference for the use of force to destroy Nazism and save Britain, the last surviving European democracy. The *failure* of that campaign to persuade Congress and the American people of the enormity and imminence of the Nazi threat delayed America's entry into a just and necessary war. The results were tragic. In George Marshall's estimation,¹¹² the protracted interval between recognition of the Nazi threat and America's entry into the war as a full belligerent extended the war by at least a year and cost America billions of dollars and 100,000 casualties (Olson 2013, 97). Marshall did not estimate the costs of America's delay to other peoples. Historian Lynne Olson (2013, 433) considers a more troubling hypothetical.

...[H]ad Hitler not decided, in a fit of anger, to go to war against the United States, the odds are high that Congress and the American people would have pressured the president to turn away from an undeclared war against Germany in the Atlantic and focus instead on defeating Japan, the only country that had actually attacked the United States. In that case, American shipment of arms to Britain and Russia might have been cut dramatically or even halted, and Germany would have had a clear shot at defeating both countries.

¹¹² According to Marshall biographer Forrest Pogue (Olson 2013, 97).

Britain's survival as an independent democratic state depended on America's entry into the war. If not for fortuitous Axis blunders, Olson suggests, it is plausible—and I believe likely¹¹³—that the administration would have continued to embrace its just-the-facts rhetorical strategy, waiting for events in Europe to educate the public while Britain fell and Hitler united Europe as Germany's fascist empire.

To succeed in modern war, states must mobilize large segments of their populations and inspire them to risk terrible costs with no rational expectation of material compensation. Because in democratic states these populations possess institutional means of punishing their leaders, democratic leaders who favor the use of force face a formidable structural barrier to their decision-making autonomy during war-threatening crises. The primary means of overcoming this barrier is rhetoric. As evidenced in the cases above, *how* leaders leverage rhetoric—*how* leaders “cry havoc” during war-threatening crises—matters. Not only does rhetoric affect foreign policy decision making and, therefore, international political outcomes, it potentially influences the trajectory of nations and the trajectory of the lives of countless souls. Therefore, if there is variation in the efficacy of rhetorical campaigns, as I have argued, then accounting for and explaining that variation has sweeping theoretical, practical, and moral implications.

Yet some students of international politics continue to characterize rhetoric as cheap and debate whether talk matters. For practitioners of international politics, this question is beyond debate. When war threatens, leaders invest enormous resources in the

¹¹³ The belief that the administration was waiting for the slightest German provocation to justify war and that America's entry into the war, therefore, was essentially inevitable is unfounded. The German Navy served up two such incidences, firing on the USS Greer in September 1941 and sinking USS Reuben James in October of that year. After the sinking of Reuben James, writes Olson (2013, 405) “German officials awaited the US response to the sinking with great trepidation, convinced that Roosevelt would use it as a pretext for breaking off relations with Germany and declaring war. But FDR did nothing. To the consternation of his aides, he did not even issue a condemnatory statement.”

rhetorical mobilization of their societies. Statesmen intuitively understand E. H. Carr's insistence that rhetorical power is "the third form of power...not less essential for political purposes than military and economic power" (Carr 1946, 132).

The intent of this dissertation has been to construct a theoretical framework on the foundation of that intuition.

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