

# Coercion by fear: Securitization of Iraq prior to the 2003 war

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## Abstract

The Iraq War was one of the most prominent events of the early 2000s. The prelude to the war halted the sense of optimism that captivated International Relations as a discipline after the end of the Cold War. The United States initiated this war following a lengthy securitization process. This study focuses on analyzing the securitization process in Iraq prior to the 2003 war. To that end, the article investigates the securitization process by asking, “How, within what context, and when did the securitization of Iraq take place?” For the study, 85 speeches made by President Bush are analyzed to examine how the president presented Iraq as an existential threat. The study also examines the kinds of arguments used by the Bush administration in securitizing Iraq. This study contributes to the literature on the 2003 Iraq War and security studies by applying Securitization Theory to the Iraq case by incorporating two essential contributions to the securitization analysis: context and audience(s).

## Keywords

Securitization, Iraq War, intervention, Bush administration, Saddam Hussein regime, Copenhagen School

This study argues that the Bush administration securitized Iraq and convinced both its own public and international society that Iraq was an existential threat. It did so to take extraordinary measures against the Saddam Hussein regime. To securitize Iraq, the Bush administration utilized a number of reference points related to the Saddam Hussein regime: its possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), its nuclear ambitions, its links with terrorist organizations, its brutal and undemocratic rule, and its human rights violations.

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**Table 1.** Main reference points.

Main reference point	Sub-topics
Iraq and weapons of mass destruction	<p>Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction</p> <p>Saddam Hussein regime's previous usages of weapons of mass destruction</p> <p>Saddam Hussein regime's previous non-compliances</p> <p>Iraq's nuclear ambitions</p>
Iraq's terrorist connections	<p>Iraq's connections with terrorist organizations (other than al-Qaeda)</p> <p>Iraq's connections with al-Qaeda</p> <p>Possibility of Iraq to provide weapons of mass destruction to terrorists</p>
Other reference points	<p>Saddam Hussein regime's brutality and human rights violations</p> <p>Saddam Hussein regime's hostility toward the US</p> <p>Saddam Hussein regime as a threat to regional and international peace</p> <p>Saddam Hussein being personally evil, tyrannical, and a dictator</p>

The time frame for the study is limited to the period between 11 September 2001 and 19 March 2003. The date 11 September 2001 is selected because the 9/11 attacks affected US domestic and foreign policy and played a vital contextual role in the securitization process. The date 19 March 2003 is selected because it marks the start of the invasion. This can be seen as the start of extraordinary measures, which is the most significant indicator of a successful securitization. This time frame does not suggest that Iraq was not a security issue for the US prior to the 9/11 attacks. Therefore, although this study focuses on the securitization efforts after the 9/11 attacks, it also examines the history of Iraqi–American relations.

To analyze the securitization process of Iraq, a detailed literature review was conducted to present the units of the securitization process and contextual factors. In addition, a content analysis was conducted to analyze 85 speeches<sup>1</sup> by President Bush in order to show how the president framed Iraq as an existential security threat. The analysis was not carried out by merely counting certain keywords such as “Saddam” or “WMD” in the texts. All of the speeches were read thoroughly, and evaluated to see whether President Bush referred to certain reference points identified in Table 1. If the president referred to a reference point in a speech (irrespective of how many times he referred to the same reference point in the

1. In these speeches, President Bush referred to Iraq within the time frame of this study: <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/archive.html>; <http://usiraq.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=684> (accessed 2 November 2015).

same speech), the speech was assigned a value of 1. Otherwise, the speech had a value of 0. At the end, the values of the reference points for all speeches were summed and presented in bar charts to analyze the securitization process. These reference points were not predetermined. They were determined during analysis of the speeches according to their number of usages. The selected reference points were used by the president in more than 10 speeches.

Building upon this analysis, the article is divided into seven parts. The first provides basic theoretical background for the study, and analyzes Securitization Theory, including its critics. The second part presents the existing literature on the Iraq War. The third part introduces the units of the securitization process of Iraq, and the fourth part analyzes the context in which the securitization process occurred. The fifth part includes a discussion of the securitization process. Because securitization itself depends on “speech acts,” the president’s speech acts are analyzed in this part. An analysis of the timing of the securitization process is provided in the sixth part. Finally, the conclusion evaluates the securitization’s success.

## Securitization Theory and its critics

Securitization Theory focuses on taking an issue beyond the established boundaries of politics and outside the area of established or ordinary rules into an exceptional order. In this regard, securitization should be seen as a more severe form of politicization.<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan et al. explain this phenomenon as follows:

In theory, any public issue can be located on the spectrum ranging from non-politicized (meaning the state does not deal with it and it is not in any other way made an issue of public debate and decision) through politicized (meaning the issue is part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations or more rarely, some other form of communal governance) to securitized (meaning the issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bound of political procedure).<sup>3</sup>

Through a securitizing act, an issue is presented as an “existential threat” in order to prioritize it. This creates the idea that if we cannot solve this problem, nothing else will be relevant. Thus, the actors perceive the legitimacy of handling these issues by resorting to extraordinary means.<sup>4</sup>

Buzan et al. consider the acts conducted by a securitizing actor to be securitizing moves.<sup>5</sup> In these moves, the securitizing actor decides to securitize an issue.

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2. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 23.

3. *Ibid.*, 23–24.

4. *Ibid.*, 24.

5. *Ibid.*, 27.

Therefore, securitization is a political choice by the securitizing actor.<sup>6</sup> Although the choice of securitizing depends on only one actor, its success relies on different factors, such as context and the features of the audience. Securitization Theory has been criticized for its neglect of these factors.

Securitization Theory is not immune to other criticisms. These criticisms are beneficial for this study because they are also integrated into the analysis of the securitization of Iraq. The first criticism is about Securitization Theory's overemphasis on speech acts. This criticism is based on the idea that images and visual representations (especially media coverage) also play an important role in the securitization process. According to Frank Möller, language is not the only tool for communication.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Michael C. Williams argues that image rhetorics play a crucial role in the construction of security policies as well as linguistic means.<sup>8</sup>

Second, Securitization Theory is criticized for its neglect of audience. Thierry Balzacq argues that although the audience's acceptance is required for a successful securitization, the framework of Securitization Theory does not focus on the status and nature of the audience<sup>9</sup>: "the success of securitization is highly contingent upon the securitizing actor's ability to identify with the audience's feelings, needs and interests . . . . To persuade the audience . . . the speaker has to tune his/her language to the audience's experience."<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Balzacq divides the support of the audience into two categories: moral and formal.<sup>11</sup> For a securitizing actor, it is always necessary to obtain the moral support of the public. However, this is often not sufficient. There are always formal institutions (i.e. Parliament, Congress) that need to be convinced to take action.

Finally, Matt McDonald argues that the Theory of Securitization is problematically narrow because of its neglect of social and political context.<sup>12</sup> According to McDonald, "in developing a universal framework for the designation or construction of threat through speech acts, the Copenhagen School ultimately downplays the importance of contextual factors."<sup>13</sup> Hence, this article takes contextual issues and audience into consideration in the issue of the securitization of Iraq.

6. Pınar Bilgin, "Güvenlik Çalışmalarında Yeni Açılımlar: Yeni Güvenlik Çalışmaları," *SAREM Journal of Strategic Studies* 8, no. 14 (2010): 69–96, 83.

7. Frank Möller, "Photographic interventions in post-9/11 security policy," *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 2 (2007): 179–196, 180.

8. Michael C. Williams, "Words, images, enemies: Securitization and international politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (2003): 511–531, 527.

9. Thierry Balzacq, "The three faces of securitization: Political agency, audience and context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2 (2005): 171–201, 173.

10. *Ibid.*, 184.

11. *Ibid.*, 184.

12. Matt McDonald, "Securitization and the construction of security," *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 4 (2008): 563–587, 571.

13. *Ibid.*

## A brief literature review and contributions

The 2003 war in Iraq has been examined by a number of scholars who have aspired to explain why the American public supported the Bush administration. In their comprehensive work, Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner examined how the Bush administration gained public support by presenting the Iraq War as an extension of the war on terror.<sup>14</sup> These scholars also utilized content analysis for their study, but, unlike this article, they used a statistical method in which they counted words such as “terror,” “Saddam Hussein,” and “evil” in President Bush’s speeches. Although this method is more efficient for analyzing a large number of speeches, analyzing speeches by reading them as a whole is more suitable because speakers may use different words to imply different things, such as using “mushroom cloud” to refer to a nuclear attack.<sup>15</sup> In this study, all of the speeches were read thoroughly for the analysis. The work of Gershkoff and Kushner is mostly an empirical study that briefly refers to theories of public opinion. In contrast, this study uses Securitization Theory to analyze the issue, which provides a framework to explain not only the speeches/speech acts but also the units (securitizing actor, referent object, audience) and the context of the process. Finally, Gershkoff and Kushner focused on framing the Iraq War within the wider global war on terror. Although this was a significant part of the persuasion process, other factors also affected the securitization process, and the Bush administration referenced other issues to convince the audiences. Consequently, this study analyzes these other factors to present the full picture of the process.

In their 2008 study, Daniel Masters and Robert M. Alexander successfully showed that the American public supported the Bush administration because of the context provided by the 9/11 events.<sup>16</sup> They also noted the importance of the Bush administration’s efforts to link Saddam Hussein with terrorism and the 9/11 attacks. Terrorism and the 9/11 attacks were crucial for providing an appropriate backdrop to persuade the American public. However, these issues were not the only factors that influenced the process, because they were not the only reference points used by the Bush administration. To avoid this oversimplification, this study analyzes other issues and reference points such as WMD in order to capture a broader picture of the securitization process.

Paul Roe utilized Securitization Theory to explain the justification for the 2003 Iraq War.<sup>17</sup> In his study, the focus is on the securitization process in the UK rather than in the US. Moreover, rather than concentrating on speech acts, the author analyzes the audiences and their formal and moral support in the securitization process. Thus, Roe’s study neglects the discursive efforts of the securitizing actor.

14. Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, “Shaping public opinion: The 9/11-Iraq connection in the Bush administration’s rhetoric,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005): 525–537.

15. Interview with Condoleezza Rice, 8 September 2002.

16. Daniel Masters and Robert M. Alexander, “Prospecting for war: 9/11 and selling the Iraq War,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 3 (2008): 434–452.

17. Paul Roe, “Actor, audience(s) and emergency measures: Securitization and the UK’s decision to invade Iraq,” *Security Dialogue* 39 (2008): 615–635.

In contrast, this study aims to analyze the securitization process in the US. Additionally, this study presents a speech act analysis as a main component of Securitization Theory in addition to analysis of the contextual factors.

Overall, this study aims to contribute to the literature in two ways. First, it contributes to the literature on the 2003 Iraq War by explaining how the Bush administration convinced the US public and the international community to use force in Iraq. Its unique contribution emanates from the lenses it employs, Securitization Theory, and its content analysis of 85 speeches by President Bush. Unlike the studies discussed above, this article presents a more complete picture of the process. Rather than focusing on one contextual issue such as the effect of the 9/11 attacks or focusing only on speeches or audiences, this article, using the framework provided by Securitization Theory, analyzes the issue by examining contextual issues, units, and the speeches/speech acts. Second, this research contributes to the literature on Critical Security Studies by presenting a case study of Securitization Theory that employs content analysis as the methodological toolbox. Finally, this study incorporates the examination of the units of securitization, including the audience, analysis of the context of securitization, and the evaluation of the speech acts. Thus, the study integrates two neglected issues in the analysis of securitization, audience, and context.

## Units of the securitization process of Iraq

The first unit of securitization is the referent object. Buzan et al. define the referent object as the thing that is “seen to be existentially threatened and that ha[s] a legitimate claim to survive.” Securitization Theory analyzes the referent object at three levels: micro, macro, and middle.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, in the case of the 2003 Iraq War, individuals in Western countries, especially the US, can be seen as micro-level referent objects. Moreover, the Iraqi people were also presented as referent objects that had faced the brutal rule of the Saddam Hussein regime:

Saddam Hussein has the motive and the means and the recklessness and the hatred to threaten the American people.<sup>19</sup> My job is to protect the American people from further harm. I believe that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the American people.<sup>20</sup>

[T]he man [Saddam Hussein] over there in Iraq is a threat. After all, he gassed his own people; he used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. He’s used weapons of mass destruction on countries in his own neighborhood.<sup>21</sup>

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18. Buzan et al., *Security*, 36–37.

19. Statement by President George W. Bush after Secretary of State Colin Powell’s speech at the UN, 6 February 2003.

20. Remarks by President Bush and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia, 10 February 2003.

21. President Bush’s remarks at North Carolina Welcome, 24 October 2002.

At the macro level, the Bush administration presented the Iraqi regime as a threat to world peace and regional peace in the Middle East. In 41 out of 85 speeches, President Bush presented the Saddam Hussein regime as a threat to world peace and regional stability:

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.<sup>22</sup>

The threat to America also threatens peace and security in the Middle East and far beyond. If Iraq's dictator is permitted to acquire nuclear weapons, he could resume his pattern of intimidation and conquest and dictate the future of a vital region.<sup>23</sup>

The final level of referent object is the middle level. According to Securitization Theory, most of the successful securitizations occur at this level.<sup>24</sup> At the middle level, the US and its allies were presented as the referent object. President Bush directly stated that Saddam Hussein's regime was a threat to the US in 55 out of 85 speeches.

The second main unit in the process is the securitizing actor. The securitizing actor presents a referent object as threatened by an existential threat in order to be able to use extraordinary measures against it. Determining the securitizing actor is tricky because of the unit-collectivity problem. According to Buzan et al., a collectivity is more than the sum of its units.<sup>25</sup> A single individual, namely President Bush, cannot be the only securitizing actor in the Iraq issue. Nonetheless, we may argue that he was the most prominent representative of the securitizing actor. Moreover, because opposition figures in the Congress (especially Democrats) did not support the war in Iraq, it is not appropriate to take the United States as a singular actor.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, this study takes the Bush administration as the securitizing actor.

Functional actors are units that influence the securitization process without being a securitizing actor or referent object. In the securitization of Iraq, the media was the most evident functional actor. Although the media played a positive role in the securitization process, we cannot define it as a securitizing actor because of the problem of intentionality. It is not certain that the media aimed to convince the audience(s), because there may have been other intentions, such as giving people what they want or increasing ratings. Therefore, the media was not a securitizing actor; rather, it represents an important functional actor as the mediator of information and facilitator of communication between the securitizing actor and audience.<sup>27</sup>

22. President George W. Bush's State of the Union Address, 29 January 2002.

23. Remarks by the President on the United Nations Security Council Resolution, 8 November 2002.

24. Buzan et al., *Security*, 36–37.

25. *Ibid.*, 40.

26. The resolution that authorized President Bush to use force in Iraq passed the Senate by 77 to 23 and the House by 296 to 133.

27. Ciaran O'Reilly, "Primetime patriotism: News media and the securitization of Iraq," *Journal of Politics and Law* 1, no. 3 (2008): 66–72, 71.

The final unit to be examined here is the audience. Securitization is essentially about convincing the audience. Thus, the audience represents a crucial unit for the securitization process.<sup>28</sup> Balzacq divides audience support into two components: moral and formal.<sup>29</sup> To gain moral support, the Bush administration had to convince the majority of the American people of the necessity of taking extraordinary measures against Iraq.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, in the Iraq case, there were two seemingly evident formal audiences. The first one was the US Congress. According to the US Constitution, Congress has the power to declare war. According to Ciaran O'Reilly, the moral support of the public and the formal support of the Senate went hand-in-hand in the Iraq issue.<sup>31</sup> However, Congress was not an evident formal audience because the US Constitution is subject to different interpretations,<sup>32</sup> and the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which was designed to limit the power of the presidents, still gives certain rights to the US presidents to use the US Armed Forces. According to this resolution, the president can commit US forces to military action, but must notify Congress within 48 hours.<sup>33</sup> Because of this, the US Congress can be regarded as a debatable formal audience.

In addition to the US Congress, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) appears as a formal audience. However, although UNSC approval is a prerequisite for using force, it is not impossible for a country to wage a war without UNSC approval. Additionally, the Bush administration based its actions in Iraq on an interpretation of existing UNSC resolutions, although most civil society actors and European states disagreed with this interpretation. As a result, in the case of the securitization of Iraq, the UNSC's formal audience status is also under question.

The final audience for the process of the securitization of Iraq is the international community. Because there is no legal obligation to convince other countries to use force, this audience should be considered a moral one. To obtain the approval of this audience, the Bush administration had to convince a sufficient number of true countries (the critical mass). The administration's success in convincing these audiences is evaluated in the conclusion, where the success of securitization is investigated.

## Context of the securitization process of Iraq

As Balzacq argues, securitization is context dependent. Although securitization modifies the context, the context also affects securitization. Additionally, the psychological and cultural features of the audience are crucial in the securitization

28. R.G. McGillivray, *Casus Belli: Fear, Rhetoric and Securitization of the War in Iraq*, [http://rgmcgillivray.com/images/Casus\\_Belli.pdf](http://rgmcgillivray.com/images/Casus_Belli.pdf) (accessed 17 February 2013), 4.

29. Balzacq, "The three faces of securitization," 184.

30. O'Reilly, "Primetime patriotism," 67–71.

31. *Ibid.*, 67.

32. The US Constitution, Article I, Section 8.

33. War Powers Resolution (1973), [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/warpower.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/warpower.asp) (accessed 7 July 2015).

process because securitization is mainly about convincing the audience.<sup>34</sup> This section analyzes the issues that affected the securitization process.

### *Historical background*

The relations between Iraq and the US before the war are crucial to the securitization analysis. The earliest event that is directly related to the 2003 Iraq War is the Saddam Hussein regime's attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja using poison gases in 1988. During this event, thousands of people died from the chemical weapons used by the Iraqi regime. This event is salient because the Bush administration cited the issue in the securitization of Iraq, and it was used as proof of Saddam Hussein's determination to use these weapons against his own people.<sup>35</sup>

In this context, on 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and declared its annexation.<sup>36</sup> It was immediately condemned by the UNSC.<sup>37</sup> The UNSC authorized the use of "all means necessary" to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait on 29 November 1990.<sup>38</sup> The US-led coalition forces began air attacks on Iraq on 16 January 1991, and Iraqi forces were defeated quickly by a subsequent ground invasion. After the defeat of the Iraqi forces, the UNSC passed Resolution 687, which required Iraq to "unconditionally accept" the destruction and removal of all "chemical and biological weapons," and not to "acquire or develop nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapons-usable material."<sup>39</sup> This resolution also created the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), which was given the duty of verifying the elimination of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons.

In 1991, the Saddam Hussein regime brutally suppressed Shia and Kurdish uprisings in Iraq. In April 1991, the UNSC condemned these actions. In that same month, the US, France, and the UK declared a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel, an area that is mostly populated by Kurds. The second no-fly zone was declared south of the 32nd parallel, which is mostly populated by Shia Muslims.<sup>40</sup> In 1993, President George H.W. Bush visited Kuwait in commemoration of the victory in the Gulf War. During that visit, 17 people were arrested on suspicion of attempting to assassinate the president. Upon further investigation by US officials, the US government concluded that the Saddam Hussein regime was

34. Balzacq, "The three faces of securitization," 184.

35. Cemil Gündoğan, İbrahim İncesu, and Ali Rıza Gezici, *Halepçe jenosidi: Öncesi ve sonrası: Vahşet yargulanıyor* (Ankara: Sun Yayınılık, 1991); Joost R. Hilberman, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

36. Christopher Greenwood, "New world order or old? The invasion of Kuwait and the rule of law," *The Modern Law Review* 55, no. 2 (1992): 153–178, 153.

37. UNSC Resolution 660, 6 August 1990.

38. UNSC Resolution 678, 29 November 1990.

39. UNSC Resolution 687, 3 April 1990.

40. Timothy P. McIlmail, "No-fly zones: The imposition and enforcement of air exclusion regimes over Bosnia and Iraq," 1994, <http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1347&context=ilr> (accessed 19 June 2013), 48.

behind the failed attempt.<sup>41</sup> This event was also used by the Bush administration in the securitization of Iraq before 2003.

In August 1998, Saddam Hussein ended Iraqi cooperation with UNSCOM by accusing the US and UN of espionage. After this event, on 31 October 1998, President Bill Clinton signed the “Iraq Liberation Act” that supported regime change in Iraq. UNSCOM and International Atomic Energy Agency personnel left Iraq on 16 December 1998. On the same day, the US and the UK started Operation Desert Fox, in which the two countries conducted air bombardment in Iraq for four days to destroy WMD sites in the country. On 17 December 1999, the UN Security Council accepted Resolution 1284 establishing the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, which replaced UNSCOM.<sup>42</sup> However, Saddam Hussein did not accept the resolution, and the inspectors were not allowed to enter Iraq. Finally, in February 2001, the UK and the US carried out a joint air bombardment, which received condemnation from the international community.<sup>43</sup>

As seen above, relations between Iraq and the US were not smooth or problem-free prior to the George W. Bush era. Saddam Hussein was already regarded as a dictator who did not respect democracy or international norms, and who sought power to challenge world peace. Iraq’s record of non-compliance with the UNSC resolutions and its human rights violations were on the agenda in the 1990s. President Bush himself explained this situation as follows:

Well, as you know, our government in 1998—action that my administration has embraced—decided that this regime was not going to honor its commitments to get rid of weapons of mass destruction. The Clinton administration supported regime change. Many members of the United States Senate supported regime change. My administration still supports regime change.<sup>44</sup>

Despite these problematic relations, the US did not initiate a major operation/invasion against the country prior to 2003. From the perspective of Securitization Theory, the ideas of the relevant audiences provide legitimacy for using force, waging war, invading a location, or using extraordinary measures. To do so, the audiences must be persuaded that the other side is an existential security threat. Two factors are crucial for this persuasion: contextual issues and the securitization efforts of the securitizing actor. From this perspective, it can be argued that the Iraq issue did not receive the status of an existential security threat until 9/11. Even after the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration did not directly attack

41. USDOJ/OIG Special Report, “The FBI laboratory: An investigation into laboratory practices and alleged misconduct in explosives-related and other cases,” April 1997, <http://www.justice.gov/oig/special/9704a/05bush2.htm> (accessed 13 February 2013).

42. UNSC Resolution 1244, 17 December 1999.

43. Christine Gray, “From unity to polarization: International law and the use of force against Iraq,” *European Journal of International Law* 13, no. 1 (2002): 1–19.

44. Remarks by the President and Prime Minister Tony Blair in Camp David, Maryland, 7 September 2002.

Iraq. It first sent troops to Afghanistan. However, in 2003, with the help of contextual factors and the securitization efforts of the Bush administration, Iraq attained the status of an existential security threat.

### *Munich versus Vietnam analogies*

For decades, interventionist and non-interventionist policies battled for supremacy in American foreign policy. These policies can be summarized by two analogies: Munich and Vietnam. These contradicting analogies played a crucial role in decisions by the United States.<sup>45</sup> The Munich analogy is based on the appeasement of Nazi Germany at the 1938 Munich Conference, where France and England maintained an appeasement policy toward Hitler.<sup>46</sup> However, subsequent events demonstrated the fallacy of this decision: “The fear of another Munich was an underlying element for the future foreign policy decisions of the US . . . . The fear of not stopping a tyrant in his tracks—before it is too late.”<sup>47</sup> This analogy also played a crucial role in Vietnam and in the Gulf War of 1990–1991.

The second analogy that played an important role in the nature of US foreign policy was Vietnam. In the Vietnam War, the US lost 58,220 soldiers to a war in which the US could not reach its objectives.<sup>48</sup> The catastrophic results of the war led the nation to favor non-intervention.

There is no doubt that these two analogies affected the securitization of Iraq. The result shows that the Munich analogy was stronger than Vietnam with regard to the Iraq issue. There are several reasons for this. First, the success of the Gulf War in the early 1990s supported the Munich analogy. Moreover, and more effectively, the failure to stop the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia in the 1990s also invoked the Munich analogy.<sup>49</sup> Another factor was the passage of enough time for the audience to forget the catastrophic effects of war. People had forgotten the sufferings of World War II and the Vietnam War.

### *Historical perception of WMD*

The claim that Saddam Hussein possessed WMD was a main reference point used by the Bush administration in the securitization process. During the process, the

45. Robert D. Kaplan, “Foreign policy: Munich versus Vietnam,” *Atlantic Magazine*, May 2007, [http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/05/foreign-policy-munich-versus-vietnam/305934/?single\\_page=true](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/05/foreign-policy-munich-versus-vietnam/305934/?single_page=true) (accessed 28 February 2013); Andrew J. Taylor and John T. Rourke, “Historical analogies in the congressional foreign policy process,” *The Journal of Politics* 57 (1995): 460–468.

46. Joseph M. Siracusa, “The Munich analogy,” *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy*, 2002, <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/E-N/The-Munich-Analogy.html> (accessed 28 February 2013).

47. Kaplan, “Foreign policy.”

48. The numbers of casualties are presented in the US Department of Defense, Defense Casualty Analysis System: [https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report\\_vietnam\\_sum.xhtml](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_vietnam_sum.xhtml) (accessed 28 February 2013).

49. Kaplan, “Foreign policy.”

president used the audiences' existing views about WMD. During the Cold War, the entire world suffered from the fear of a nuclear catastrophe. Obviously, the American public was among the most sensitive to this issue because their country was one of the two great powers. Hence, historically, the audiences had a negative perception of WMD.

For the US public, the most important event that caused the emergence of negative perceptions of WMD was the Cuban Missile Crisis. This crisis, like the previously mentioned Vietnam and Munich analogies, played a significant role in shaping the character of the US nation and influencing future decisions. It was mostly the Cuban Missile Crisis that made the US public aware of the catastrophic results of a nuclear war. This perception was also reinforced by Hollywood movies.<sup>50</sup> As a result, the securitizing actor utilized this sensitivity during the securitization of Iraq.

### *9/11 attacks and already securitized global terrorism*

Al-Qaeda killed almost 3000 Americans in the heart of New York on 11 September 2001. This event obviously created a feeling of insecurity and fear among the American people. In February 2002, 62 percent of Americans believed that there might be another terrorist attack in the coming months.<sup>51</sup> The Bush administration successfully used this environment to securitize Iraq. Masters and Alexander explain the feelings of insecurity and their effects as follows:

Feelings of insecurity stimulate a number of emotional responses among people that affect their evaluation of policy options and risk orientations. In general, individuals display belligerence in the face of terrorist attacks. Feelings of injustice increase as people react to their perceived status as a victim of mistreatment . . . We observe a decline in helplessness as people come to believe they have an ability (or need) to influence or control events.<sup>52</sup>

After the 9/11 attacks, global terrorism gained prominence in the international agenda. By successfully securitizing global terror, the Bush administration started the "war on terror" and declared a war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. When the Bush administration turned its face toward Iraq, global terrorism had already been securitized. During the securitization process of Iraq, the Bush administration successfully framed the Iraq case within the already securitized global war on terror.<sup>53</sup> Terrorist connections with the Saddam Hussein regime were one of the

50. *When the Wind Blows* (1986), *Thirteen Days* (2000), *Black Rain*, *Fail Safe* (1964) and (2000) versions, *Trinity and Beyond* (1995), *White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (2007), *Silent Storm* (2010), *Threads* (1984), *the Day After* (1983), *On the Beach* (1959), *Crimson Tide* (1995).

51. Masters and Alexander, "Prospecting for war," 443.

52. *Ibid.*, 441.

53. Gershkoff and Kushner, "Shaping public opinion."

main reference points of the Bush administration in the process of securitization. In 39 of 85 speeches, President Bush referred to the terrorist ties of the Saddam Hussein regime, and in 26 of his speeches, he talked about the possibility of Saddam Hussein providing WMD to terrorists. By establishing these links, the administration presented actions against Saddam Hussein's regime as part of their efforts to eliminate the possibility of another 9/11. The president expressed this as follows: "The war on terror is not confined strictly to the al-Qaeda that we're chasing. The war on terror extends beyond just a shadowy terrorist network. The war on terror involves Saddam Hussein."<sup>54</sup>

### *Relative success in the Afghanistan War*

The war in Afghanistan started on 7 October 2001. When the Bush administration turned its attention to Iraq, the war in Afghanistan was in its first phase. The US and its allies attained fast and notable success in this phase of the war. The coalition forces in Afghanistan ousted the Taliban regime from power in Kabul and most of Afghanistan in a matter of weeks. This quick and decisive success in Afghanistan created a positive environment in the US. It was seen as proof of the success of the Bush administration's intervention policy. This is more understandable when one looks from the opposite direction. For example, if the US had not gained success in Afghanistan, or body bags came home in increasing numbers,<sup>55</sup> would the US public still have supported the Iraq War? Obviously, this would have affected the decisions of the people. As a result, the relative success in the Afghanistan War affected the US public positively to support the Iraq War.

### **Analysis of the speech acts of president George W. Bush**

This section constitutes the *how* part of the study. It answers the question of which arguments were used by the Bush administration to securitize Iraq before the 2003 war. To this end, it presents and explains the results of the content analysis that analyzed 85 speeches by President Bush. In the analysis, examples of the president's speech acts are also given.

### *Saddam Hussein regime and WMD*

The issue of WMD was one of the main justifications for the Iraq War and the main reference point in Iraq's securitization process. The first sub-topic in this regard is "Iraq's possession of WMD." In 77 of the 85 speeches, President Bush stated that Iraq already had or was still producing WMD. Only eight of the

54. President Calls for Strengthened and Reformed Medicare Program, 29 January 2003.

55. James Der Derian, "In terrorem: Before and after 9/11," in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, eds., *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 264–277, 268.

85 speeches did not mention WMD. In this way, the President presented Iraq as a serious security threat to the US and the whole world.

Saddam Hussein has a history of mass murder. He possesses the weapons of mass murder.<sup>56</sup>

He has weapons of mass destruction—the world’s deadliest weapons—which pose a direct threat to the United States, our citizens and our friends and allies.<sup>57</sup>

Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction are controlled by a murderous tyrant who has already used chemical weapons to kill thousands of people.<sup>58</sup>

The second sub-topic is the Saddam Hussein regime’s previous use of WMD, particularly in Halabja in 1988 and during the Iran–Iraq War. Bush referred to these events in 40 of the 85 speeches. Thus, he presented Saddam Hussein as a leader who was determined to use these weapons:

They not only had weapons of mass destruction, they used weapons of mass destruction. They used weapons of mass destruction on people in other countries, they used weapons of mass destruction on their own people. That’s why I say Iraq is a threat, a real threat.<sup>59</sup>

The third sub-topic concerns Saddam’s previous non-compliance with the resolutions about WMD and his deceptive policies against UN inspections. The president used this reference point 55 times. This issue has two important implications for the securitization process. First, by presenting the previous non-compliances, President Bush implied that Saddam Hussein was a person who could not be trusted. Second, he implied the uselessness of these efforts, suggesting that something different had to be done; in other words, that extraordinary measures had to be taken.

For 11 years, he deceived and denied the world, and he’s a threat. He’s a threat.<sup>60</sup>

He has told the world he won’t have weapons of mass destruction; for 11 years he’s lied. Time and time and time again, he has lied. Time and time and time again, the United Nations has passed resolutions telling him, disarm. He’s totally ignored the resolutions.<sup>61</sup>

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56. President Bush’s “Moment of Truth for World on Iraq” Speech, 16 March 2003 (2).

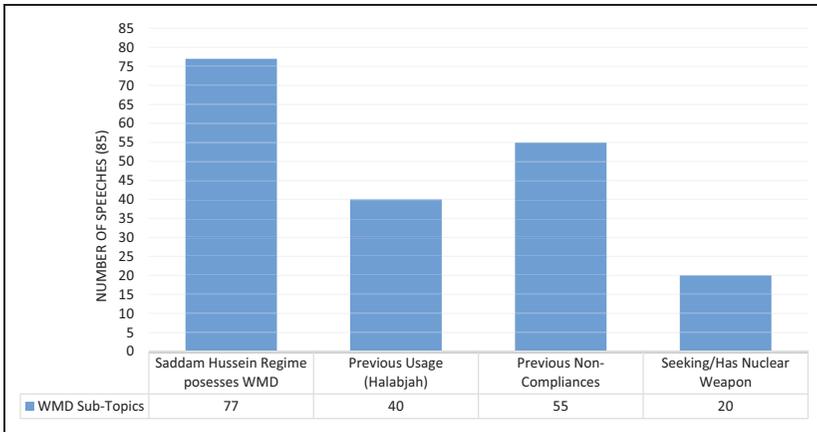
57. President Meets with Leading Economists, 21 January 2003.

58. Remarks by the President on Iraq in Cincinnati, Ohio, 7 October 2002.

59. President’s remarks to troops at Fort Hood, 3 January 2003.

60. George W. Bush’s remarks at “Indiana Welcome,” 31 October 2002 (2).

61. George W. Bush’s remarks at “North Carolina Welcome,” 4 October 2002.



**Figure 1.** Iraq and weapons of mass destruction index.

[T]he role of the inspectors is not to play “gotcha.” He’s better at playing “gotcha” obviously—for 12 years he’s played “gotcha.” The role of the inspectors is to watch Iraq disarm.<sup>62</sup>

The final sub-topic concerns Saddam Hussein’s nuclear ambitions. This reference point is especially important because by referring to these nuclear ambitions, the Bush administration presented Iraq as a threat to the macro-level referent objects as well: “The regime is seeking a nuclear bomb, and with fissile material, could build one within a year. Iraq has already used weapons of mass death against—against other countries and against her own citizens.”<sup>63</sup>

### *Terrorist connections of the Saddam Hussein regime*

As with the WMD issue, the alleged terrorist connections of the Saddam Hussein regime were one of the main reference points in Iraq’s securitization. First, President Bush directly linked Saddam Hussein’s regime to terrorism in 39 of the 85 speeches. People already had strong feelings concerning terrorism, especially after 9/11. These feelings were a mixture of anger and fear. By linking the Iraqi regime with terrorism, President Bush used these feelings to convince the audiences that Saddam Hussein was a threat.

This guy who has had connections with these shadowy terrorist networks . . . he’s the kind of fellow who would love nothing more than to hurt America and not leave any fingerprints by using a surrogate army on his behalf.<sup>64</sup>

62. President Calls for Strengthened and Reformed Medicare Program, 29 January 2003.

63. President Bush’s Discussion with Congressional Leaders in White House, 26 September 2002.

64. George W. Bush “South Dakota Welcome,” 31 October 2002 (3).

[A] true threat facing our country is that an al-Qaeda-type network trained and armed by Saddam [Hussein] could attack America and leave not one fingerprint. That is a threat. And we're going to deal with it.<sup>65</sup>

[I]t has sponsored and sheltered terrorists; it has developed weapons of mass death; it has used them against innocent men, women and children.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to linking Saddam Hussein's regime to terrorist networks, President Bush linked the Saddam Hussein regime directly to al-Qaeda in 15 of 85 speeches. Although Bush never stated that Saddam Hussein had direct connections to the 9/11 attacks, by linking him to al-Qaeda, he indirectly connected him to the 9/11 attacks. In this way, he exploited the feelings that emerged after the 9/11 attacks to securitize Iraq and convince the audience(s) to use force against Iraq.

We know that Iraq and the al-Qaeda terrorist network share a common enemy—the United States of America. We know that Iraq and al-Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade. Some al-Qaeda leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq. . . . We've learned that Iraq has trained al-Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases. And we know that after September the 11th, Saddam Hussein's regime gleefully celebrated the terrorist attacks on America.<sup>67</sup>

We also know that Iraq is harboring a terrorist network, headed by a senior al-Qaeda terrorist planner.<sup>68</sup>

The regime has long-standing and continuing ties to terrorist organizations. And there are al-Qaeda terrorists inside Iraq.<sup>69</sup>

The third issue is about the possibility that the Saddam Hussein regime would provide WMD to terrorists. In 26 of the 85 speeches, President Bush discussed this possibility. By talking about this possibility, President Bush merged two strong reference points: terrorism and WMD.

One of the greatest dangers we face is that weapons of mass destruction might be passed to terrorists who would not hesitate to use those weapons. Saddam Hussein has longstanding, direct and continuing ties to terrorist networks.<sup>70</sup>

65. President Outlines Priorities, 7 November 2002.

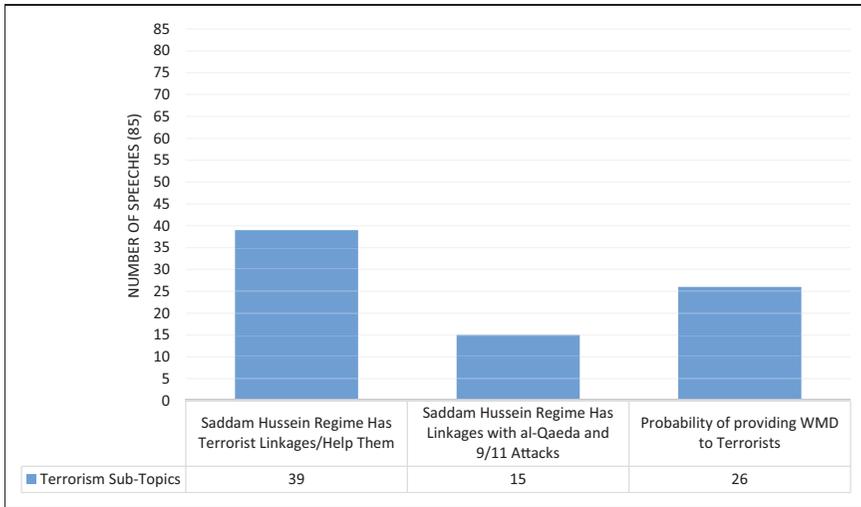
66. Remarks by President, after agreeing on Iraq Resolution with House Leadership, 2 October 2002.

67. Remarks by the President on Iraq in Cincinnati, Ohio, 7 October 2002.

68. Statement by the President after Powell's Speech on UN, 6 February 2003.

69. President Bush's Discussion with Congressional Leaders in White House, 26 September 2002.

70. President's radio address to the nation, 8 February 2003.



**Figure 2.** Saddam Hussein regime and terrorism index.

This same tyrant has close ties to terrorist organizations, and could supply them with the terrible means to strike this country—and America will not permit it.<sup>71</sup>

[W]e oppose a uniquely dangerous regime—a regime that has harbored terrorists and can supply terrorists with weapons of mass destruction.<sup>72</sup>

### *Analysis of other speech acts*

After analyzing these two main reference points, this section provides an analysis of other reference points. The first reference point is the human rights abuses and brutal actions of the Saddam Hussein regime. In 27 of the 85 speeches, President Bush referred to human rights abuses and the regime’s brutality. This issue was important for the process of the securitization of Iraq because President Bush presented the Saddam Hussein regime as a threat to the Iraqi people as well.

Iraqi refugees tell us how forced confessions are obtained—by torturing children while their parents are made to watch. International human rights groups have catalogued other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape. If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning.<sup>73</sup>

71. President Calls for Action on Judicial Nominee, 26 February 2003.

72. Remarks by the President on the United Nations Security Council Resolution, 8 November 2002.

73. State of the Union Speech 2003, 28 January 2003.

We also know the nature of Iraq's dictator. On his orders, opponents have been decapitated and their heads displayed outside their homes. Women have been systematically raped as a method of intimidation. Political prisoners are made to watch their own children being tortured. The dictator is a student of Stalin, using murder as a tool of terror and control within his own cabinet, within his own army, even within his own family. We will not leave the future of peace and the security of America in the hands of this cruel and dangerous man.<sup>74</sup>

The Saddam Hussein regime's hostility toward the United States and Americans is the second reference point. President Bush presented the regime as such in 55 of the 85 speeches. In this way, he presented the most important audience, the US public, as a referent object.

Saddam Hussein has the motive and the means and the recklessness and the hatred to threaten the American people.<sup>75</sup>

The Iraqi regime is a grave threat to the United States. The Iraqi regime is a threat to any American and threats to those who are friends of America.<sup>76</sup>

The third reference point highlights Saddam Hussein's status as a threat to regional and world peace. In 41 of the 85 speeches, President Bush directly presented the Saddam Hussein regime as a threat to the whole world and the region. By doing so, President Bush depicted the regime as a threat to macro-level referent objects.

It's a threat to the security of peace-loving people everywhere.<sup>77</sup>

The threat to America also threatens peace and security in the Middle East and far beyond.<sup>78</sup>

His brutal regime had reduced a country with a long and proud history to an international pariah that oppresses its citizens, started two wars of aggression against its neighbors, and still poses a grave threat to the security of its region and the world.<sup>79</sup>

States like these [Iraq], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.<sup>80</sup>

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74. Remarks by President, after agreeing on Iraq Resolution with House Leadership, 2 October 2002.

75. Statement by the President after Powell's Speech on UN, 6 February 2003.

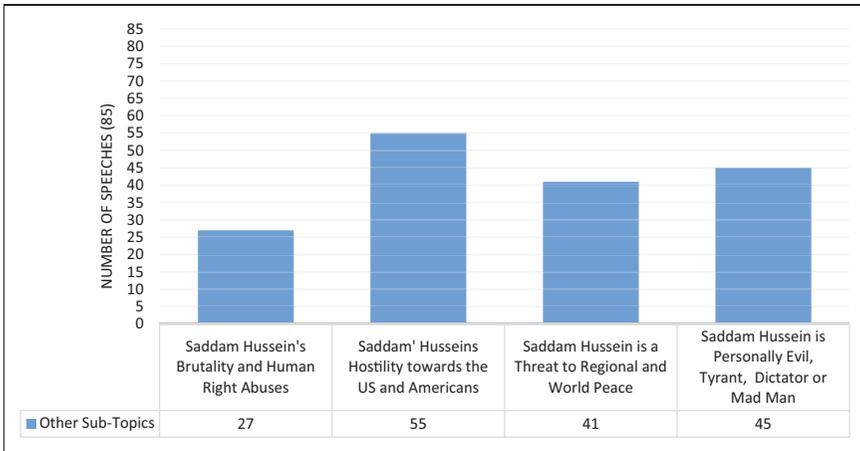
76. President's remarks to troops at Fort Hood, 3 January 2003.

77. Remarks by the President to the Meeting of the National Governors Association, 24 February 2003.

78. Remarks by the President on the United Nations Security Council Resolution, 8 November 2002.

79. Statement of the Atlantic Summit, Portugal, 16 March 2003 (1).

80. President George W. Bush's State of the Union Address 2002, 29 January 2002.



**Figure 3.** Other reference points of securitization.

The fourth and final reference point addresses Saddam Hussein’s personal features. In other words, it presents Saddam Hussein as an evil tyrant and as a madman. In 45 of the 85 speeches, Bush presented Saddam Hussein in this way. Hence, he portrayed the regime as a threat.

Iraq is ruled by perhaps the world’s most brutal dictator who has already committed genocide with chemical weapons, ordered the torture of children, and instituted the systematic rape of the wives and daughters of his political opponents.<sup>81</sup>

For decades he [Saddam Hussein] has been the cruel, cruel oppressor of the Iraq people.<sup>82</sup>

These figures help us understand which reference points are used more frequently in the securitization process. Despite the aforementioned studies, which focus only on terrorism (particularly 9/11 attacks), and as opposed to Gershkoff and Kushner’s argument that claims that WMD was not “a prominent frame in Bush’s rhetoric,”<sup>83</sup> the results indicate that WMD was the most frequently used reference point in the securitization process. Although the president referred to terrorist connections with the Saddam Hussein regime 39 times, he referred to Saddam Hussein’s links to al-Qaeda and 9/11 attacks only 15 times. In general, the results indicate that President Bush used WMD more than other reference points, although the others were also used in meaningful numbers.

81. Radio Address by the President to the Nation, 5 October 2002.  
 82. Statement of the Atlantic Summit, Portugal, 16 March 2003 (1).  
 83. Gershkoff and Kushner, “Shaping public opinion,” 535.

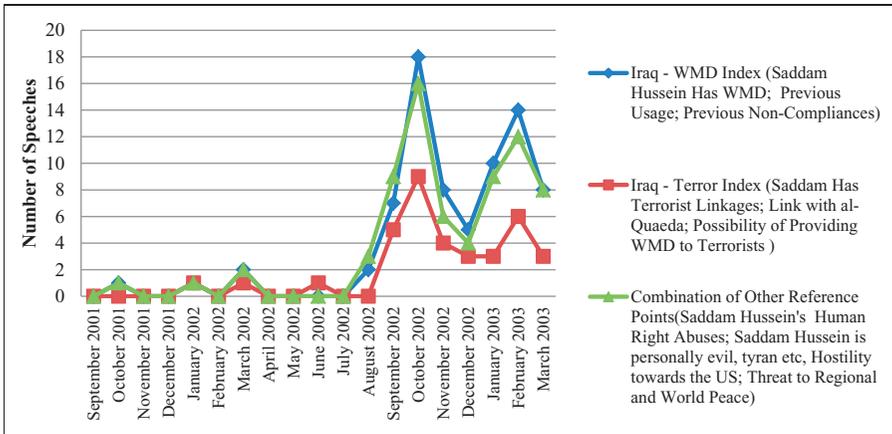


Figure 4. Timing of speech acts.

## Timing of the securitization process

This section addresses the timing of the securitization process of Iraq by referring to the results of the content analysis. Balzacq explains the importance of timing for a securitization process as follows:

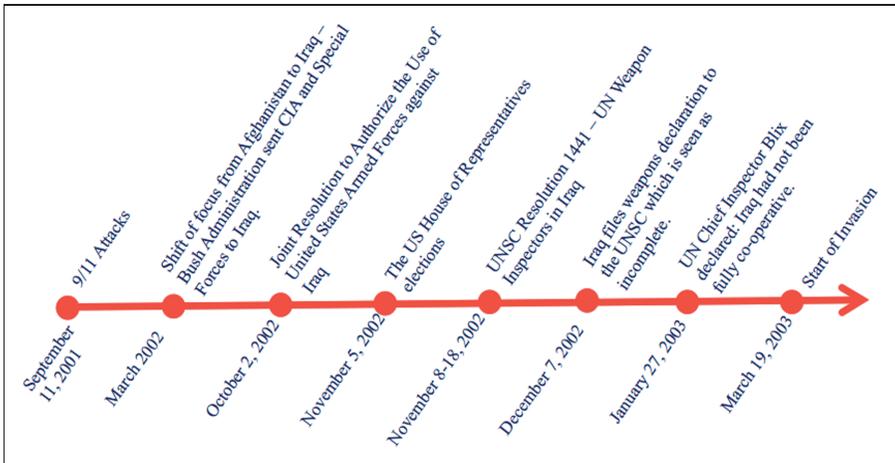
The success of securitization is contingent upon a perceptive environment. Therefore, the positive outcome of securitization, whether it be strong or weak, lies with the securitizing actor's choice of determining the appropriate times within which the recognition, including the integration of the 'imprinting' object—a threat—by the masses is facilitated.<sup>84</sup>

Immediately after the 9/11 attacks, the first selected target was Afghanistan. According to McGillivray, there was controversy within the Bush administration about taking action against Iraq immediately after the 9/11 attacks. According to him, the Bush administration tried to find direct links between Iraq and 9/11.<sup>85</sup> Finally, they decided to wage a war on the Taliban first because there were no direct links between Iraq and 9/11.

As the figures show, the securitization efforts peaked initially in September and October 2002. This first peak shows that the Bush administration turned its attention to Iraq one year after the 9/11 attacks and decided to make a strong start to the securitization process. Moreover, this peak indicates that the administration chose the first anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks to facilitate its intense

84. McGillivray, *Casus Belli*, 13, referring to Balzacq, "The three faces of securitization."

85. McGillivray, *Casus Belli*, 12–13; Ron Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004); Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006); Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004).



**Figure 5.** Course of major events.

emotional environment. Additionally, in October 2002, Congress voted to delegate power to the president to use force against Iraq. This issue also explains the peak in September and October 2002. Finally, a House of Representatives election was held on 5 November 2002. It can be argued that the securitization of Iraq was also used to stoke US public opinion to affect the voting results.

After November, the number of speech acts decreased until January 2003. This is because on 8 November 2002, the UNSC passed Resolution 1441. The Bush administration waited for some time for this resolution to be implemented. Then, in January 2003, the second peak emerged when the Bush administration increased its efforts to securitize Iraq again, even though the inspectors could not find any concrete evidence of WMD. This peak is also understandable given that it occurred immediately before the invasion.

## Conclusions

The conclusion examines the results of the securitization process. Two frameworks can be used to assess the success of a securitization. The first one involves convincing the audience(s), and the second one is about the politicized–securitized divide based on extraordinary measures. According to McGillivray, securitization is about convincing.<sup>86</sup> Buzan et al. also emphasize the importance of convincing the audience, as follows:

Even if the general logic of securitization is clear, we have to be precise about its threshold. A discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object does not by itself create securitization—this is a *securitizing*

86. McGillivray, *Casus Belli*, 4.

*move* [source emphasis], but the issue is securitized only if and when the audience accepts it as such.<sup>87</sup>

In this regard, the best way to assess the success of securitization is to evaluate the audiences' support. O'Reilly explains this through his use of the concept of "critical mass." According to him, "securitization has been successful, i.e., critical mass has been achieved, when the securitizing actor has convinced *enough of the right people* [emphasis source] that someone or something constitutes a legitimate security threat."<sup>88</sup> The first and most prominent audience in the securitization process was the US public, which provided moral support for securitization. The securitizing actor simply had to convince the majority of this audience to be seen as successful.<sup>89</sup> Table 2 presents the poll results conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* on 6–7 February 2003. As the poll results indicate, more than three-quarters of the US public supported military action against Iraq.

The second audience that provided moral support for the Iraq War was the international community. The US was unable to obtain approval from the UNSC. Moreover, many influential countries opposed the military operation, including many longstanding NATO allies. However, many countries supported the US in its military action against Iraq.<sup>90</sup> These included influential countries such as the UK. Ultimately, the US formed the Coalition of the Willing to fight against Iraq. Considering this situation, this study asserts that the success of securitization can be regarded as debatable only according to this variable.

The final audience was the US Congress. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives approved the delegation of power to the president to use force against Iraq.<sup>91</sup> The resolution was passed in the Senate by a vote of 77 to 23, and in the House by 296 to 133.

The second framework to assess the success of securitization focuses on the divide between exceptional and normal policies. Buzan et al. explain this difference in their 1998 work as follows:

[S]ecuritization on the international level . . . means to present an issue as urgent and existential, as so important that it should not be exposed to the normal haggling of politics but should be dealt with decisively by top leaders prior to other issues.<sup>92</sup>

87. Buzan et al., *Security*, 25.

88. O'Reilly, "Primetime patriotism," 67.

89. Ibid.

90. Coalition Members, White House Document, 27 March 2003, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/03/print/20030327-10.html> (accessed 2 March 2013).

91. Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq, 2 October 2002, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/10/print/20021002-2.html> (accessed 26 September 2012).

92. Buzan et al., *Security*, 29.

**Table 2.** *Los Angeles Times* poll results, 6/7 February 2003.<sup>94</sup>

**Question:** Do you support or oppose the Bush administration's decision to take military action against Iraq at this time? If support/ oppose, do you support/oppose the decision strongly, or do you support/oppose it somewhat?

	ALL	DEM	IND	REP	LIB	MOD	CON	MEN	WOM
Approve (net)	77	70	72	95	67	74	84	82	71
Approve strongly	58	49	49	84	46	52	74	62	55
Approve somewhat	19	21	23	11	22	22	10	20	17
Oppose (net)	21	27	27	4	32	23	14	15	27
Oppose somewhat	6	8	11	2	7	8	4	4	7
Oppose strongly	15	19	17	2	24	15	10	11	19
Do not know	2	3	1	1	1	3	2	3	2

ALL: all of the participants; DEM: Democrat; IND: Independent; REP: Republican; LIB: Liberal; MOD: Moderate; CON: Conservative; WOM: women.

If an issue is successfully securitized, extraordinary measures become legitimate. Therefore, one can analyze the success of a securitization process by determining whether the securitization process legitimized extraordinary measures.

In the case of Iraq, the securitizing actor opted not to “go through the regular channels.”<sup>93</sup> The US and its allies used force, and they did so even without the explicit approval of the UNSC. Under normal politics, the US government would have to urge the UNSC to authorize a resolution allowing the use of force. However, the US preferred to intervene militarily without a UNSC resolution. Thus, along with other acts, this move can be regarded as a break from the rules, which indicates the success of securitization.

In conclusion, the Iraq issue was securitized rather than handled within the normal boundaries of politics, and it provides a picture of a successful securitization at a particular juncture. Whether breaking free of the rules that the US built so meticulously after World War II within legal frameworks was a positive move in the long run is another story. Stating that the “securitization of Iraq was a successful securitization” does not mean that the war was just and produced positive results. Similarly, this study does not consider whether arguments from the Bush administration were accurate or just. What is important for understanding a securitization process is not what is true or just, but what is presented and believed and whether it worked to convince the audiences. This study analyzed the securitization process of Iraq: how did the Bush administration persuade the audiences to wage a war? Plausibly, this analysis can be seen as proof that securitization arguments are

93. McGillivray, *Casus Belli*, 11.

94. *Los Angeles Times* Poll Study 481 (6–7 February 2003), [http://www.latimesinteractive.com/pdfarchive/stat\\_sheets/la-timespoll481ss.pdf](http://www.latimesinteractive.com/pdfarchive/stat_sheets/la-timespoll481ss.pdf) (accessed 15 March 2013).

not always based on truth or just motives, especially given that there were no WMD in Iraq and the war caused approximately one million Iraqi deaths. The war also paved the way for the emergence of ISIS, which offers an avenue for future research.

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