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Going Solo: A Study into the Framing and Salience of International Terrorism

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This research is a product of the graduate program in Political Science at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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Going Solo: A Study into the Framing and Salience of International Terrorism

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BY

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THESIS

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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE
Abstract

In order to explore presidential rhetoric, media coverage and its contribution to public opinion, this thesis will examine these facets in the matters of international terrorism. More specifically, terrorism in India, Syria, and Afghanistan will be assessed and compared during two time periods: 2003-2004, and 2011-2012. This thesis will predominately attempt to evaluate the relationship between the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and actual coverage. By searching for key words in presidential speeches from President Obama and President Bush, evaluating the news coverage of terrorist activity in all three countries, this thesis will attempt to show the impact of presidential speeches and media coverage on public opinion. I hypothesize that in the case of India and Syria, presidential speeches and the media will cover the topic of Syria’s terrorism more than India’s. I also expect to find that in the case of India and Afghanistan, the media and president will cover Afghanistan’s terrorism more than India’s. The results suggested that the relationship between the GTI, media coverage, and presidential mentions is inconclusive. Findings also indicated that presidential rhetoric is still apparent in President Obama and Bush’s speeches, and that terrorism has been mentioned less over time.
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Table 1: Comparison of presidential mentions of Afghanistan, Syria, and India in 2003 and in 2011
Introduction

Terrorism within the last 15 years has dramatically shaped foreign and domestic security policies for the United States government. More specifically, the efficiency and accuracy of coverage for international terrorist activity has been questioned continuously from the academic community. Scholars have determined that fear can be a substantial factor for changing public opinion in regards to terrorism (Finserras and Listhaug 2013; Lecount and Washum 2009; Gadarian 2010). For example, in 2008 India had a series of terrorist attacks occur in Mumbai. In the same year, a series of bombings in Baghdad, Iraq had also occurred as well. While there were only two documented instances of Former President George W. Bush commenting on the situation in 2008, the Baghdad bombings in Iraq had a total of eight mentions from President Bush within the same year. This raises a series of questions regarding the accuracy in coverage of terrorism, and how in turn that impacts public opinion.

Among other things, US public opinion after the attacks on 9/11 has been focused on a sense of fear and patriotism surrounding the American people. While the attacks themselves resulted in remorse and anger from the public, President Bush asserted that this act of terrorism would not go unpunished. His declared “War on Terror” was known as the beginning of the controversial counterterrorism pursuits of the United States in foreign countries. The war on terror, as Bush proclaimed, does not stop with the terrorists who attacked America on 9/11, but ends only when "every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated" (Bush 2001). More recently, President Barack Obama still combats the same war on terror, primarily focusing on Iraq and Syria and the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). However, the issue of why
the United States tends to focus counterterrorism efforts in some areas rather than others is still a question that deserves further research.

The Institute for Economics and Peace releases an annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI), which ranks states by how heavily they were impacted by terrorism on an annual basis. The GTI is based on data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which was created by the University of Maryland. GTI defines terrorism as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation." Moreover, in order for an action to be considered a terrorist act in the GTD, the incident must be international, entail some level of violence or threat of violence, and must be carried out by subnational actors. When the GTI was released in 2003, out of 162 countries, India was ranked as the most terrorized state in the world. In addition, not only has terrorism increased over time in India, but also the attacks have tripled in recent years. More specifically in the past decade, there has been a significant increase in terrorist attacks in the region ranging from under 200 attacks in 2007 to roughly 700 attacks in 2013. In the same study, Afghanistan was ranked fourth on the list of most terrorized nations. Heavy U.S. interest in Afghanistan has been apparent since 2001. The largest surge of terrorist attacks occurred from 2011-2012, where it increased from 600 to 1,500 attacks. In regards to Syria, it was ranked 119 in 2003 according to the GTI report and had roughly 10 terrorist attacks. In the following years, Syria continued to move down on the list, eventually reaching the sixth most impacted state by terrorism in 2011. During that year alone, Syria had well over 180 terrorist attacks within the country. This thesis attempts to evaluate if media
coverage and presidential speeches reflect these rankings through observing their impact on public opinion.

Ultimately, the media has an influential role in this process, by not only publicizing US endeavors overseas, but contributing in providing the public with news from abroad, which potentially may spark specific feelings and conversation on the terrorism issue. The president contributes to the conversation as well. By providing speeches to the nation, the president continues to publicize issues that reflect U.S. interests. Thus, the impact of the president on public opinion may also be argued to have a definitive role in the foreign policy area (Brinson and Stohl 2012; Stroud and Sparrow 2011; Nabor 2009); Therefore, with President Bush’s approval rating peaking at 90 percent in 2002, it is imperative to study if his stances on issues affected public opinion on India as opposed to Syria and Afghanistan. Moreover, as Bush stepped down and Obama took office, it became even more essential to compare and contrast what topic the presidents spoke on more frequently in relation to terrorism.

In addition, discussing whether the president’s dramatically high approval ratings had influenced public opinion could attempt to show an impact of presidential influence during national terrorism emergencies (Bloch-Elkon 2011; McCrisken 2012; Hindman 2004). Also, considering how both presidents’ foreign policy agendas were and are still dominated by counterterrorism, observing public opinion on the issue may be essential. News coverage specifically could provide additional insight into how the view of terrorism was shaped by presidential speeches and media outlets. Some research exists that examines the relationship between presidential speeches, media coverage, and public opinion. Stroud and Sparrow (2011) specifically assessed the way Iraq and terrorism
were addressed in media polls. Most importantly, Stroud and Sparrow (2011) implement a content analysis of over 4,000 polling questions with reference to public opinion and the media. Not only did Stroud and Sparrow find a significant correlation between media reporting of public opinion and the evaluation of public opinion through polls, but they concluded by showing that influential presidential speeches and the media’s most popular news have a strong effect on public opinion assessment.

Instead of using Stroud and Sparrow’s 2001-2002 timeframe, this thesis utilizes a different approach based on this model. By comparing a time in which India and Syria were impacted by terrorism at significantly different levels to when they were considerably closer in measures of effect, I will observe the influence of media coverage and presidential influence on the U.S counterterrorism policies. More specifically, the dates that were used in the search were January 1, 2003- January 31, 2004 and January 1, 2011- January 31, 2012. These dates were chosen in order to include two State of the Union addresses to Congress, and to include two different presidents.

From this research, one may ask: To what extent do presidents and the media influence US public opinion? I will attempt to explore how presidents contribute to public opinion, as well as to evaluate the extent at which the media addresses terrorism issues in other states. Through content analysis, I will strive to elaborate further on Stroud and Sparrow’s research in attempts to analyze the pattern between the presidents, the media and public opinion. In order to extend the study, the case of terrorism in India, Syria, and Afghanistan will be evaluated and compared during two time periods: 2003-2004, and 2011-2012. By searching for key words in presidential speeches from President Obama and President Bush, and evaluating the news coverage of terrorist activity in all
three countries, I will attempt to show the impact of presidential speeches and media coverage on public opinion. Furthermore, I hypothesize that in the case of India and Syria, presidential speeches and the media will cover the topic of Syria’s terrorism more than India’s. I also expect to find that in the case of India and Afghanistan, the media and president will cover Afghanistan’s terrorism more than India’s. Finally, from a holistic perspective, I predict that presidents, their speeches, and media coverage influence public opinion on terrorism.

The first chapter of this thesis reviews previous research on American public opinion and terrorism. Scholarly literature surrounding public opinion and 9/11 attempts to evaluate the impact of terrorism on individuals, their votes, and the president’s decisions predominately through identity constructions. This chapter discusses the literature towards studies that assess the manipulation tactics in presidential speeches and media. Additionally, this chapter also discusses the central model that that will be used in the chapters that follow, and thus includes a discussion of Stroud and Sparrow’s (2001) research approach.

The second chapter provides the first substantive examination of this issue by examining how the president plays a role in framing the issue of terrorism and its effect on public opinion. By analyzing presidential speeches in 2003 with Bush, and 2011 with Obama, this thesis will explore if any trends can be identified between presidential speeches and public opinion. The data source used to explore presidential speeches will be the American Presidency Project.

The third chapter will discuss the media’s effect on public opinion. In reference to media coverage, I will follow Stroud and Sparrow’s framework by conducting a Lexis
Nexis search of the same key terms stated previously on page 9. However, instead of searching a variety of newspapers that Stroud and Sparrow used, this chapter will focus on three of the US’s most popular news agencies as determined by the Alliance for Audited Media. Over time, the reports indicate that the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* have consistently been in the top five lists of the most circulated newspapers. Through use of the three sources chosen, this chapter will attempt to locate and analyze the media coverage on US involvement on Syria, Afghanistan, and India’s terrorism.

The fourth chapter will examine how presidents attempt to manipulate their messages related to terrorist threats. By comparing Obama and Bush, I will observe the rhetoric both presidents use in regards to Islam. With the reemergence of ISIL, the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, and the Boston Marathon Bombing, this chapter will focus on how the president addresses Islam, and how also how the public views Islam. By using content analysis through both the American Presidency Project and Lexis Nexis, I will observe the differences between the Bush and Obama administration attitudes on Islam during two single year time periods of 2003 and 2011.

The final chapter discusses any trends and observations found from the following chapters. Implications on the influence of the presidents and media as factors for the future of public opinion on terrorism will be addressed. While the war on terrorism has undeniably introduced a wave of counterterrorism policies, it is important to note whether the United States is addressing the most crucial acts of terrorism by international standards.
Chapter I: Literature Review

Past research on presidential influence stems from a discussion of foreign policy. As a president has the capability to frame messages and create rhetoric for any situation of importance, past research focuses on studying these narratives (Bennet, 1975; Wander 1984). More specifically, rhetoric involves the influences of words and drive policy decisions as a result of them (Clarke, 1995). In order to further understand how foreign policy rhetoric works for U.S Presidents or in politics overall, one must understand the relationship between rhetoric and realism. Of the most popular students of such practices is Machiavelli in his book *The Prince* (1513). Ultimately, the book advises the princes of Italy in how to effectively rule a nation, as laid out through tenets which advise the following: the leader should never reveal his true self, must be ready to go against charity, religion, and humanity if needed, mask his intentions, attempt not to be hated, should attempt to be of great stature, and obtain consistency at all costs. By attempting to frame the image of the leader, Machiavelli discusses how politicians must be aware of what they say and how they act towards the public while ultimately keeping their own selfish interests to themselves. One may contend that these practices can be seen today through our presidents as well and their rhetoric in foreign policy. Thus, Machiavelli is in a sense defining rhetoric.

As a result, past literature on foreign policy rhetoric has been linked to realism overall in order to support this claim (Kraig, 2002; Lu, 2011; Guerlain, 2014; Tjalve and Williams, 2015;) For instance, Lu’s (2011) examination of the U.S-China relationship indicates that rhetoric used is framed predominately by the interests of each country, and
that American foreign policy history is based from realism (Lu, 2011; Beer and Hariman, 1996;). Moreover, Jetschke and Ruland (2009) observe the Association for South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) community and how states will publicly act in cooperation only if it is in the states own best interest. Ultimately, asking why their rhetoric of cooperation and unity does not produce successful implementation. In the end, Jetschke and Ruland conclude that the cooperative measures in ASEAN’s structure are based from self-interest and through incentives.

Moreover, in regards to the president’s relationship to rhetoric and realism, there has been much scholarly debate. More specifically, identifying themes in foreign policy among various presidents have since then been a case of study when discussing rhetoric in the academic community. Kraig (2002) examines the Carter administration’s failure of rhetoric overall. By attempting to shift from power tradition to human rights policy, Carter aimed at showing the American people that morality should trump power as a reason for American decision making on international issues. Due to what Kraig describes as a pressure from the American people, Carter continued to follow the traditional methods for foreign policy. Ultimately, his return to realism ultimately indicated a relationship between realism and rhetoric exists.

Guerlain (2014) furthers the relationship between realism and rhetoric among presidents by that rhetoric is handled by electoral means through a smart power approach. In other words, a president will attempt to exhaust all resources through cooperation, diplomacy, and alliances instead of relying solely on their hegemonic status. Research also suggests that Obama’s presidency has defined foreign policy through primacy, diplomacy euro centrism, cooperation, and role expansion (Stepak and Whitlark, 2012).
More specifically, the “Obama Doctrine,” as it has come to be known, stresses that as the world advances through technological and geopolitical shifts, America needs to reevaluate and adjust to its changing environment and its role as a global leader. Cole (1996) examines President George H. W. Bush’s foreign policy rhetoric and how he defined it during his administration after the Cold War. Ultimately, Cole determined that the main theme surrounded by the Bush administration was that of a war metaphor and that the ones who frame the foreign policy rhetoric must match their intentions with that of their audiences expectations.

Edwards and Valenzano (2007) also examine foreign policy rhetoric after the Cold War, but focus on the Clinton administration instead. By analyzing the “new partnership” narrative during Clinton’s visit to Africa in 1998, Edwards and Valenzano determined that this rhetoric was used as the foundation for his foreign policy platform. More specifically, they identify three key themes in Clinton’s framework. These include democracy promotion abroad, America’s obligation as a global trailblazer, as well as reconstituting the threat environment. Ultimately, Edwards and Valenzano not only determined that Clinton’s rhetoric influenced future presidents in how they understand and work within a new foreign policy environment through his new partnership approach. Clarke (1995) echoes this by showing that the situation in Bosnia brought in rhetoric in regards to America as a leader as well. As a result, the United States was placed in the middle of Bosnian negotiations, and made it clear that the world would not tolerate ethnic cleansing. However, as foreign policy rhetoric has continued to be an influence among past U.S presidents, the idea of media framing and its potential impact on the public, has also become an area of much analysis.
Scholarly literature surrounding public opinion and 9/11 attempts to evaluate the impact of terrorism on individuals, their votes, and the president’s decisions predominately through identity constructions and framing. Framing itself has become a prevalent part in terrorism research. Framing is popularly defined as a theory in which the media tends to focus their attention on specific events and places within a certain subject of study (Christie 2006). Christie (2006) examines the framing rationale that was used for the Iraq War by observing both high and low time periods of public support for the war. When the content analysis was conducted on the White House Press Briefings, The Washington Post, The New York Times, and ABC News, Christie attempted to examine the main rationale for going to war with Iraq in mass media and policy agendas. The results indicated a relationship between the White House and media agendas on the main issues of war, which included topics of terrorism, coalitions in order to prosecute the war, as well as weapons of mass destruction, and were only found in periods of high public support. More importantly Christie uses these findings to conclude that public opinion is significant in influencing media and policy content.

The general consensus on media framing among the academic community is that it is both influential and significant in the war on terror. Edy and Meirick (2007) also explore framing in the media in order to examine the impact of natural occurring media frames on public support of policy implementation. They use a content analysis of network news at night in October, of 2001. Moreover, after surveying 300 Tennessee residents, Edy and Meirick found that respondents were influenced in their support of the war of Afghanistan as a result of September 11th, 2001 attacks which resulted from coming media frames in order to understand and formulate their opinions. Ultimately,
they concluded that the attacks on 9/11 were framed in ways of war and of crime. Moreover, Liberman (2014) examines the importance of framing and how it has undeniably impacted public opinion, and more importantly, the war on terror. From taking just the “war on terror” to actually being considered “Americans war on terrorism” or the post 9/11 world. Considering that it has been proven difficult to provide another frame for the war on terror, calling the situation, as “war on terror” has been inevitable and now the worldviews the war as a US policy oriented with a general set of assumptions of the war on terror. Papacharissi and Oliveira (2008) further expand the study on media framing by comparing the United States and the United Kingdom on media coverage of terrorism by doing a content analysis on various newspapers in both countries and network maps. Ultimately, they found that the United States consistently reported news with a military frame of reference and a hard news method of approach, whereas in the United Kingdom it followed a diplomatic and thematic perspective.

Additionally, terrorism is also a major component in evaluating the effects of public opinion on the decision making process. Hindman (2004) uses methodology from Ball-Rokeach and Defleur’s (1976) media system dependency theory in comparison to the rally around the flag effect in order to observe media dependency. At the social level, this model asserts that the public will become heavily dependent on the media for information, resulting primarily from social change and conflict. Ball-Rokeach and Defleur introduce an individual media dependency concept and discuss what influences citizens to turn to the media to include entertainment, surveillance, and integration, as well as personal and social influences. Ultimately, this theory assumes that system level characteristics are more important than individual level ones in the sense of dependency
because of the relationship between the media and other social systems. Hindman uses this theory to analyze public opinion in regards to the performance of the news and the president prior to 9/11. Thus, he concludes that party differences have a large impact on presidential approval after the terrorist attacks in 2001. Thus, while alternative methods in public opinion and terrorism research are diverse in structure, it is clear that this topic is continuing to be discussed after the attacks on September 11th. This not only shows that public opinion and issue salience may be changing in post 9/11 world, but it also indicates that trends in media framing and possibly word construction are apparent.

Furthermore, aside from media framing, manipulation is also a word that is associated with the coverage of terrorism, usually attempting to insinuate fear among the community through the power of word. More specifically, in times of national crisis, Naber (2009) attempted to discover a link between overall international crises through evaluating the attacks on 9/11 and the development of identity construction through foreign policy. Through Bush's attempt to construct national unity by including words involving religious quotations and specifically the use of "freedom," "good," "evil," and the "mother of all threats" in his presidential speeches, Naber asserts that hegemonic discourses functions as a link between the construction of crises and identity. By insinuating fear into the citizens in a moment of crisis, existing identities tend to vanish and a new "political community" that has changed their initial feelings towards terrorism (Naber 2009). Brinson and Stohl (2012) also observe fear through public opinion. In her research on media framing in regards to terrorism, Brinson studies the 2005 London bombings. By exposing American participants to a domestic homegrown frame and an
international frame, Brinson concludes that the domestic homegrown frame insinuates more fear than the international one (Brinson and Stohl 2012).

In contrast, there are some scholars who do not find fear to be a determining factor in public opinion. De Castella and McGarty (2009) elaborate on the notion of fear and anger in regards to terrorism by evaluating President Bush and former Prime Minister Tony Blair’s various speeches from 2001-2003. While they found that fear content was prevalent in the majority of speeches, in regards to political rhetoric it was not correlated to changes in public fear of terrorism. However, De Castella and McGarty did conclude that emotional content can be linked to declining presidential support, as it will be used specifically when public approval of the president is low. Moreover, LeCount and Wasburn (2009) also evaluate the notion of external threats affect presidential public opinion by observing broadcast news media and government issued terrorist threat warnings. They conclude that there is indeed a rally around the flag effect, even if the terrorist threat warnings after 9/11 are minimal.

Joslyn and Haider-Markel (2007) analyze surveys in order to observe whether concern about terrorism and view of the public concern of terrorism in turn affect attitudes towards policies regarding counterterrorism. They concluded that a perception of the public concern is a significant factor that is the most consistent predictor of policy attitudes towards terrorism. More importantly, personal concern largely impacts the prediction of policy positions if the threat is specific and if the policy targets the government and that people rely heavily on their perceptions of public attitudes of terrorist threats to form policy preferences. Merolla and Zechmeister (2013) further the notion of public perception by evaluating leaders under terrorist threats. By using
President Obama and the evaluations of his presidency, they attempt to discover if the threats vary by incumbency and partisanship. Ultimately, Merolla and Zechmeister conclude that Obama’s image was damaged by his party identification, but he gained substantially by his incumbent status. In other words, the survey data revealed that the harmful effects of terrorism on Obama were from surveyors who view Republicans as “owning” the issue of terrorism. Thus, they concluded that threats, incumbency status, and political partisanship affect the evaluations of political leaders. The impact of these factors helps lead way into understanding why presidents act and speak about specifically issues the way that they do. While constantly under supervision and scrutiny by the public eye, the president must pick and choose wisely what issues he chooses to deal with, and how he will go about addressing it.

To further this notion of presidential impact, Mack, DeRouen and Lanoue (2013) evaluate the role of foreign policy votes on presidential support in Congress and suggest that presidents are more likely to take positions if the public has issue salience and the vote is global. As a result, Congress may be more likely to vote in favor of the president on international support. Not only is this imperative in understanding the role Congress plays in matters of foreign policy, but it also demonstrates the president’s need to make certain issues more important than others. Mack, DeRouen and Lanoue further conclude that presidents are less likely to take positions if they are running for reelection. This finding is essential in potentially answering why Bush implemented such a progressive and assertive policy towards terrorism and why Obama continues to follow suit.

Media coverage of terrorism has long been a tool of manipulation. Edwards and Swenson (1997) examined the rally following Clinton’s declaration to attack Iraq
Intelligence Headquarters. They determined that the administration has a tool for social control when the media is more likely to positively report on a government. Nossek’s (2008) research on terrorist attacks in the media also suggests substantial impact from news agencies. More specifically, Nossek’s News Media-Media event model shows how terrorist attacks can be conceptualized as a media event. Nossek takes on the assumption that journalists abandon their professional rituals of news coverage when dealing with popular terrorist attacks. Moreover, not only do journalists forget to question the government’s actions and instead tend to lean towards a more patriotic role by attempting to showcase US dominance and the strong partnerships that will provide a solid response against the terrorist threat.

Additionally, Nacos and Bloch-Elkon’s (2011) argue that the relationship between terrorist strategies and its reliance on the media to publicize the attacks is an undeniable facet. In other words, President George W. Bush was essentially selling fear to the American public, with the media softening the issues and questionable strategies of the Bush administration that should have been covered. In regards to his presidency, Rojecki (2008) also examines the Bush Administration but focuses on their foreign policy during the war on terror. He looks at how they built public support for their foreign policy, specifically ones outlined in the National Security Strategy. Through the use of various appeals, as well as through analyzing commentary from The Washington Post and The New York Times, Rojecki found that not only did the medias elite show their unilateral support for the policies that were enacted and more importantly that the elite opinion may have added to the sense of a misperception among Americans.
Wilkinson (1997) then assesses the overall relationship between terrorism and the media and ultimately determines that the media needs to do a variety of things to effectively deter terrorism. By accurately reporting the news, exercising transparency, and presenting useable data, media censorship, and knowing how the public should react in cases of national emergencies. The most important note Wilkinson stresses is that the same media that is easily manipulated by terrorists can also be equally used to end terrorism if the media can act responsibly and respectfully. This can ultimately be solved by a practice of what Wilkinson determines as voluntary self-restraint in order to avoid influence. Moreover, Gadarian (2010) supports the notion that media have an undeniable impact on public opinion by observing the media’s emphasis on imagery and frightening information. Gadarian not only showed that the public’s support of policies implemented by president had increased with the factors of imagery and threats, but uses the National Election Studies to demonstrate that individuals tend to change their perspectives on foreign policy when the news content is psychologically influential. By showing that individuals form different opinions in threatening news stories that induces fear in their content, Gadarian indicates that the influence of the media is more significant than it seems. In the end, this set of literature shows an undeniable influence from media agencies across the board from the academic community. However, the question now is how this media impact affects the way citizens feel about other countries in regards to terrorism, and how it affects what people know about international terrorism.

Finserras and Listhaug (2013) further question this issue by asking if terrorist attacks have an impact on public opinion even if the terrorist attacks occur from a distance. By observing the Western European countries’ fear of terrorism from the 2008
terror attacks in Mumbai, India, Finseeras and Listhaug find that although there is an increased fear of terrorism in Western Europe, there was no significant effect for changing liberal immigration policies or illiberal interrogation techniques. Ultimately, they conclude that terror attacks must have a significant influence on the fear of terrorism before citizens change their policy preferences. Lewis (2004) also looks at perception from an international standpoint. By examining the changes in public opinion in Great Britain during the war in Iraq through television coverage, he determined that opinions that supported the war became more prevalent as encouraged by the television news agencies. By observing BBC, Channel 4, Sky, and Al Jazeera, he concludes that public support for military action has in some part been shaped by the way the media has framed the issues through biased coverage and assumptions. In addition, Page, Rabinovich and Tully (2008) indicate that individual feelings are affected by formal education. More specifically, high formal education on average makes people slightly cool but close to neutral towards India because those who have more knowledge on global events will on balance produce warmer feelings.

Additionally, issue salience is also a prominent topic of interest in the terrorism field of research as well. Opperman and Spencer (2013) evaluate the methods behind issue salience and metaphor analysis in its relation to foreign policy. They explain that while salience observes the priming of issues, metaphors assist in framing the issues in foreign policy. Opperman and Spencer’s findings attempts to explain which issues individuals will deem important, while also showing how they frame these issues. Moreover, saliency is specifically observed through the implementation of policy issues. Kiousis et. al (2013) specifically discusses the agenda setting theory in an attempt to
examine the relationship between terrorism as a meta-issue, media content and its effect on issue salience. By observing various news stories covered from Fox and CNN as well as Bush’s communication methods in three year time span during the aftermath of 9/11, they find that the switch of issue salience from one policy agenda to the next is statistically significant.

Most important to this thesis, Stroud and Sparrow (2011) implement a content analysis of over 4,000 polling questions with reference to public opinion and the media. They specifically observed over 20 agencies including Fox News, The New York Times, NBC, ABC News, CNN, and USA TODAY. They found that the media public opinion on a more holistic note, than terrorism in Iraq specifically. Moreover, public opinion polls specifically asked fewer questions in regards to terrorism and Iraq during the follow up to congress implementing the use of force in Iraq. More importantly, both the polls and the media covered public opinion on terrorism less and less as the weeks went by after the attacks on September 11 and media specifically has a significant impact on what polling questions are being asked. Furthermore, not only did Stroud and Sparrow find a significant correlation between media reporting of public opinion and the evaluation of public opinion through polls, but they also concluded that presidents’ most influential speeches and the media’s most popular news have a strong effect on public opinion assessment.

Overall, previous literature has shown that a major gap in academia is a result of the lack of discussion on how the president responds and publicizes issues of terrorism. More importantly, there is a lack of literature on how foreign policy rhetoric affects the president’s stance in public statements on terrorism, and whether presidential rhetoric is a
result of realist tendencies. While previous literature does account for foreign policy rhetoric and realism by presidents, there is simply not enough discussion on how the presidents frame their speeches in reference to terrorism. This thesis will attempt to narrow the gap on the absence of literature by providing new research on presidential and media influence on public opinion. Additionally, it will attempt to provide insight into the foreign policy rhetoric used by U.S presidents through observing State of the Union speeches.
Chapter II: Weapons of Mass Distraction

As stated previously in the introduction, the main focus of this study is to observe American national print media coverage of presidential references to terrorism in India, Syria, and Afghanistan. Previous literature finds that there is a sense of manipulation by both the presidents and the media but fails to provide much discussion into the foreign policy rhetoric used by presidents in regards to terrorism. In order to observe these trends, the methods of this chapter will follow the content analysis approach outlined in Stroud and Sparrows (2011) research. However, instead of using their 2001-2002 timeframe, I attempt to utilize a cross comparison technique. By comparing a time in which India, Afghanistan and Syria were impacted by terrorism at significantly different levels in 2003, to when they were considerably closer in measures of effect in 2011, I will observe the influence of media coverage and presidential influence on the U.S counterterrorism policies.

Additionally, during this time, the Institute of Economics and Peace released their annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and their complimentary GTI report. As stated previously, the GTI indicates that in 2003, India was the most terrorized nation in the world. Both Afghanistan and Syria were not as critically listed as detrimental during this time. Thus, this study examines if the media coverage by national news agencies, and discussions by the president reflect these rankings. Moreover, this chapter specifically examines presidents and their efforts to cover international terrorism in their presidential speeches, conferences, addresses, orders and proclamations. Presidential mentions of terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria will attempt to observe foreign policy rhetoric of
both President Bush and President Obama. Thus, it will be just as worthy to observe if
certain positive or negative words are used throughout their speeches.

Methods

As stated previously, by searching through presidential speeches, I am conducting
a study on terrorism and public opinion by imploring Stroud and Sparrow’s content
analysis framework. After choosing the terms “India,” and “Terrorism,” “Syria,” “United
States,” “Terror,” “Attack,” and “Afghanistan” as points of focus, I will attempt to locate
the true impact of Bush and Obama’s speeches on public opinion. By using the American
Presidency project, I will search and locate all public mentions made by the President on
terrorism issues regarding India, Syria, and Afghanistan. In order to get an accurate
representation of the 2003 and 2011 sample, the search conducted will be examined in
order to include two State of the Union addresses by both presidents. More importantly,
these State of the Unions serve as an imperative speech that outlines the presidential
agenda for the upcoming year.

As stated previously, after a broad search of the sample years are conducted for
all three countries, an in-depth analysis of both presidents’ State of the Union speeches is
done in order to observe both presidents and their foreign policy rhetoric. As a popular
annual speech that lays out the President’s agenda for the upcoming year to Congress, the
State of the Union will show what issues hold the most saliency to a President. Thus, a
content analysis will be done in order to evaluate and analyze the terminology the
president uses when addressing matters of terrorism, and which words the president uses
the most throughout the speech. Searching for terms such as “Islam,” “Evil,” “Good,” “Terror,” and any other descriptive terms in both presidents’ public statements will help to see if manipulation is visible. Observing which words are used the most during their speech will also aid in attempting to observe the presidents’ foreign policy rhetoric. These positive and negative word associations will be documented in order to discuss any trends, and will be able to suggest what message both presidents are trying to release to the public and compare the two together. Finally, the fourth chapter will discuss the limitations and implications of the findings presented in this chapter.

Results

Public Presidential Mentions of International Terrorism under George W. Bush

In assessing presidential speeches, a broad search over the terms “India” and “Terror” found 338 documents were found from right after the attacks on 9/11, dating back from 2001-2015. When narrowed specifically to the 2003-2004 time frame, Bush has only publicly discussed India only five times. Additionally, the two instances where both terms were included in the title of the records include Bush’s statement on the terrorist bombings in Mumbai as well as a statement in early January 2004 on the next steps in the United States’ strategic partnership with India. Of the two specific

mentions, the strategic partnership did not have plans in attempting to aid in solving India’s terrorism problem. The results not only suggest that coverage of India’s terrorism is scarce, but President Bush did not deem the discussion worth of much time spent. Moreover, although in the speech Bush publicly condemned the attacks, there are rarely any other records that show an extension of that sentiment. Even in Bush’s remarks in strengthening its partnership with India, it attempts to combat terrorism in Syria than specifically in India.

Additionally, in Bush’s interviews, news conferences, and remarks, Bush addressed relations between Pakistan and India, rather than rallying for counterterrorism policies in India. Ultimately, it can be suggested that the salience on the issue of India’s terrorism was fairly low for the president. For instance, Bush’s news conference with the President of Pakistan was the only other instance in which the president addressed terrorism in India, more specifically relating it to the conflict between India and Pakistan.⁴ During the news conference, President Bush proclaimed that the United States would aim in the process forward in fixing relations between India and Pakistan, specifically in fighting off terrorism. While Bush and his administration advocated less towards India’s terrorism according to the research presented, Bush did however, take an interest in India through its relationship with Pakistan as well as through their nuclear arms partnership. These factors alone may imply that a fixed relationship with Pakistan may cause terrorism to decrease within India.

On the contrary, when “Syria” and “Terror” were broadly searched throughout both presidencies from 2001-2015, 383 documents were found in comparison to India’s 338. From 2003-2004, the results narrowed to sixteen recorded documents. This number indicates that Syria and terrorism were mentioned more than India and terrorism. Considering that India had nine mentions in the archives, while the difference is not substantial, it is still worth noting. In other words, the results show that Syria is mentioned in seven more documents than in India. The references were included in five news conferences, two statements, seven interviews, and two remarks including one he made previously in India’s search on the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy. Additionally, fourteen out of the sixteen documents addressed terrorism in regards to Syria specifically in comparison to India’s two mentions. The results indicate that not only did President Bush mention Syria more, but it was also covered more in a time where India was ranked as the most terrorized country in the world and Syria was ranked 119.

In comparison, when Afghanistan was broadly searched, there were 1,661 documents found containing both “Afghanistan” and “Terror”. Moreover, when searched specifically from the 2003-2004-time period, there were 179-recorded mentions with 37 times of “Afghanistan” in the headline and ten times with “Terrorism”. Overall,

7 In order to get these results, I used the American Presidency Project database to first search the phrase “Afghanistan” from 2001 to 2015. Then, the phrase “Afghanistan AND Terrorism” was searched from January 1, 2003- January 31, 2004. The results regarding Afghanistan were analyzed under President Bush’s administration throughout the study.
8 See Footnote 7.
the research may suggest that Bush had more mentions of both India and Afghanistan than Obama, and more importantly the research indicates that Afghanistan had the most mentions during Bush’s presidency than both India and Syria combined. Ultimately, Bush’s mention of Afghanistan is significantly greater than Bush’s references to India during his administration, and gives way for a new set of questions to be answered. At the time, India was number one in terrorism according to the GTI, the index does not fall in line to the results indicated by the American Presidency Project. In other words, Bush’s salience towards Afghanistan’s terrorism was much heavier than India’s. Not only was Afghanistan mentioned more in Bush’s agenda, but he also made it a point to constantly make the public aware of issues regarding Afghanistan. Such references include 22 public remarks involving the issue, thirteen news conferences, twelve addresses, eight statements and one executive order. Ultimately, the Bush administration suggests that Afghanistan was a more pressing and important issue at the time when India had the most terrorist attacks in 2003. Hopefully, the next chapter will give us more insight into why the Bush administration chose to focus on Afghanistan more. Was it because the media covered Afghanistan more? Were people more aware of terrorism in India, Syria, or Afghanistan, and why does this matter towards the overall views of public opinion in regards to terrorism?

Moreover, when looking specifically at the State of the Union addresses for 2003 and 2004, the following findings can be seen. First and foremost, the 2003 State of the Union address used the following words the most: people, America, weapons, Saddam,

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10 See Footnote 7.
country, united, and Hussein. Furthermore, supporting words such as terrorism, good, evil, threat, war, Al Qaeda and nation are also used within the same speech. With support from previous scholarly literature, the specific word association used with this famous annual presidential speech shows that there is a focus on patriotism and war throughout the 2003 address. While it has been said that with each year that passes 9/11, the fear and salience of terrorism becomes less popular, it can still be seen that in 2003, there was a sense of commitment towards unification towards the nation. This patriotism shows that nationalism is a very important feature that President Bush heavily stressed towards the people. Moreover, it is suggested that terrorism and rallying behind the flag had heavy salience for Bush. Using the terms “good,” “evil,” and “threat” show that the president chose to instill a fear and discontent about the dangers that await the United States.

Moreover, in the 2004 State of the Union address, there seems to be less focus on Bush’s foreign policy, and it tends to advocate more of his domestic agenda. In his State of the Union, I attempt to determine the most repeated words in President Bush’s speeches. In fact, the words most used in his speech include words such as: America, people, must, congress, economy, help, new, law, and health. This dedication to unification of the nation not only shows that Bush’s agenda for the new year was no longer terrorism-based, but it also shows that regardless of issues, patriotism and unification are still main messages that can be perceived in both speeches. Additionally,


while Iraq, Afghanistan, weapons, and terrorism were also included in the speech, they were not mentioned to the same effect as Bush’s domestic policy terms. Why this drastic change in agenda? Future research should attempt to answer this question by looking into the changes within the Bush administration during this time period, as well as through public opinion polls in order to determine why the salience of the terrorism issue among citizens matches the salience of terrorism as according to the president in 2004. Analysis of the 2004 State of the Union shows that Bush’s most used words in his speech and determines that the most used phrase was “America.”¹⁴ These results may indicate that the rally-behind-the-flag-effect is still a primary framing tool used by presidents when addressing the nation. This sense of nationalism is not only apparent in both the 2003 and 2004 speeches, but I hypothesize that the 2011 and 2012 speeches will present similar findings.

¹⁴ See Footnote 12.
Public Presidential Mentions of International Terrorism Under Barack Obama

During the Obama Presidency, mentions of “India” and “Terror” increased to thirteen references during 2011-2012. These references include seven remarks, two news conferences, one interview and one executive order on establishing visas. Of all thirteen documents, only one document had “India” in the title, and it was a statement in regards to the terrorist attacks in India. Moreover, ten of the thirteen documents did not address terrorism in India at all. Most of the documents referred to the advancements of India in business and the economy, where terrorism was addressed later on in the article with no relation with India. Additionally, two documents addressed India’s relationship with Pakistan with reference to the War on Terror overall. Thus, the question arises, what can be said about President Obama’s coverage of India? While it is seen that Obama has spent more time addressing India than he did in the past, is it still even plausible to say that coverage of India’s terrorism is accurate? The research presented above suggests otherwise. Granted, as the years had passed, India has jumped from being the most terrorized nation in the world, to the fourth most terrorized. However, India still has considerably more issues with terrorism than more than 100 other countries on the same list. These rather insignificant results suggest that President Obama did not cover the issues of terrorism within India more than President Bush.

16 In order to compile the results, I searched the American Presidency Project from January 1, 2011 to January 31, 2012 using the search phrase, “India AND Terror” in the search engine. This produced thirteen documents overall for the sample year in Obama’s presidency.
17 See Footnote 15.
18 Results compiled through the Global Terrorism Index Database.
Furthermore, the search for the terms “Syria” and “Terror” during Obama’s presidency produced contradictory results. In contrast to its previous results of sixteen recorded documents, the search decreased to nine documents in 2011. These results raise a variety of questions regarding the President’s position. While Syria has increasingly become an issue over time in regards to its terrorism, it is interesting to note that the mentions of Syria’s terrorism have decreased over time. As stated before, the search for terms “India” and “Terror” produced thirteen results overall.19 These findings suggest inconsistency over the results of the Global Terrorism Index Report, which ranked Syria at sixth in the ranking of most terrorized nations. Thus, since terrorism in Syria has dramatically increased over time, one would expect more mentions of Syria.

Additionally, the president made three statements on the issue, one address to the UN, and two news conferences. Of the twelve records found, four of them had the term “Syria” in the title. Moreover, eight of the twelve documents involved President Obama specifically condemning the Syrian government for not effectively letting a peaceful and democratic transition into the region; one that is associated with shaming the Syrian government for supporting terrorist organizations.20 Overall, the findings discussed produce mixed results. While India had more records during the Obama administration, 77 percent of the records found did not link the terms “India” and “Terrorism” together21. In contrast, although Syria search produced one less mention than India, 67 percent of the

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19 When using the American Presidency Project Database, I searched the phrase “Syria AND Terror” from January 1, 2011- January 31, 2012 and produced sixteen documents overall. These results were analyzed thoroughly throughout this paragraph.
20 See Footnote 18.
21 See Footnote 18.
records effectively related the terms “Syria” and “Terrorism”.\textsuperscript{22} Overall, the results of Obama’s mentions suggest that Syria’s terrorist activity is discussed and mentioned more than India’s under his term in 2011.

Moreover, when the terms “Afghanistan” and “Terror” was searched in 2011-2012, 59 instances where both terms were used were found.\textsuperscript{23} The data included thirty remarks, seven addresses, four statements, and nine news conferences. From a holistic standpoint, Afghanistan was mentioned more in presidential speeches in both Bush and Obama’s presidency than India overall. Sure enough, while the mentions of terrorism have literally cut in half since Bush’s presidency, the mentions of Afghanistan still prove to be more prominent than Syria and India combined. Considering that the United States and NATO were at war with Afghanistan during 2011, these results remain consistent with this timeline. These findings not only suggest consistency with the war during this time, but it also indicates that saliency overall is heavy when it comes to terrorist activity in Afghanistan. As a result, it is expected to see more mentions of Afghanistan than both Syria and India when examining the State of the Union addresses.

Thus, when the State of the Union address for 2011 was observed, some interesting trends emerged.\textsuperscript{24} First and foremost, the findings suggest that President Obama tends to focus on words not associated with nationalism as much as President Bush. More specifically, President Obama’s most used terms included: people, jobs, government, years, new, work, and America. While it is undeniable that the terms

\textsuperscript{22} See Footnote 18.
\textsuperscript{23} In order to produce these findings, The American Presidency database searched “Afghanistan AND Terror” from January 1, 2011- January 31, 2012.
“America” and “American” still attempt to hold some sense of unity as it is stressed by the president, it is not used as often as by President Bush. Moreover, President Obama spent most of his speech discussing new policies, jobs, and the government. Terrorism, however, is hardly seen in his speech. The root word “Afghan” was used 8 times during Obama’s 2012 address to Congress. In these instances, there was a call for better governance of the Afghan nation, a strive for partnership by the United States’ in aiding security forces, and in reference to bringing troops home. Words associated with “Afghan” in Obama’s speech include control, safe haven, and deny, ultimately showing that the United States will not yield to the terrorist organizations involved in Afghanistan.

More importantly, showing that there is still a sense of American dominance and persistence in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan and to reassure that terrorism was being stabilized within the region. There were no words associated with fear during his acknowledgement of Afghanistan, rather as a sense of strength and persistence. Additionally, India was mentioned three times throughout the speech, with two of those times being in regards to creating jobs and their status as a global producer. The one time that India was mentioned in relation to terrorism simply stated that there were partners in counterterrorism. There was no mention of the status of India’s terrorist dilemma or what was included in the partnership. Holistically, this not only shows that Obama is less focused on terrorism, but it also shows that Obama does not feel the need to spend the majority of his State of the Union on terrorism. Thus, showing that a prominent issue for Obama involved the production of jobs. Moreover, the salience issue of terrorism for President Obama is low, as it was hardly mentioned during his speech. However, when
the actual words were broken down, both Afghanistan and India were mentioned once
regards to terrorist efforts, and neither of those times indicated a sense of fear or threat.

Furthermore, in the 2012 State of the Union, there was also a sense of domestic policy focus. In fact, the sentences containing the root word of terror were only found twice in this address, and of those times were used in a sense of reassuring of the strength of American security. Similar to the 2011 speech, the most used words used in Obama’s address included more, “new,” “people,” “work,” “jobs,” and “government”. India was mentioned three separate times in reference to reaffirming a solid partnership with America in its counterterrorism efforts, as a thriving nation in technology and innovation, and as a partner in creating jobs for U.S citizens. The root word “Afghan” was used only four times in Obama’s 2012 State of the Union and all were in reference to terrorism. The term was used primarily to discuss the return of troops and the continuance of our partnership in order to ensure Afghanistan’s transition into a stable nation. Thus, the words associated in these mentions do not indicate a sense of fear, but rather a sense of solidarity and success by America. “Strength,” “troops,” and “partnership” are the words that support the general theme surrounded by the mention of Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Overall, word association in relation to the two presidents examined produced interesting findings. While nationalism and fear are two of the main areas of salience towards either one or both presidents, what is more notable is the fact that although the three countries mentioned have had major problems in regards to terrorism, both
President Bush and Obama failed to mention them in great detail throughout their term.
More specifically, Table 1 indicates the findings that were previously discussed. It shows that while India was deemed as the most terrorized nation in the world in 2003, it was mentioned the least amount of times out of all three countries. In that same time period, Afghanistan had the largest mentions by President Bush, while Syria only had ten mentions overall. Syria, which was listed as 119 on the list of the most terrorized nations in the world, surpassed Bush’s mentions of most terrorized state, India, with only a mere three mentions. Moreover, over time Table 1 also shows that even as Syria jumped from 119 to 6 on the list, it still is mentioned less than previously.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>&quot;India&quot; and &quot;Terror&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Afghanistan&quot; and &quot;Terror&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Syria&quot; and &quot;Terror&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obama</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, mentions of Afghanistan in presidential speeches and addresses also decrease over time as well. While Afghanistan was still mentioned more than by both India and Syria combined, President Obama addressed Afghanistan by half as much as President Bush did in 2003. Additionally, President Obama’s mentions of India continue to produce the same trend of decreasing results. India, although still in the top five countries is covered way less than both Syria and Afghanistan. Ultimately, this finding shows that coverage of terrorism in countries that are the most affected are not only continuing to decrease in salience over time, but are not being covered to the same degree either. Thus, the point of what our presidents choose to focus on is clearly seen to be
strategic at best, which should be something worth noting for presidential rhetoric.

Ultimately, as realism suggests, presidents tend to address situations that solely influence the United States, rather than simply addressing another country outside of themselves. In the case of the State of the Unions for both President Bush and President Obama, this chapter shows that words associated during their speeches indicate an overall sense of strength and unity by the Presidents using terms such as “America” and “strength” repeatedly. Most importantly, other countries are not noted without references of America’s own primary self-interests. Whether it is to use places such as India as an example of market competition, or of global partnerships, every mention is surrounded on America’s status and response to these countries.
Chapter III: What the Media is Not Telling Us

News agencies serve an important role in the United States; the most important of which is that the media have transformed the way people share information. Utilizing free speech to its fullest, news agencies attempt to report on issues and events occurring throughout the world. From magazines to newspapers, television to blogging, and radio to social networks, the media connects citizens nationally and globally. Media coverage in the United States specifically has covered the nation’s most popular events, and arguably serves as a check on the state, local, and federal government.

News agency coverage includes areas such as Supreme Court decisions, crime, protests, and presidential campaigns, oftentimes with an emphasis toward entertainment and ratings. At the same time media agencies in the United States have also been criticized for stereotyping, framing, and their overall coverage of issues. The issue of political bias between certain media outlets has also been a large area of dissatisfaction as well. This chapter attempts to observe how media covers of terrorism that occurs outside of the United States. More importantly, it will observe if and how the media accurately depicts the events occurring in the era of the War on Terror, specifically in the countries of India, Syria, and Afghanistan. Based off of the findings in the previous chapter, one would anticipate heavy media coverage in Syria and Afghanistan, and significantly less coverage in India during the Bush administration. Also, there should be more coverage of Afghanistan and Syria during Obama’s term as well. Overall, considering that the terrorism has been a primary issue in both presidents’ foreign policy agenda, I expect to see a positive relationship between the number of terrorist activities within a country and the amount of coverage. If no relationship can be concluded, then a discussion on
whether the media is accurately covering issues involving terrorist activity may be needed for future research.

Methods

For media coverage, I will continue to follow Stroud and Sparrow’s (2011) framework by conducting a one-year time period sample for both presidents. In order to conduct a content analysis for media coverage, and stay true to Stroud and Sparrow’s framework, I will use Lexis Nexis to search media coverage. Key terms including “India,” “Terrorism,” “Afghanistan,” “Attack,” “United States,” and “Syria” will be searched in the database in attempts to examine the accuracy of coverage. However, instead of searching a variety of newspapers that Stroud and Sparrow used, I narrow this study to focus on three of the US’s most popular news agencies as determined by the Alliance for Audited Media. 25 Over time, their reports indicate that The New York Times, Washington Post, and USA Today have consistently been in the top 5 lists of the most circulated newspapers in the United States, and will be studied in this chapter. 26

By predominately searching headlines, front-page sections, and the overall quantity of coverage, I will analyze how media agencies attempt to cover issues. More

26 Although The Los Angeles Times and the Wall Street Journal are also consistently in the top 5 for the most circulated newspapers, they were not included in this study. Similar to reasons laid out in Stroud and Sparrow (2011) research, The Los Angeles Times was not used because it is not covered in the Lexis Nexis database. The Wall Street Journal was not used due to the lack of results on international terrorism in the Lexis Nexis database.
importantly, after searching the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *USA Today*, I will attempt to determine if the US media outlet’s coverage of terrorism in Syria, Afghanistan and India matches the results of terrorist activity indicated in the GTI report addressed in the previous chapter.
Results

Media Coverage of International Terrorism during President George W. Bush’s Administration

First, when the terms “India” and “Terrorism” were entered into the Lexis Nexis search engine, the results revealed that 623 articles were published during 2003. Of the 623 results, The New York Times published the most articles out of the three sources. While The New York Times leads with 306 stories, The Washington Post follows by producing 273 articles, and USA Today only published 44 stories on the issue. This broad search indicates that while the New York Times posted the most articles, there still leaves room to question the relevancy and accuracy of these results due to its mass generality. Thus, the additional terms “United States,” “Terror,” and “Attack” were added in order to further narrow the data even further. The findings further indicate that 124 articles were published, and 58 of those came from the Washington Post with 47 percent of those making the front section of the segment. These findings suggest that while the New York Times produced more results overall with the terms from a broader perspective, when the search is more specialized, the Washington Post also produces a similar amount of publications when compared to The New York Times in the same search.

27 In order to evaluate coverage on India’s terrorism, Lexis Nexis’ advanced search tool was predominately used. The phrase “ ‘India’ AND ‘Terrorism’” was the main search term for this portion. Moreover, when examining the Bush presidency, the time period looks at publications from January 1, 2003- December 31, 2003. When controlling for specific sources, only The New York Times, Washington Post, and USA Today were searched for purposes of this study. This includes web publications as well.

28 See Footnote 3.

29 Continuing off of the previous search, more terms were added in order to further specialize the results. By adding the phrase “ ‘United States’ AND ‘Terror’ AND ‘Attack’”, the search will produce publications that have all of these terms in regards to terrorist activity in India, and attempt to provide more accuracy to the results.
Moreover, looking at headlines will also aim to further specialize the results. It must be noted that the mention of the front section in this more concentrated search is of great importance. Articles that make the front section of the article of their respective newspapers not only indicate the popularity of the topic among the population, but it also indicates the importance of the issue to the magazine. Whether it makes the front section of the global affairs desk, or of the overall newspaper, it is important to note these results because it indicates the popularity or perceived relevance of the terrorist activity for that country. In the case of The Washington Post, for example, less than half of the articles made headlines. 30 Overall, what does this say about the saliency of India's terrorism to The Washington Post? The results indicate that the issue is important enough to make headlines only some of the time under the Washington Post, but what about the other two agencies?

The New York Times also produced 57 stories with the additional terms with 47 percent of their articles making the front section of their respective desks. 31 Thus, producing vastly similar results to the findings indicated by the Washington Post. Ultimately, what do these findings suggest about the coverage of India's terrorism from this news agency? Research indicates that while broad searches may produce staggering results, the more in-depth searches show that The New York Times and The Washington

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30 In order to search headlines, I used "HEADLINE (India) AND Terrorism" for all three media sources with the same time period from before. This gave me publications that contained India in the title of the publication, but had the word Terrorism in the body. I also searched the headline with both terms in the headline, and also with terrorism in the headline and India in the body.

31 In the Lexis Nexis search, the section labeled "A" notes the articles that are in the front sections of publications. The citation for the article will indicate which section the article made the majority of the time, whether it be the foreign issues desk, the letter from the editor section or the global affairs section.
Post do not differ as much as previously thought. While word choice undeniably places a significant factor in the impact on public opinion, the numbers do not lie. The search on India’s terrorism so far shows that its importance and saliency of issues is not making headlines the majority of the time. Unfortunately, USA Today supports this notion by providing a very limited amount of articles; only nine were found in their news source, with no indication of making the front section. The limited supply of issues further indicates that the issue of India’s terrorism is drastically under covered. USA Today not only produced completely insignificant results, the number of articles for India’s terrorism that made the front section was virtually nonexistent.

Un fortunately, the results of the publications produced in the search for India are rather questionable considering the GTI reported that India had the highest level of impact from terrorist activity in the entire world. Moreover, at a time when terrorist activity was high within the area, it also introduces the question as to why one of the most heavily circulated news agencies does not inquire more coverage on the situation. Are they simply unaware? Or, do they choose not to include such information? Ultimately, these results indicate that not only is saliency on this issue significantly low for USA Today during the Bush Administration, but it also suggests there may not be a relationship between coverage and the nations most impacted by terrorism.

Finally, when “India” and “Terror” were searched specifically the headlines of the three sources presented, only one article from The Washington Post was found to contain both terms. While the importance of observing whether an article has made the front page, it is equally if not more important to discuss which articles have India and terrorism

32 See Footnote 6 and 7.
33 See Footnote 6.
as the main subject of the article. For these reasons, I will attempt to observe this than 
through searching through the headline titles. The titles of these news articles are 
carefully crafted to effectively summarize the article in question. Essentially, it is the title 
that catches a reader's attention and draws them into what the article embodies. Thus, 
during an age where terrorism was a concern among the community, and the war on 
terror was declared, the data found previously produced results that are inconsistent with 
the GTI report. Having only one headline out of the three of the US' most popular 
circulated news sources suggests further that coverage of India's terrorism is minimal and 
insignificant. Additionally, when only "India" was searched, with the term "Terrorism" in 
the body, 55 results were found.34 Thus, data suggest that the more specific searches 
become, and the percentage of error decreases, the coverage of India's terrorism is not as 
prevalent as one may hypothesize. If looking back, the 623 results that were previously 
found in the beginning of the chapter of India's terrorism has quickly decreased to under 
a hundred results as the search becomes more specific as the saliency and relevance of 
the article are examined. Furthermore, when the search was reversed and "Terrorism" 
was searched in the headline and "India" in the body, the results narrowed to only twelve 
published articles. While these results were less successful than the previous search it will 
be interesting to compare this number to results that will be discussed later in the chapter. 
These results ultimately open the discussion when it comes to if Obama produce more or 
less coverage of India and if news agencies become more accurate on their representation 
of issues of terrorist activity in India.

34 See Footnote 6.
In contrast to India’s 623 article mentions of terrorism from the US top circulated news agencies, the terms “Syria” and “Terrorism” were searched, 899 articles were found in 2003. As a brief reminder, during Bush’s presidency, the GTI reported that Syria was ranked 119 on the list of most terrorized nations in the world. The findings on the coverage of India and the results of Syria’s terrorism coverage indicate that, unfortunately, the results are not consistent with the data in the GTI report. More specifically, not only does Syria have incredibly low terrorist activity in comparison to India, on the contrary, Syria was covered more from a holistic perspective from all three agencies. Additionally, when broken down, the results show that The New York Times produced 502 stories containing both terms. The Washington Post followed with 322 articles, and USA Today had a mere 75 articles. In comparison to India’s coverage, The New York Times still leads with producing the most coverage on the issue. These results indicate that The New York Times contains the highest salience for issues of international terrorism thus far.

Additionally, when the same four terms were added from the last search (“United States,” “Terror,” and “Attack”) the results decreased dramatically to 176 findings. In comparison to India’s 124 articles, while not as significant as the broader search, it is still apparent that the issue of Syria’s coverage is addressed more among news agencies than India’s terrorist activity. Moreover, of the 176 results, The New York Times published 79

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35 The phrase “‘Syria’ AND ‘Terrorism’” was searched from January 1, 2003-December 31, 2003 in Lexis Nexis’ advanced search tool. The New York Times, Washington Post and USA Today were the only news agencies that were specifically requested. This included all blogs, internet publications and newspapers.

36 To further break down the search, the terms “‘Terror’, ‘Attack’, and ‘United States’ were added to the previous search. The time period and news agencies control remains the same.

37 See Footnote 12.
articles with 67 percent of them in the front section, and The Washington Post followed close behind with publishing 71 articles with 62% in the front section. The results from The New York Times and The Washington Post show that during Bush’s presidency, the news agencies published articles about Syria involving terrorism tend to appear in their front sections more than India’s. In fact, over half of their articles for Syria’s coverage made the front section. The USA Today continued to produce the lowest number articles; with only 26 articles published and none indicated in the front section. In comparison to the nine articles that were found in India’s search, it is apparent that USA Today consistently does not effectively cover international terrorism. Even though USA Today covers Syria more than India, its unwillingness to put these articles in the front of sections shows their lack of importance to the agency. Additionally, their results indicate that their coverage of terrorist activity abroad is poor and limited in number. Although these results suggest that Syria had a lower amount of terrorist attacks at the time, it was still covered more by the media than India.

When the headlines were searched with the terms “Syria” and “Terrorism”, only two newspapers produced results for having both terms. More specifically, both The New York Times and The Washington Post published one article on the issue. While this difference is minimal in comparison to India’s one published article, it further supports the argument that coverage on the issue of international terrorism is minimal and weak. On the contrary, when the term “Syria” was searched in the headlines with “Terrorism”

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38 In order to search the headlines the phrase "HEADLINE (Syria AND Terrorism) was used from January 1, 2003- December 31, 2003 for the Washington Post, New York Times, and USA Today.
in the body, 90 results were found as opposed to India’s 55 results. These findings indicate that Syria’s terrorist activity is indeed discussed more than India’s. Additionally, when the terms were flipped, thirteen results were produced as opposed to India’s one article finding. Ultimately, these results suggest that although India was the most terrorized nation during the world in 2003, the media covered Syria more than India.

When examining media coverage during Obama’s administration, it will be interesting to see if news agencies continue to produce such staggering results about Syria’s terrorist activity by itself, and in comparison to India’s and Afghanistan’s. Considering that Syria has a rapid increase in terrorist activity, moving from the 119th to the sixth most terrorized nation, it will be valuable to note if the relationship between the news agencies coverage and the GTI is significant or not; and more importantly, if the findings will differ than that of coverage under the Bush Administration.

When “Afghanistan” and “Terrorism” were searched from 2003-2004, 2,717 results were found as opposed to India’s 623 and Syria’s 899 article mentions. Ultimately, the results show that The New York Times again leads in overall production with 1,350 articles. This notion of the high saliency by The New York Times for international terrorism will also be observed under the Obama Administration. It will be interesting to examine whether The New York Times continue to be the leading agency in

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39 Similar to Footnote 14, except the phrase “HEADLINE( Syria) AND ‘Terrorism’ was searched.
40 Similar to Footnote 15, excepted the phrase “HEADLINE (Terrorism) AND ‘Syria’ was used.
41 In order evaluate coverage of Afghanistan’s terrorism, Lexis Nexis’ advanced search tool was predominately used to search the phrase “ ‘Afghanistan’ AND ‘Terrorism’”. The time period looks at publications from January 1, 2003- December 31, 2003. When controlling for specific sources, only the New York Times, Washington Post, and USA Today were searched for purposes of this study. This includes web publications as well.
42 See Footnote 17.
regards to coverage of international terrorism. Moving on, in 2003 *The Washington Post* closely follows *The New York Times* with 1,041 articles. Not surprisingly, and consistent with results from both India’s and Syria’s articles, *USA Today* trails last with having only 281 articles involving Afghanistan’s terrorist activity.43 While larger in number than both Syria and India combined, the media’s coverage of Afghanistan as reported by *USA Today* is still minimal at most. Moreover, when the additional terms were added to solve for the generalization of the results listed previously, the data produced 741 publications. These results are still considerably large in opposition to the 124 articles India produced during the same time period and Syria’s 176 article mentions. Additionally, *The New York Times* continues to lead in coverage by mentioning all five terms in 303 articles, 298 times in *The Washington Post*, and 139 in *USA Today*.44 It is important to note in this finding that *USA Today* surprisingly produces results closer to the results of the *Washington Post* than ever before.

Finally, when a search for the headline involving “Afghanistan” and “Terrorism” in the body was conducted, 120 results were found in comparison to India’s 55 and Syria’s 90 article mentions.45 When broken down even further, the results indicate that, on balance, *The New York Times* continues to lead in publishing across all searches. With 89 articles and 80 percent of the articles specifically in the front section, *The New York Times* consistently shows quantitatively the most media coverage during the Bush

43 See Footnote 17.
44 To further specify the search results “United States”, “Terror”, and “Attack” were added to the previous search using the same timeline and media sources.
45 In order to search the headlines the phrase “HEADLINE (Afghanistan AND Terrorism) was used from January 1, 2003- December 31, 2003 for *The Washington Post, New York Times*, and *USA Today*. This only produced results that had both terms in the headline.
Administration in 2003. Additionally, *The Washington Post* follows next by producing 31 articles with 81 percent of those published in the front section of the newspaper. *USA Today’s* news agency published 5 articles and none of them made the front page. Moreover, when the terms are switched and Terrorism is the title and Afghanistan is the body there were fifty mentions overall as opposed to Syria’s thirteen mentions and India’s one article mention. Thus, these findings suggest that even though the number of article mentions are low, they are not only still greater than coverage for India and Syria, but they also made the front section more as well.

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46 See Footnote 21.  
47 See Footnote 21.  
48 See Footnote 21.  
49 The headlines the phrase “HEADLINE (Terrorism) AND ‘Afghanistan’” was used from January 1, 2003- December 31, 2003 for *The Washington Post, New York Times*, and *USA Today*.
Media Coverage of International Events during President Barack Obama's Presidency

Since the Bush administration, the media coverage on "India" and "Terrorism" has decreased from the 623 results to 497.\(^50\) During this time, India raised its position and secured the top 4 spot on the list of the most terrorized countries by the GTI. Surprisingly enough, there is a change in the leading newspaper in the coverage of India's terrorist activity. Of the 497 articles, The Washington Post produced the most results with 274 article mentions, and The New York Times followed with 212 findings.\(^51\) The reasons for this change in leadership should be explored in future research on this topic. USA Today continues to consistently produce insignificant results by publishing only eleven articles. This number is considerably low even compared to the 44 findings during the Bush presidency for USA Today's mentions of terrorism activity in India.\(^52\) Thus, further showing that even as terrorism is still apparent in India, news coverage of the issue is still low under both past two presidents.

When the additional terms were added, only 42 articles were found.\(^53\) The Washington Post still leads with having 21 articles with 43 percent making the front section. This shows that not only are the number of articles low, but the actual coverage of India's terrorist activity making the front section is also low. Additionally, The New

\(^{50}\) In order evaluate coverage on India's terrorism under the Obama Administration, the phrase "'India' AND 'Terrorism'" was searched for publications from January 1, 2011-December 31, 2012. When controlling for specific sources, only The New York Times, Washington Post, and USA Today were searched for purposes of this study. This includes web publications and blogs as well.

\(^{51}\) See Footnote 26.

\(^{52}\) See Footnote 26.

\(^{53}\) Continuing off of the pervious search, more terms were added in order to further break down the findings. The phrase "'United States' AND 'Terror' AND 'Attack'", were added to it.
York Times had 18 article mentions with 22 percent in the front section. The data does not only support the previous claim that news coverage over terrorism in India has continued to decrease, but it also shows that of the articles that are mentioned, a significant amount of the articles are actually making the front sections of their respective sections.

Furthermore, USA Today publishes the least results with only three article mentions, and none making the front section. Thus supporting the previous findings suggested in the 2003 study, that stated that USA Today has limited salience of international terrorism.

Finally, the headline search found 4 articles that had both “India” and “Terrorism” in the title. This finding indicates that in comparison with Bush’s presidency, coverage during the Obama administration produces more results in headlines opposition to India’s one article, but it is not significant. When India was searched in the title and Terrorism in the body, 30 results were produced in comparison to the 55 results found in 2003. When the terms were switched, ten article mentions were found as opposed to the twelve during the Bush administration. Ultimately this shows that while the saliency of international terrorist activity has changed over time, coverage of terrorism in India by the top US media agencies is still minimal at most, and is making the front sections less than during Bush’s administration. Granted, the headlines produced more mentions than previously, but it was nowhere near significant. With only three more mentions than the previous, it

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54 In order to search the headlines the phrase “HEADLINE (India AND Terrorism) was used from January 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011 for the Washington Post, New York Times, and USA Today.
55 Similar to Footnote 30, however “HEADLINE (India) AND ‘Terrorism’” was searched instead.
56 Similar to Footnote 31, however In order to search the headlines the phrase “HEADLINE (Terrorism) AND ‘India’” was used, but the other factors remain the same.
is clear that coverage over India’s terrorism has not improved over time: most results show that it has decreased.

Media coverage of Syria during the Obama presidency also decreased in coverage, even though Syria’s ranking dropped dramatically from 119 to the sixth most terrorized nation in the world. In comparison to 889 articles produced during Bush’s administration, Obama’s presidency continued to produce decreasing article mentions. Of the 581 findings that were found in 2011, The Washington Post continue to lead by publishing 324 articles, and The New York Times having 196 article mentions. USA Today continued the decreasing trend with a mere 34 stories overall in comparison to its 75 mentions during the Bush administration. Then, after the additional terms were added in the search, 34 articles were mentioned in relation to Syria’s terrorist activity. In comparison to media’s coverage of India’s terrorism of 42 findings in the same year, and 124 India mentions in 2003, it is remarkable to see less articles when more terms were added during the same year, and the overall dramatic loss of mentions since Obama became president. More specifically, The New York Times produced 17 article mentions with 35 percent making the front section and The Washington Post had eleven with 64 percent making the front sections. USA Today has only seven articles that mention Syria’s terrorist activity, with only 14 percent making the front section.

57 In order evaluate coverage on Syria’s terrorism under the Obama Administration, the phrase “Syria” AND “Terrorism” was searched for publications from January 1, 2011-December 31, 2012. The same media outlets were used as well.

58 Adding on to Footnote 33, “United States”, “Terror” and “Attack” was added to the phrase.

59 See Footnote 34.
Moreover, when searching for headlines, however, the results were inconsistent with previous trends. No documents could be found containing both terms “Syria” and “Terrorism.” These results indicate that even as Syria has incurred more terrorist activity over time, a relationship between its coverage and its terrorist activity cannot be significant. Moreover, with there being no headlines consisting of “Syria” and “Terrorism” in the title, questions for future research need to be geared towards why coverage decreases as terrorist activity increases for Syria. On the contrary, however, the headlines containing “Syria” in the headline and “Terrorism” in the body produced 66 results in opposition to the 90 results produced in 2003. Finally, when the terms were flipped, the results continued to decrease, and only two articles were found in comparison to the thirteen in 2003. Overall, it can be seen that even as Syria has gained more threats to its safety through a dramatic increase in terrorist activity over the past 8 years, the media has actually decreased its coverage on terrorism in Syria. As a result, there can be no significant relationship between coverage on the media’s coverage Syria’s terrorism and the actual data on the terrorist activity within Syria.

During Obama’s presidency, the terms “Afghanistan” and “Terrorism” produced 2,098 results in comparison to its 2,717 article mentions during Bush’s presidency.

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60 The headline phrase “HEADLINE (Syria AND Terrorism) was searched from January 1, 2011- December 31, 2011 for The Washington Post, The New York Times, and USA Today and only shows articles that have both terms in the title.

61 Similar search to Footnote 36, but the headlines the phrase “HEADLINE (Syria) AND ‘Terrorism’” was used instead.

62 Similar to Footnote 37 but “HEADLINE (Terrorism) and ‘Syria’” was searched. The same timeline and media outlets are used.

63 The phrase “‘Afghanistan’ AND ‘Terrorism’” was searched for publications from January 1, 2011- December 31, 2012. The same media outlets from all previous searches were used and internet publications were included.
Ultimately, Afghanistan’s mentions in newspapers have exponentially increased since 2003. Consistent with results produced by both Syria and India in 2011, of the 1,542 newspapers found, *The Washington Post* produced the most mentions of terrorist activity in Afghanistan. With 623 articles from *The Washington Post*, 606 stories from *The New York Times*, and 190 articles from *USA Today* it is clear to see a different trend occurring between media outlets during Obama’s presidency as opposed to Bush’s. In opposition to India’s 120, the results suggest that Afghanistan still remains a more covered topic under the Obama administration as well, even though the mentions overall have decreased since 2003. *The New York Times* specifically leads with 71 articles overall with 55 percent in the front section and *The Washington Post* follows by publishing 66 articles with 47 percent of them in the front section. Finally, *USA Today* publishes 46 articles with 30 percent in the front section. Thus, in comparison to 2003, article mentions are lower, and overall mentions in the front section are also dramatically lower than previously. Moreover, after searching for “Afghanistan” in the headline, with 138 results were found in comparison to 134 mentions in 2003. However, when comparing results from 2011 between all three countries, mentions of Afghanistan still continue to have the largest number of mentions. Moreover, *The New York Times* had the most articles with 48 articles in the headline, and 67 percent in the front section, *The Washington Post* with 30

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64 See Footnote 39.
65 See Footnote 39.
66 The headline phrase “HEADLINE (Afghanistan AND Terrorism) was searched from January 1, 2011- December 31, 2011 for *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *USA Today* and only shows articles that have both terms in the title.
and 67 percent in the front section, and *USA Today* with 22 article mentions and 9.1 percent in the front section.\(^67\)

**Conclusion**

Overall, the results show that holistically, terrorism in Afghanistan is continuously and consistently covered more over time than India or Syria. As predicated, media agencies still produce a significant amount of articles related to terrorism in Afghanistan. However, this proves problematic for the relationship between media coverage and terrorist activity as defined by the GTI. Using the GTI as a reference point, one may anticipate that India should have had the second most coverage out of all three countries under the Obama administration during this time. As the sixth most impacted country by terrorism, the GTI shows that the media coverage in Syria should not surpass that of India. The results in this section show that this was not the case. While a clear relationship or trend cannot be produced between the media’s mentions of terrorism in Afghanistan, India, and Syria’s impact from terrorist activity, the results do suggest that salience on this issue is still prevalent in today’s news coverage in the United States.

Moreover, as info-tainment becomes increasingly popular in America’s modern day news coverage, the results found in this chapter could be consistent for the need to keep the viewers entertained. As a result, any coverage specifically involved in the United States, such as the war in Afghanistan, will ultimately produce more coverage. Thus, terrorism in India, which does not directly affect or threaten the United States, may have less coverage from American news agencies. The findings produced by *USA Today*

\(^67\) See Footnote 39.
indicate that the news agency does not cover international terrorism as much as the other newspapers in this chapter. Not only did the content analysis on USA Today show relatively low findings for the Bush administration, but it was also minimal for the Obama administration as well. As a result, it may be implicated that USA Today simply does not cover international events as much as other media outlets. This lack of coverage may also be due to the notion of info-tainment, as foreign affairs may not appeal to their viewers as much as domestic issues. In the end, this chapter suggests that's the relationship between the GTI report and media coverage is inconsistent.
Chapter IV: Treading Softly on Islam

The discussion over Islam and the terrorism associated with its culture often stirs a harsh emotional response in the United States. Since 9/11, Muslims throughout the United States have been targeted as supporters of terrorism due to their ties to the Islamic faith.iii This concern with the religion has sparked discrimination and protests from many. For example, some Americans were upset when a mosque was to be built right next to ground zero where the twin towers fell after the attacks on September 11. The discussion of building the mosque resulted in a vast array of protests across the nation. Even President Barack Obama has been continuously criticized as being a Muslim during his presidential campaign, even though he professed a belief in Christianity.iv Why religion is important among presidential candidates is a discussion for another study, however why the issue of a Muslim president being so negative and alarming deserves attention in this chapter. Chapter four will aim at identifying the relationship between the presidential mentions of Iraq and the image that is associated with the religion. For example, the re-emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and their mass-beheading spree of innocent people have taken over the media and Internet by storm. As a result, presidents, citizens, and other international leaders have publicly condemned these attacks. Thus, one must question if these attacks are harming Islam’s reputation.

Since 9/11, there have been also been more attacks from Islamic extremists, including the Boston Marathon bombings. There has also been the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, in which 12 people were killed in a shooting at a satirical newspaper building by Islamic terrorists from Yemen.v Essentially, the negative events and press that the Islamic
faith receives are arguably due primarily to Islamic extremism. However, do presidents attempt to discuss Islamic extremism more as opposed to the peaceful events and teachings of the Islamic faith? Answering this question may show how the president contributes to the public views of Islam. This chapter will look at how the U.S presidents address the matter of Islam among the public through their presidential speeches, and most importantly their State of the Union addresses. As stated previously from earlier chapters, this chapter focuses predominately on presidential foreign policy rhetoric associated with Islam.

Past literature on presidential rhetoric in regards to Islam have observed Bush and Obama’s stance on the issues (Price, 2009; Sicherman, 2007; Espisoto, 2011; Nye, 2011; Pipes, 2013; Pankhurst, 2010). For example, Panhurst examines presidential rhetoric of the Bush Administration (2010). He argues that the role of the caliphate, which is minor in the ideology of Al Qaeda, had become a major concern by Americans as their main strategy as a terrorist organization (Pankhurst, 2010). After 9/11, Bush made a point to frame his foreign policy agenda after international terrorism, and democracy (Nye, 2008; Price, 2009). Nye (2008) recognizes Bush’s main foreign policy theme was to prevent terrorism, and as a result concluded that the next president should not follow this rhetoric because of its negative association to Islam. Presidents have also been known to frame their stances on the issue through efforts to separate religion from extremism for Islam (Sircherman, 2007; Pipes, 2013). Pipes (2013) points out that presidents attempt to avoid the issue of Islam as a dangerous religion and by offending the Muslim faith. Similar to previous literature, chapter four will attempt to observe how the president addresses Islam through public statements and speeches, as well as through the public opinion on
Islam. Moreover, chapter four will not only attempt to further close the gap on foreign policy rhetoric on religion overall, but it will also aim to discuss the framing of policy concerning Islam by both President Bush and President Obama. Compared to past literature, chapter four will observe presidential rhetoric through State of the Unions specifically for both Bush and Obama and other presidential speeches with support from public opinion.

**Methods**

Similar to chapters two and three, this chapter will use a content analysis approach in order to observe the foreign policy rhetoric of President Bush and President Obama over the mention of Islam. First, the one-year time period observed in previous chapters will continue to be used here, and will follow the model outlined by Stroud and Sparrow (2011) the 2003 and 2011 sample periods will be used for the overall consensus of the study. However, the study of presidential State of the Union addresses will be analyzed for both Obama and Bush. This research approach will be done in order to see if any trends or consistency in word usage is kept with the discussion of Islam.

As discussed prior to this chapter, State of the Union addresses are specifically being studied because of their importance to the presidential platform. Not only does the address outline the president’s foreign and domestic policy agenda for the year, but it also lets the nation know what the President deems as the most important issues that need to be addressed by Congress. The American Presidency project will be used in order to
locate foreign policy mentions in regards to Islam released by the presidents. In addition to the American Presidency Project, The Policy Agendas Project will specifically be used in searching the state of the Unions as well. The Policy Agenda not only outlines the year in which the term “Islam” or “Muslim” was mentioned, but it also indicates the line and the entire sentence that was used in reference to the term. Additionally, in order to further study Islam and its place in the American polity, Lexis Nexis and public opinion polling sites including Gallup for support in the search of how presidential rhetoric and public opinion compare. Specifically, the use of the Gallup Poll’s most important problem will be studied in order to observe the importance of Islam to the public as a whole.
Results

Foreign Policy Rhetoric for Islam by President Bush

For 2003, the American Presidency Project provides 32 separate documents addressing “Islam.” More specifically, President Bush publicly mentioned “Islam” in eight remarks, six statements and in a variety of addresses including an address to the nation on the War on Terror. Surprisingly enough, the words “Islam” and “Muslim” were only used once separately throughout the address. Moreover, it was used in reference to a bombing of a holy Islamic shrine. The word “peaceful” follows right after Islam in order to show the religion itself is nonviolent in its teachings. In this same address however, there are 27 mentions of “terror”, and more importantly, words such as “radicals,” “violence,” “tyrants,” and “attackers,” were used generously in this speech, indicating a sense of danger tied to the term “Islam.” Thus, the results suggest that there could have been an attempt to separate the term Islam from terrorists. Additionally, it would be interesting to note if Islam is mentioned exclusively to terror. Such a connection could provide insight into support for public opinion.

Moreover, in a commencement address at the University of South Carolina, Bush continued to speak highly of the Islamic faith, associating its principled teachings as separate from terrorist activity. However, the commencement address also blamed terrorists for ruining the religion of Islam as well. Regarding the terrorists attacking

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69 See Footnote 4.
Islam, Bush used the words “cruel,” “tyrants,” and “murderers,” in order to set the tone on the terrorists that were tainting this religion. Furthermore, Bush remarked in another address that the Islamic faith follows democratic teachings. Bush continued to discuss Islam as a response to criticisms of Iraq not being ready to take on democracy, and that some countries that have a predominantly Islamic faith have democratic values.

Discussion of Islam in Presidential State of the Union Addresses have been apparent since the 1980s, and were first used by President Jimmy Carter in reference to Soviet domination and cooperation with Islamic countries. After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, President Carter publicly condemned their involvement with the sovereign Islamic state. Since his 1980 and 1981 mention of Islam, America did not see a mention of Islam in the presidents’ state of the union until the early 2000s when Bush started his presidency. In his 2002 address, President Bush associated Islam with terrorist groups, specifically with Jihadists, but also a peaceful and cooperative Islamic world. Additionally, the state of the union address for 2003 had no mentions of Islam at all throughout his speech, and the same results are indicated in 2004. Of all 32 articles studied during the 2003 time frame that contained the word “Islam,” roughly 84 percent

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72 See Footnote 3.
73 To access the State of the Union Address data set, go to the policyagendas.org to the datasets and codebook section. Under the presidency section there is a link for the state of the union address data set. Once opened, search for islam and look in the “Description” for the section in which “Islam” was used.
75 See Footnote 6.
of those articles contained both the worlds “Islam” and “Terror” in the speech.\footnote{The American Presidency Project was used to search the 2003-2004 time frame in order to follow Stroud and Sparrows timing. “Islam” was searched from January 1, 2003-January 31, 2004.} Ultimately, these results suggest that Islam is associated with terrorism the majority of the time in Bush’s speeches. Bush did not mention Islam again in his state of the union until again in 2006 and 2007, with multiple references to radical Islam throughout his address. Additionally in 2010, Islam was mentioned in reference to Iran’s isolation from the united global community.\footnote{See Footnote 6.}

During Bush’s presidency, the public opinion polls suggest that Islam is a religion surrounded by a great deal of controversy. When surveyed in 2003, 44 percent of Americans felt that Islam is more likely to encourage violence than any other religion. More importantly, this number increased by 19 percentage points in one year.\footnote{See Footnote 4.} Another poll indicated that during the Bush administration, opinions of Muslim Americans were more negative than were the opinions of other religions with a 24 percent disapproval rate.\footnote{See Footnote 4.} Additionally, when another survey was conducted looking specifically at teens, when asked if most Muslims were accepting of other religions, 61 percent of American teens believed that they were not.\footnote{See Footnote 6.} This essentially negative view of the Islamic faith during 2003 does not necessarily follow the results indicated of the content analysis search of Bush’s public papers. More importantly, these results suggest that while Islam was mentioned as a moral, peaceful, and ethical source of religion in Bush’s speeches and statements, the belief among Americans concerning Islam tended to be skeptical.
Foreign Policy Rhetoric for Islam by President Obama

In President Obama’s record of addresses, on the other hand, Islam was only mentioned on sixteen occasions. The rhetoric in 63 percent of those occasions mentions both the terms “Islam” and “terror.” Similar to President Bush, however, Obama mentioned Islam and terror a majority of the time, thus showing a strong association between the two words. Throughout many of his speeches, President Obama took the time to make sure the public knew that Islam was not the real enemy. 79 In his remarks after the death of Osama Bin Laden, Obama reinsured Bush’s words on how Islam was the victim of mass murdering. 80 As Muslims continued to die at the hand of Bin Laden, Obama used the term “Islam” as a reminder that Islam is symbolic of peace. Obama reaffirms this notion in other speeches including his address to parliament in London, remarks on the anniversary of 9/11, address to the nation, statement to personnel in Afghanistan, and in his letter to congress on the deployment of troops. Partnership and a sense of cooperation and unification comprised the majority of the rhetoric seen most throughout these articles in reference to Islam. The results suggest specifically that President Obama felt it necessary to keep enforcing the fact that Islam is not the enemy, and that the United States has no intentions to go to war with it. More specifically, Obama has been known to have references to Islam when talking about family and unity.

His attempt to unify religions and silence people who have a fear of Islam, also known as “islamaphobia,” is apparent in his presidential speeches and public statements. 81

Also, similar to President Bush, Obama did not mention Islam in either of his State of the Union addresses in 2011 and 2012, or in any of his addresses throughout his presidency. 82 Considering that State of the Unions essentially lay out the President’s agenda for the upcoming year, this lack of acknowledgement of Islam varies heavily from Bush. Instead, Obama used the term “Muslim” more throughout his state of the unions. In the majority of the instances in which the term “Muslim” was used, the term was associated with other religions in attempts to show diversity and unity among the nation. 83 Additionally, Obama attempted to make a point to acknowledge, in both times, that Muslims are a part of America’s family and that a variety of people, including our troops are made of individuals from a variety of faiths, including Muslim. Obama’s attempt to associate the term “Islam” with family is strategic, because both States of the Union addresses tied Islam to a unified family concept. In contrast, Bush did not mention Islam past the issue of terrorism at all during his state of the Unions. His failure to disassociate the two terms indicates that Obama may have attempted more to bring equality among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. While Bush did attempt to separate Islam from radical Islam, Obama attempted to show that Islam as a part of America, and that Muslims most importantly, are equally accepted in the United States as Jews and

82 See Footnote 6.
83 The term “Muslim” was searched in the Policy Agendas Dataset of American Presidency State of the Union Addresses.
Christians. By including Islam in his example of peaceful religions, his efforts suggest that Obama attempted not associate Muslims with terrorism.

Today, Americans still believe that Islamic extremism is still a large area of concern. In fact, 69 percent of Americans still view Islamic extremism as a large threat to Americans. Moreover, 40 percent of Americans believe that the Islamic religion is more likely to encourage violence over other religions. The findings on the American sentiment towards Islam are imperative in studying the association of religion to lifestyle. In the previous study, the Islamic faith is associated heavily with violence. This in turn affects the perception of Islam overall as a non-peaceful and non-accepting religious faith. However, it is interesting to note that surveyors’ views of terrorism as America’s most important problem has dropped substantially from 46 percent in 2001 to only 8 percent in 2015, but increases in concerns are evident with regard to ISIS and the situation in Iraq to 4 percent.

While the numbers of Americans concerned with ISIS are not as critical as other issues such as the economy, it is necessary to note that there is an increased sense of concern over the issues than there was initially. Thus, these results suggest that in comparison to polls conducted during Bush’s presidency, a significant amount of Americans still feel a threat towards Islam as a religion. More importantly, concerns about islamophobia is evident in the speeches and statements that Obama has issued to the public, as he attempts to remind the people that the Islamic religion is peaceful and unrelated to the terrorism. Considering that worries are still high among Americans about Islam, Obama’s attempts at calming those fears by reminding Americans that Islam has done nothing wrong and that their faith is accepted in the United States.
Conclusion

Overall, the foreign policy rhetoric over Islam varies by both presidencies. In the case of Bush, the empirical data suggest the term “Islam” is popularly associated with terrorism. On the other hand, Obama chooses to use the word “Islam” to indicate a peaceful and diverse religion that is separate from extremism. Interestingly enough, Obama does not mention “Islam” at all during his state of the Unions, but rather uses the term “Muslim.” These results indicate that over time, Islam is mentioned less and less in his address to congress. Similar to past research by Price (2013) and Sirchermain (2007), chapter four findings indicate that the mention of Islam is not addressed as much by Obama, and the connection of Islam to terrorism is not associated. By avoiding the use of “Islam,” the research suggests that Islamic extremism is no longer primary concern on the presidential foreign policy agenda as of 2011, or perhaps that Obama wishes to present his foreign policy agenda in a much different way to the public when compared to President Bush. In contrast, however, Bush’s negative word associations with Islam in his presidential speeches do not reflect his overall mentions of the religion. In fact, while the majority of Bush’s mentions of Islam in speeches outside of the address indicate his attempts to separate Islam from radical Islam, the fact that he feels the need to make this distinction indicates that there is a negative view among Americans in their thoughts on Islam. However, the need for presidents to separate Islam for extremism can be seen in both presidencies. These results ultimately suggest that the president feels the need to reiterate the differences of Islamic extremism to regular Islamic faith due to a misunderstanding in the community.
Moreover, Obama specifically attempted to show Americans that Muslims should be treated as any other faith in America. Thus, as Obama took office, the results suggest that the threat of terrorism overall is continuing to decrease, however, mentions of Islamic terrorist organizations, such as ISIL are continuing to increase as a growing concern among the American people. Ultimately, showing that the future of presidential state of the unions may mention the Islamic faith again. While Obama and Bush have showed the most mention of Islamic faith, previous history indicates that Islam has been an active topic among some presidents in their annual presidential agendas since the Jimmy Carter administration in the early 1980s. Ultimately, the main trend that needs to be mentioned is the association between terrorism and Islam. As stated previously, during the Bush presidency, most mentions of Islam were in relation to terrorism overall, thus we would expect the opinion of Islam by the American people to be negative and fearful of Islam. While Obama has attempted to steer away from mentioning Islam in relation to extremism and to unify the religions in the United States, he still has the emergence of ISIL that keeps the president addressing extremism. Pankhurst's (2010) caliphate example, and the findings in chapter four reaffirm the aforementioned statement. Nye's (2008) recommendation for future presidents to stay clear of a terrorist prevention foreign policy agenda seems to fit the results indicated in this chapter. Chapter four shows that as the notion of fear and negativity among Islam decreases; the results should also show less association with the word terrorism. Thus, this chapter has shown that this data matches the trends that were hypothesized by previous literature, and suggests that mentions of Islam will continue to be avoided by presidents.
Chapter V: Conclusion

This thesis sought to expand literature on foreign policy rhetoric by observing the relationship between presidents, media outlets, and international terrorism following thoughts introduced by Machiavelli and the theory of realism. While the notion of self interested actors and the essential framing of political leaders were originated in the writings of *The Prince*, this thesis attempts to elaborate further on how this ideology is still an essential component in politics. This thesis specifically shows that Presidential and foreign policy rhetoric is dominated by heavy word manipulation, self-interest and info-tainment methods. By examining President Bush, Obama, and three of the most popular news agencies in the United States, this thesis attempted to identify the rhetoric used in the instances of international terrorism.

Overall, the results in chapters two, three, and four show an inconsistency to the trends indicated in the GTI report. Chapter two evaluated presidential public statements of both President George W. Bush and President Obama in regards to international terrorism. In 2003, when the GTI reported that India was the country most impacted by terrorism, President Bush did not discuss India’s terrorism as much as Syria or Afghanistan. President Obama, on the hand, reported on India more than president Bush, but reported on Syria and Afghanistan less. As a brief reminder, GTI had reported Syria as the sixth country most impacted by terrorism in 2011. The findings on Obama and Bush are not only inconsistent with the GTI report, but also produced mixed results for the overall relationship between terrorism and coverage. But overall, both presidents have minimal coverage of India’s terrorism. From 2003-2011 and onto today, India has continued to be in the top ten countries most impacted by terrorism. India’s stance as a
top five terrorist hotspot should have brought a significant amount of coverage along for its country. Additionally, Obama’s term in 2011 indicated that there was no mention of Syria during his annual State of the Union address. The GTI report, which ranked Syria as the sixth most impacted nation remains contradictory to President Obama’s agenda. The president’s failure to mention Syria and his minimal discussion of India has not only limits the discussion on the break down of the state of the union, but it also limits our understanding on what President Obama felt was his most important issues to combat for the new term.

Consequently, future research should attempt to evaluate more speeches and public statements to create a wider date base. While the State of the Unions are arguably one of the most important speeches a president can give to the public, looking into other public statements in further detail are of equal importance. Observing campaign platforms, discovering presidential rhetoric in public statements, or by broadening the time and quantity of searches would help to strengthen the accuracy of studies.

The findings in chapter three indicated that news sources cover Afghanistan more than India and Syria. Thus, the findings cannot support the claim that there is a relationship between the GTI and U.S. interests. After covering The Washington Post, The New York Times, and USA Today, the results suggest that Syria is covered more than India as well. Reasons for this inconsistency may be answered by looking to an info-tainment and realism influence. The popularity of issues and the self-interest of media agencies to report information on exciting and dramatic events may be potential factors for issue coverage. As the war in Afghanistan was an imperative issue among Americans due to our heavily involvement in the war, it is expected that there is more coverage of it
in American media. As a result, terrorism in India should be significantly lower than Afghanistan considering that we are not in a direct war with their country, and our relationship with India is overall strong and positive.

Presidential rhetoric has also been a large contributor to how a policy is viewed and covered as well. Chapter four indicated that for the study of the term “Islam” is typically associated with the issue of terrorism by both presidents. This thesis essentially supports the finds in previous literature by Naber (2009), Edy and Meirick (2007) which stat that presidents attempt to their speeches through word association. Moreover, this thesis also supports the impact of the relationship between public support and the presidential agenda that was outlined by Christie (2006). While President Bush and Obama attempted to separate the religion of Islam from Islamic extremism, Obama spent more time attempting to blend Islam as just another religion of the United States, one that is accepted and valued among Americans. Future research should aim at looking at the factors that contribute to the coverage of terrorism, including info-tainment and saliency. By studying the factors, it may be easier to understand why coverage of these three countries in regards to international terrorism is not consistent with the GTI.

Thus, the question of the morality of the war on terror must come into discussion. Considering the goal of this war was to combat terrorism home and abroad, would it seem immoral to not cover the issues, notify the general public and actively aid countries who are being most affected by terrorism? Moreover, as realism and rhetoric become common links between one another, looking at how this affects the morality behind the war on terror would help show how realism affects viewpoints. While it may be said the presidents are shown as honest, humble, and true defenders of our constitution, it can also
be said that presidents are reelection seeking individuals, doing what best fits the
collectivity, and of the United States. Making international decisions based on self-
interest is not a foreign concept and can ultimately affect how issues are viewed and what
news agencies tend to coverage. Future research can discuss exactly how the debate of
realism versus liberalism or constructivism affects coverage by media agencies and
presidential rhetoric as well.

Discussing the definition of terrorism, and the overall accuracy of the GTI report
is another limitation that must be addressed. Considering that the definition that the GTI
uses the liberal definition "an intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-
state actor," there can be a lot of events that fit under this description. Future research
should evaluate what exactly should be the correct definition of terrorism, and how past
definitions are inaccurate. In the case of the GTI, not only are threats recorded in the
report as opposed to actual activities, but it also does not include terrorist acts by the
state. The limitations of this report indicate that further transparency and clarity in the
relationship between international terrorism, and presidential rhetoric is essential. By
studying these factors using another report, or by creating a new basis for a more accurate
database, the area for affects of coverage on international terrorism may bring more
insight into the scholarly community.

Another way to check the accuracy of the report would be to go in depth on the
actual types of terrorism that are occurring in the country. Doing an analysis on the
events labeled, as terrorism in India may be less severe than that of Syria or Afghanistan.
Under the definition provided, a threat of violence towards others can be defined as
terrorism. Determining its accuracy, and examining the events within the country could
greatly benefit this research. Not only would it solve for the issues mentioned previously, but could also aid in creating a foundation for a new report in the future. Also, effectively defining the factors of what they look at when defining what is considered the most impacted country would help as well.

All in all, the research shows a lack of correlation between the GTI report and terrorist activity coverage. More specifically, both President Barack Obama and President George W. Bush tended to report on countries that meet the United States primary interest (the war on terror) over the actual terrorist activities that occurring throughout the world, such as in India. Considering that a solid business and nuclear deal with India is already in place, the United States tends to focus on areas that have direct threats to its national security. News agencies have also proven to support similar trends of coverage similar to that of the president. Moreover, the study of foreign policy rhetoric over Islam suggests that word choice is important in the overall perception of the issue. For Islam, in the majority of instances where it is mentioned in the presidential state of the union, there is typically the word terrorism being associated with the word.

Also, public opinion polls show that Islam is a concern among the American people. Thus, the research indicates that coverage and perception is imperative. Presidents must craft their messages creatively in order to send the right message to their constituents. Terrorism specifically in the United States is covered based on its own self-interest within the region. For example, a severe threat to the United States may get more news coverage than one man protesting the war. While this study specifically looked at the GTI report and its arguable irrelevance with American presidential and news media coverage, it is only start of a great discussion about international terrorism, public
opinion, and foreign policy rhetoric. The impact of these factors will continue to spark lively debate among the academic community, and the nation’s constituents as well.

Wilkinson’s (1997) answer to solving the issue of terrorism is for media to be a transparent and accurate force, one that can be supported by the findings in the following chapters. Reflection from the results of the following chapters indicates that there is a discrepancy between the GTI report and the American presidency and media findings, imploring Wilkinson’s strategy may solve for this contradiction. In the end, while the data of this study has produced mixed and inconsistent results the overall literature on presidential terrorism rhetoric will benefit immensely from observing the foreign policy rhetoric of U.S presidents and the nations media outlets.
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Appendix I

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