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TERRORISM: A TOOL FOR SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION

By

JONATHAN VOISICH

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism: A Tool for Shaping Public Opinion

by

Jonathan Voisich

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Public Opinion matters on issues of foreign policy. This makes controlling public opinion very important for governments. In this paper I will argue that elites use terrorism both as a tool for instilling fear and by creating a certain image of groups they wish to support or destroy in order to shape public opinion. I will examine both literature on framing and public opinion data on foreign policy to show why public opinion is so important and how it can be shaped. The two case studies showing terrorism being used in these ways will be the Ronald Reagan administration's policy making in El Salvador and Nicaragua and the Bush administrations initiatives to start the war on terror and the Iraq War. These two examples will show how and why terrorism can be such an important tool for shaping public opinion to support new foreign policy initiatives.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction …… 1

2. Definitions of Terrorism …… 4

3. Public Opinion and Foreign Policy …… 11

4. Framing …….. 16

5. Reagan's Foreign Policy …… 18

6. Nicaragua ……... 25

7. El Salvador …… 31

8. War on Terror …… 36

9. Iraq War …… 47

10. Conclusion ……... 53

Bibliography …….. 57

1. Introduction

Public Opinion matters on issues of foreign policy. For any long-term policy to work domestic support is necessary. The government must work hard to dictate how these foreign policy decisions look to the American public. Not only is it imperative for them to show why each specific engagement is the right course of action but also show the rightness of their cause to get public opinion on their side.

One specific propaganda tool elites have chosen to use in recent times to help them find support for various foreign escapades is rhetoric surrounding terrorism. The use of terrorism can take many forms. One involves supporting terrorist groups that fit within the foreign policy agenda of the U.S. by promoting them as freedom fighters. During Reagan's presidency this also included supporting supposedly reformed governments fighting back against the evils of communism. This can also involve the use of terrorism as an instigator and promotor of anger and fear. While the word may have many broad definitions and its use to describe certain groups is politicized, it remains a negative term that elicits very intense reactions.

In recent history, the Reagan and George W. Bush administrations have both used terrorism in distinct ways to promote their foreign policy agendas by pushing public opinion in the direction they wanted it to go. Reagan used terrorism to support the Reagan doctrine and other anticommunist policies in the 1980's. He wanted to support the contras against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua while they were committing gross human rights violations. He also wished to back the military run government of El Salvador in their war against leftist groups fighting in their country. In both cases Reagan wished to support a group or government that was involved in terrorist activity. Violence was being committed actively against civilians and U.S. support for these two groups would be difficult based on the U.S.'s stand against all forms of

terrorism. It was imperative for Reagan to use his power to stop the contras or El Salvador's government from being labeled or shown to be a terrorist organization. This was the not the first time the U.S. backed groups engaged in leftist suppression. We had supported coups in Guatemala in 1954 and Chile in 1973 that successfully removed democratically elected leftists (Norton 2015). We had also botched the removal of Castro in Cuba with the Bay of Pigs incident (Kennedy Presidential Museum).

In the case of Bush, terrorism was used to encourage fear and anger. With 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in the country's history fresh in the minds of most citizens, terrorism was an easy and readily available tool that could be used to promote new security proposals and wars. Bush would link the word terrorism with the push for war in Iraq as well as the fear of future attacks of terrorism to push us into a war on terror, an endless war giving the government full power to engage in all areas around the globe with the stated goal of ending terrorism while keeping the country safe.

This paper is argued in three parts. The first part is that public opinion matters in areas of foreign policy. There is ample evidence to support this claim that in order for foreign policy initiatives to work, there must be domestic support behind them. The public has stable and definable preferences that affect what a government will and will not do. The second part examines how governments actively work to promote the policies they wish to proceed with to their electorate to effect change in public opinion. By working through presidential speeches and the media, they shape and frame the discussion about foreign policy topics that the public must decide whether or not they support. Building upon the first two arguments, the third shows how terrorism is used by elites to gather support and protect the interests they have. I will show why

terrorism as both a term and action is such a powerful tool that can used to push forward programs that otherwise an informed electorate would be against.

The specifics of that argument will come in two parts. The first will examine how and why Reagan used his power to protect the image of terrorist actors in Nicaragua and El Salvador in the 1980's. He not only supported groups well known for their human rights violations but also actively worked to rehabilitate and protect their image as freedom fighters and anticommunists. He did this through suppression of those in the media and through promoting false propaganda about the Contras and El Salvadorian government in his screeches and planted stories.

The second will look at how George W. Bush used the fear of terrorism in the U.S. after 9/11 to not only push forward with more surveillance and other security protocols but to also start a war in Iraq and more broadly against terrorism around the globe. He would also use his presidential speeches and high popularity to gather support for the foreign policy ideas he and his administration believed in.

2. Definitions of Terrorism

Why is terrorism as both a label and action such an effective propaganda tool for the government to use? As a term its definition is murky. Acts like bombing a building or shooting up a shopping mall are considered by many to be acts of terrorism. Yet these acts are already illegal according to almost any set of laws. Why do some acts that are already categorized as being erroneous need this additional marker and what sets them apart from other illegal actions? Understanding why this term can be used so liberally will illuminate how and why states use it as a tool in support of their foreign policy ambitions.

First there remains disagreement over its formal definition. The Oxford dictionary defines it as "The use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or to force a government to act (Oxford Dictionary)." Even within the United States Government various agencies have different ways of defining it. The State Department defines terrorism as "Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents (US Department of State 2006)." The FBI defines it as "Involving violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violates federal or state law. It appears to be intended, to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping (FBI 2013)." The Department of Homeland Security defines it as "Any activity that involves an act that is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive to critical infrastructure or key resources, and is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any state or other subdivision of the United States and appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or

kidnapping (Department of Homeland Security 2011).” Lastly the Department of Defense defines terrorism as “The calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological (Department of Defense).” While some definitions focus on destroying critical infrastructure and others on the psychological affects, they all define the term in relation to their own agencies priorities.

Despite the differences, some patterns begin to emerge. Alex Peter Schmid and A. J. Jongman’s in their book Political Terrorism look for the frequency of certain elements in 109 different definitions of terrorism. The 5 most common elements they find in the numerous definitions of terrorism are psychological effects and anticipated reactions 41.5 percent of the time, threat 47 percent of the time, fear and terror 51 percent of the time, acts political in nature 65 percent of the time, and the most common element is some form of violence or force being used 83.5 percent of the time (Schmid 1984, 5-6). Another part of this is the targeting of civilians. These people are not engaged in any form of combat and whose lives are protected under law. Yet generally terrorist actions are targeted at these types of people. While by no means do these elements settle the debate of what constitutes a terrorist group or action, they do provide certain parameters for states to utilize when deciding to label some act or group as terrorist.

Bruce Hoffman in his book Inside Terrorism comes to the conclusion that the reason we differentiate certain people as terrorists rather than just criminals is because they pursue goals that go beyond being purely egocentric. A terrorist group believes they are contributing toward a better tomorrow through the actions they pursue. Yet holding political beliefs that may be deemed extreme by modern standards does not immediately categorize one as a terrorist. Many

people are members of groups that hold radical beliefs that are illegal. This alone does not make a group a terrorist organization. What separates these groups from groups most likely to receive the classification of terrorist is their lack of violence. Similar to the 5 most common elements found within the various definitions of terrorism, Hoffman believes that terrorism must be political in its aims and motives, violent or threaten the use of violence, have intentional psychological effects that move past the initial persons affected by the violence, be carried out by an organization with some form of hierarchy, cell structure, or by a small group of individuals driven by some form of ideological goal, and be committed by a subnational or non-state entity (Hoffman 1998, 36-40).

It has long been held that states are the only legitimate actor who can commit violence. In his book Politics of Vocation, Max Weber states "State is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory (Weber 1965)." Kenneth Waltz echo's this in his book Theory of International Politics. He writes "A government, ruling by some standard of legitimacy, arrogates to itself the right to use force and to apply a variety of sanctions to control the use of force by its subjects. If some use private force, others may appeal to the government. A government has no monopoly on the use of force, as is all too evident. An effective government, however, has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and legitimate here means that public agents are organized to prevent and to counter the private use of force" (Waltz 1979, 103-104). There are obvious exceptions to this rule such as acting in self-defense but the rule generally applies. States demarcate themselves outside of the possibility of being labeled terrorist because they are the only form of recognized authority domestically and internationally.

With so many similar elements that appear to be generally accepted prerequisites for the labeling of someone or some group as a terrorist, why does there still remain controversy over who gets such a description? Unlike its earliest use in the French revolution where it was used in a positive light to describe revolutionaries taking down an oppressive government, today terrorism is universally considered derogatory. This is why the power to label has so many political ramifications. To give such a label, is to make a moral judgment. The state is declaring a group as committing some form of an illegal action that is morally repugnant and without justification. Because of this, such labeling is intensely subjective despite relative agreement on what certain elements make up terrorism. To no one's surprise, states tend to label groups they disagree with as being a terrorist organization, while groups they are in conjunction with get a pass, even if both groups engage in similar actions. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, a clichéd and overused sentiment that nonetheless describes the problem that arises when attempting to correctly classify groups. For this reason, the defining and labeling of what constitutes terrorism on the international stage is very difficult and divisive.

Many states in the Arab, African, and Asian parts of the world have voiced opposition to the UN getting involved against perceived terrorist actions because of the belief that western countries would label any liberation movement as a terrorist group (Hoffman 1998, 23-24). Liberation movements use similar tactics that have been used by states in wars yet they are demonized and considered illegal. Do so called liberation groups or revolutionaries have the right to use any tactics available to them to fight back against perceived foreign or domestic oppression? While it is true that states have committed similar acts that terrorist organizations have and on a much larger scale, there are rules of combat and war that at least on the face of it dictate what states can and cannot do when engaged in violence with another state or group.

While they may go beyond these restrictions their actions can be labeled war crimes which can presumably be used to convict the perpetrators of the illegal actions undertaken. Terrorists see themselves as not beholden to any form of restriction in terms of what tactics they may use to further their cause. For this reason, states, while very much just as responsible for violent actions against civilians, remain outside of the categorization (Hoffman 1998, 23-25)

There clearly remains a debate over the labeling of what constitutes terrorism. As we have seen definitions are difficult to universally recognize and disseminate. This applies especially to terrorism because of the negative implications of such a label. While mentioned briefly before, another reason for such disagreement over labeling is the support by states for various types of groups that carry out perceived terrorist actions around the world. Many terrorist groups today receive support from states informally and formally. This type of support can range from protection within a country, supplying them with money and arms, and helping them to recruit. Why then would an internationally recognized state risk condemnation and punishment from their international peers to support a group labeled as being terrorist? First the state may not agree with the label and supports the group for ideological reasons. Though in most instances, groups obtain the terrorist label for their actions and not from or because of their ideological pursuits. Support of these groups allows states to pursue actions without personally getting their own troops involved. This type of action is also a much cheaper foreign policy initiative that states can use from their repertoire. These groups can influence policy or even topple regimes that a state wants changed. By lending their support, a state can fully transform a group from being disorganized and in danger of being destroyed, to a force of nature to be reckoned with by other states. We can observe this behavior from countries like Pakistan in their support of radical

groups in Kashmir against the Indian army, as well from Iran in the support for the Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas (Byman 2005, 2-5).

Support for liberation groups using tactics of terror can be just as politically useful for western democracies as other countries. The two case studies of this paper will show how support for these causes or groups in countries like the U.S. is possible by working covertly or by creating an image that obscures the horrors these groups spread. Support for internationally recognized terrorist groups will not be easily accepted within democracies as public opinion data later in the paper will show. While there appears to be some recognition that the U.S. government must interact with other states with repressive regimes such as Saudi Arabia because they are internationally recognized sovereign countries and within our globalized economy some form of diplomacy is necessary. Support for terrorist groups does not get this type of leeway. They must attempt to not only support a group but paint a picture of positivity that obscures their true face. They are not a terrorist group; they are freedom fighters against oppression. The same tactic many nonwestern countries have used to legitimize the struggle of groups fighting colonial oppression is used to legitimize foreign policy initiatives of large powers in the west most notably by the U.S. If the cause they support can be shown to be righteous, ones tactics can be hidden from the public eye.

This research shows why a word and concept such as terrorism can be so useful for governments to exploit. Not only because it can encompass many types of activity but also because such a label can be politically useful. The term when applied to a group or actor is the kiss of death. It hurts the chances of that group or person gaining any true mainstream traction and damages the ideas they are pursuing. When applied to a person or group it can negatively affect the amount of support countries such as the US can give. It also carries with it a fear factor

that is palpable. The activity it is describing terrifies most populaces because they are the target. For this reason terrorism is the specific tool being described in this paper. The rest of the paper will show why its uses are broad and powerful for elites to use to shape public opinion in the favor of their policies.

3. Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

Does public opinion actually matter in regards to foreign policy? In this paper I argue that terrorism as both a concept and action is used by elites to push a foreign policy agenda. They use terrorism because it is difficult to define, the power it brings through its use as an identifier, and the natural fear and anger it arouses when used within public discourse. Yet, do governments need to engage in propagandizing to get the public behind them or can they simply go ahead with the foreign policy plan they already have without any thought of repercussions?

Early research appeared to suggest that public opinion had little to no impact on foreign policy. Bernard Cohen found that state department officials had very little interest in public opinion and that it did not register in their decision making (Cohen 1973). Others such as Ralph B. Levering believed that presidents had free reign in regards to foreign policy dictating what the country would do (Levering 1978). Consensus had appeared to show that public opinion not only did not affect foreign policy decisions but that it was wholly unconnected to it.

The Vietnam War helped start the reexamination of the importance of public opinion on foreign policy. More in depth studies and surveys aimed at foreign policy issues were initiated to determine if Americans supported the war in Vietnam and why opinions appeared to have changed over the course of the war. This data eventually helped start a pushback against the assumed notion that public opinion does not matter in regards to foreign policy decision making and that the public was irrational and uninformed in regards to their opinions and feelings on foreign policy matters (Holsti 1992, 445).

Important work was also done by Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro in this arena. They argued that the "public as a collective body is capable of holding sensible opinions and processing the information made available to it (Page 3, 1992)." This is not to say that the public

is always perfectly informed or always correct in its judgments. Page and Shapiro merely show through extensive research into countless surveys that the American public has stable and very real opinions that change in non-random fashions.

There has also been a lot of research done showing how and why public opinion matters to elites in foreign policy matters. Hartley and Russet show that public opinion, though not the entire force behind decision making had a strong impact on government policy making around the creation of military budgets (Hartley 912, 1992). Thomas Knecht argues for the idea of conditional political responsiveness. Within this theory come five propositions that dictate how a president will react to public opinion. The first is that a president will make many decisions during any foreign policy debate or action that may or may not be dictated by public opinion. The second is that as the majority position increases on an issue the president becomes more likely to favor such a position. The third is that the higher the issue salience to the public the more likely the president will be sensitive to the position. Fourth, the president has the most pressure against him to favor an issue when there is a clear consensus and high salience around a specific issue. Lastly the public preferences and attention move in predictable ways when moving through decision stages (Knecht 2010, 17, 18).

Most recently Michael Baum and Philip Potter have examined how the public can constrain and influence the decision making of their leaders in areas of foreign policy. They contend that the reliability of information from elites to the public determines how well people can pressure their leaders. There are two conditions necessary for this to happen. The first being a politically effective opposition to elites that can tell the public about the failings and dishonesty of those working above them. The second is readily available media institutions that can transmit the opposition's feelings and thoughts to the public at large. Both of these parts are necessary

and must work together if there is going to be any kind of constraint on the government by the people it represents. This research shows why it is such a priority of elites in power to control their messaging and cut down opposition for their foreign policy decisions to succeed unimpeded (Baum 2015, 4-7).

Public opinion on human rights as well as violence against civilians is important. Early research by Geyer and Shapiro appeared to show that human rights was of little concern to the public. In their paper Report: Human Rights they came to a few conclusions. One was that a president's view on human rights did not affect public opinion and human rights as a goal for foreign policy was not an important one. Another was that human rights support exists normally among the US population but only so far. Backing for human rights starts to decrease when they might interfere with more important foreign policy ends. This research while not stating that the government had free reign to do as it pleased, did give the impression that human rights was not a particularly interesting aspect of public opinion research in regards to foreign policy (Geyer 1988).

Kathleen Pritchard does a reassessment of this research. She finds that despite the previous conclusions arrived at by Geyer and Shapiro, human rights as a topic does carry salience within the US. Also while it is true that support for human rights does decrease when other foreign policy factors are included, the majority of people still favor human rights despite how it may affect foreign policy. In contradiction to the conclusion that the American people prefer quiet democracy on issues of human rights, Pritchard finds that the majority of Americans support public criticism and the withholding of aid in cases of human rights abuses. While much of her research is based upon reinterpreting the polls used by Shapiro and Geyer previously, it does show that the conclusions previously drawn are not conclusive (Pritchard 1991, 132).

More recently McFarland and Matthews have found that there is a divide between endorsement of human rights and commitment to defending them. 75 percent of the people in their sample averaged a 4 on a scale of 5. This meant they agreed with the endorsement of human rights or greatly supported it. These numbers dropped when commitment to these ideals was put up against other foreign policy agenda items. The average dropped to 61 percent. While still a majority it did rank 12th out of 15 foreign policy goals when polled. This research falls in with previous thoughts but clarifies them (McFarland 2005, 377). For our purposes the reach pushes in the direction that Americans do care about human rights in the abstract very passionately. While in practice more practical implications take precedent, it does show that support for groups committing human rights violations would be unpopular on two levels. Not only would we be giving funds and possibly military support to groups or countries which are not of high concern for many Americans, we would also be helping those committing atrocities. While there could certainly be problems that could arise if strongly supported and necessary foreign policy agendas included supporting countries engaged in human rights violations, this does not appear to be the case in either of Nicaragua or El Salvador. Both cases will be shown to be extensions of a roll back strategy against communism that while it was popular to dislike communism the assets required to do so would take some convincing of their ultimate importance.

Public opinion of terrorism shows how important the topic was after 9/11. The fear of being killed in a terrorist attack or having a family member perish in an attack was at its highest after 9/11 at 59 percent. It would drop after the attack to 5 percent but rise up again to 4 percent on the eve of the start of the Iraq war. The fear of an attack was very palpable in the country and it was being used to push foreign policy initiatives leading to higher fears around major events.

Polls on the most important problem the US was facing also showed how important terrorism was after 9/11 and the months following it. Hitting a high of 46 percent after the attacks it would decline to 24 percent soon after. In the lead up to the Iraq war it would rise back up to 33 percent. This is in comparison to the 2010 through the present numbers that show terrorism as the most important problem the US is currently facing being between 1 and 5 percent. Terrorism is usually not high in importance to the America people in their list of fears. Yet after 9/11 and up through the Iraq War it was fixated on the American people's minds. This is why it was so useful to use to push forward new polices geared around it (Newport 2015).

Public opinion does affect the choices a government will make when deciding what course of action to take abroad. It does not always affect every situation the same, but when opinion is swayed in one direction about a salient issue it becomes much more difficult for a president to go against it. Public opinion on issues such as human rights and terrorism also support the idea the governments cannot easily support such groups that engage in activities that fall under such a definition. This leads governments to actively seek to shape public opinion to fit their agenda. Governments will use framing as a way to tie together concepts and ideas so the public will as well. Framing is used by people such as the president to shape how we look at a certain issue. Bush will do this especially well in the framing of the Iraq War as an extension of the war on terror.

4. Framing

The basic definition of framing is "two logically equivalent but not transparently equivalent statements of a problem lead decision makers to choose different options (Rabin 1998, 36)." First the framing effect occurs according to James Druckman when "In the course of describing an issue or event, a speakers emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions (Druckman 2001a, 1042)." If public opinion is influenced by elites like Zaller states, then the language and framing used within becomes very important to influencing individuals. Robert Entman has shown how successful elites can be in influencing people who accept frames uncritically (Entman 1993). Framing is not persuasion. Its purpose is not to change ones beliefs from one thing to another. Instead it works to change the importance of a belief. As the Iraq War case later will show, Bush framed the Iraq War as a continuation of the war on terror. By doing this the war gained new importance and context within the general population (Nelson 1999, 1041). Framing works according to Zaller by changing the availability of dissimilar thoughts. The person listening to the information from a specific frame point brings this new information into their mind almost passively (Zaller 1992 83-84).

Druckman also differentiates between two types of framing that occur. The two types are equivalency framing effects and emphasis framing effects. Equivalency framing occurs when different words that create the same meaning are used to convey different things. This is the ability the make a certain bit of information appear negative or positive depending on the wording used. The framing of an issue will direct how someone who absorbs the information will feel about it. Emphasis framing is when certain thoughts are focused upon, the speaker can lead those listening to fixate on those thoughts. Both types of framing force the person listening

to concentrate on certain considerations over others. They are different in that emphasis framing does not make matching statements in different ways (Druckman 2001b, 229-230). For our purposes emphasis framing is the important one. Bush emphasized the Iraq war as an extension on the war on terror getting the public to focus on that as the reason for war instead of allowing for an objective detached view of the situation.

One important aspect of framing is who is doing it. Framing does not work in every situation. Druckman looks into the importance of the source of the framing and its actual effects. What he finds shows the credibility of the source is paramount for the framing to be accepted by the person listening to it. As with media priming and affect persuasion, the source credibility is essential for framing to work in its intended way (Druckman 2001a, 1054).

Framing occurs constantly and in ways we ourselves as consumers of information from all sets of sources cannot always comprehend. Framing is important because it gives elites with influence a distinct and important tool to use to shape public opinion. This framing will be used extensively by the Bush administration in the lead up to the Iraq War. By using his national platform Bush will be able to push the attention of the nation in the direction he wants. This direction is towards declaring war on Iraq. Framing will play a key part in the analysis of how he was able to use terrorism so effectively in his pursuit of this goal.

5. Reagan's Foreign Policy

When Reagan took office the policy ideas about the Cold War began to change. A shift from a strategy of containment to one of actively attempting to chip away at communism started to come into effect. Much of this policy change was geared toward Central and South America. A part of the world the U.S. had notably attempted to control and police since the days of Theodore Roosevelt was shifting in a direction that favored the Soviet Union's foreign policy goals. U.S. hegemony was seen as being at risk from encroaching communism and there was a clear and direct attempt to change that fact. Through what would become known as the Reagan Doctrine, the U.S. actively attempted to not only support governments in their suppression of communist uprisings but also support guerilla and so called liberation groups in various countries fighting against communist regimes. This policy was difficult to pursue because many groups and governments we wished to support were engaged in violent actions against civilians and had engaged in terror campaigns against their foes. What was necessary to publicly support these groups was a clear foreign policy message and initiative. The Reagan Doctrine would become a virtuous set of missions to help those engaged against the oppressive nature of communism. For there to be a positive linkage between the fight against communism and the fight many rebel groups and junta regimes in Central and South America were engaged in, Reagan had to make them appear as fighting a fight for freedom. Without a positive image those groups would lose their legitimacy and the policy of fighting against communist oppression would lose its moral initiative.

This new shift beyond containment was seen as a necessary next step in U.S. foreign policy. While the CIA analysts were observing that the Soviet Union was on the decline, Reagan pushed forward the belief that they were on the rise. This fearmongering was intended to push

forward a more active foreign policy against leftist groups in Central and South America (Parry 2011). In 1980 speaking to the Wall Street Journal Reagan said "The Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in this game of dominos, there wouldn't be any hotspots in the world (Sklar 1988, 57)." While it took until 1985 for the term Reagan Doctrine to be coined by the columnist Charles Krauthammer, the origins of this policy of arming and giving aid to rebels in countries affected by communism began in 1981 (Lagon 1994, 2).

Essential to moving in this new direction was the unified ideological framework of the Reagan administration. This framework could be traced all the way back to conservative thinking in the 1950's. James Burnham argued that the U.S. should be seeking victory over the Soviet Union rather than just containment. He believed the U.S. should support anti Soviet movements in Soviet controlled countries to roll back communist ideology. While the U.S. certainly pursued various covert operations in other countries prior to Reagan such as Iran in 1953 and Cuba in 1961, the view of push back as a dominant foreign policy remained relatively dormant until it was reinvigorated by the Reagan administration and the conservative party in the 1980's (Scott 14-17).

With a united front moving forward against the Soviet Union it was important to frame this policy with a clear dichotomy. Supporting the various liberation groups, guerilla movements, and oppressive regimes in Central and South America required painting this policy as a fight between good and evil. Throughout his administration, Reagan and his policy makers did their very best to not only claim the U.S. was a beacon of freedom to the world by calling the U.S. a "Shining city on the hill" in various speeches. There was also a concerted attempt to portray the Soviet Union as the center of all that was against freedom in the world. In a speech in 1982 to a

group of evangelicals, he called the Soviet Union "An Evil Empire." In another speech that same year Reagan called for a "Crusade of Freedom" against the Soviet Union (Lagon 1994, 3). It was clearly important to create a strict division between the actions the U.S. supported and those supported by the Soviet Union. They had to be perceived as being polar opposites.

George Shultz, Reagan's Secretary of State in a speech on February 22nd 1985 in San Francisco declared the U.S. would support what he described as freedom fighters in many third world countries threatened by communism and declared America had a moral duty to do so (Shultz 1985). In the address that cemented the Reagan Doctrine as the cornerstone of U.S. foreign Policy Reagan stated "We must not break faith with those who are risking their lives on every continent from Afghanistan to Nicaragua, to defy Soviet supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth (Reagan 1985a)." By establishing the U.S.'s rollback strategy against the Soviet Union as a mission of freedom, the U.S. allowed the groups or governments they would inevitably support to be seen in the same fashion. Without this clear message tied directly to a distinct foreign policy initiative, supporting the military led government in El Salvador and the Contras in Nicaragua would have been very difficult because of their many human rights violations.

Another key aspect of the propaganda mission of the Reagan administration was to kick the Vietnam syndrome that had found its way into the American consciousness. This syndrome was an aversion to interventionist foreign policy initiatives after the disaster that was the Vietnam War. The American people and the press had turned against the government in that war and this mindset would have to be changed if Reagan and other hawkish policy makers were to get their way in Washington. This syndrome would be kicked by establishing propaganda networks such as the Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean to beef up

good press around U.S. allies and through creating fear and panic about the Soviet Union and communism. This organization engaged in a white propaganda campaign to influence the American public of the righteousness of their foreign policy pursuits in Latin America (Miller 1985). They used white propaganda which is propaganda that comes from an openly identified source to mask their black propaganda. Examples of this would include op-eds by people in the media claiming to be independent, but actually had government support and influence behind them. Key players in this pursuit within the CIA included William Casey, the organizations director, and Robert Gates. They helped push forward a narrative that the Soviet Union was expanding it grasp despite many CIA analyst claiming the opposite was occurring (Parry 2011).

A message of hope and freedom for the communist controlled world was what the Reagan administration would build their foreign policy push upon. The clear and intentional messaging of the administration allowed them to pursue their rollback strategy in much of the third world in an attempt to squash any remnants of communism that had acquired a hold. In the cases of Nicaragua and El Salvador, the administration worked to communicate to the American people why these countries needed our help and why supporting the contras in Nicaragua and the military led government in El Salvador against rebel groups was necessary to push back against Soviet aggression and the oppression by the leftist governments in those countries.

In National Security Divisions Directive number 77 Reagan formally created a network for pubic propaganda that would manage public diplomacy and its relation to national security. Walter Raymond jr headed the planning group that would create the public diplomacy campaigns. One such campaign was the creation of the aforementioned Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean or S/LPD. These campaigns would all be directed to influence the public to support national security objectives (Reagan 1983b).

Though the Reagan Doctrine was the central policy of the Reagan administration during the 1980's, the all-encompassing policy towards the Soviet Union came from the National Security Decision Directive number 75. The policy broke down into 3 elements. The first and most important was "To contain and over time reverse Soviet expansionism by competing effectively on a sustained basis with the Soviet Union in all international arenas, particularly in the overall military balance and in geographical regions of priority concern to the United States." The second and third were attempts to effect some form of change within the Soviet Union and to attempt negotiations with the Soviet Union that benefit the U.S. These two were less important. Also within this directive is echoed the policy of supporting groups in the third world looking to rid themselves of communism, which is the backbone of the Reagan Doctrine (Reagan 1983a).

The Reagan administration also had clear policies regarding terrorism. In a National Security Decisions Directive number 138, Reagan outlined what the U.S.'s policy regarding terrorism would be. In the directive he says that any state supporting terrorist groups must not be able to prosper and that any state attempting to disrupt democratization anywhere in the world would fail in its goals. He also speaks about the concern over states using terrorism as a foreign policy device and how the Department of State will use its power to prosecute any persons or states involved in such behavior. Reagan proposed within this directive a bill that would help punish those who take hostages and those who sabotage aircrafts. It would also provide rewards to those who give information about terrorists, and prohibit the training and or supporting of any terrorist organizations (Reagan 1984b).

Public opinion would also play an important part in Reagan's strategy. Not only was it important to shift the public's views on interventionist policies after the Vietnam debacle but

also for the purpose of having a strong coalition of support for the foreign policy objectives the Reagan administration were intentioned to complete. Public opinion surveys during the 1980's focused a lot on U.S. policy in Central America. Questions about the possible spread of communism as well as support for El Salvador and rebel groups such as the contras were asked of the public. Polling showed the big task Reagan had in convincing the public to go along with his foreign policy initiatives. From June 1983 through June 1985 the majority of Americans opposed the idea of the U.S. helping to overthrow the Sandinistas. It would hit as high as 70 percent opposed in the months leading up to June 1985 (Sobel 1989, 117).

Sending military aid to El Salvador and Nicaraguan rebel forces was also not supported by the majority of Americans from the inception of requests to do so by the American government. This lack of support for the U.S. intervening in Central America can be seen in the presidents low approval numbers on Central American issues. Reagan's approval ratings in this area fluctuated between 18 and 35 percent according to Gallop, much lower than his overall foreign policy numbers which ranged from 31 to 56 percent up until the Iran-contra affair. These numbers are also much worse when compared with his overall performance numbers which ranged from 61 to 68 percent (Sobel 1989, 117).

During this period Reagan attempted many times to change the views of the American people with campaigns to gain support for military aid and intervention in Nicaragua and El Salvador. When campaigning for 100 million dollars in contra aid in 1986, opposition to this policy dropped from roughly 70 percent against to 62 percent against. Approval for the aid rose from 26 to 35 percent as well. Even after Reagan gave a nationally televised speech in 1986 the majority did not support more aid to the contras. The campaigning had an effect but not a substantial enough one. Public opinion showed itself to be an important force that Reagan knew

was important to shape in the direction he wished it to go. If he believed that it did not matter he would not have worked so hard to hide the terrorist actions many of the groups he wished to support engaged in (Sobel 1989, 118-119).

Reagan's foreign policy agenda is filled with many examples of his administration working to influence the public towards supporting the groups he wished to support. By defining the fight as being between good and evil, the US versus the USSR, he helped plant the idea in people's heads that all policies in favor of this idea must also follow the same logic. Two concrete examples of this are his attempts to improve the image of the Contras in Nicaragua and the Salvadorian government in El Salvador. The next section will show how he worked to display both groups as fighting in the tradition of ourselves. This would be done with the active suppression of the negative details surrounding their actual activity.

6. Nicaragua

In 1979 the Sandinistas ousted the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle and established a new government. The U.S. cut off any aid to the county and excluded them from programs used to promote U.S. investment and trade (Parsa 2000, 224). After this various groups that included ex Sandinistas, national guardsmen, peasants, and farmers upset over new land policies conspired together to form a resistance to the new government. This disparate group would become known as the contras. Before they had outside support their numbers were small with roughly 2000 members. After support from the U.S. and others arrived, their numbers rose to over 6000 (Brown University).

Reagan did his very best to show why the Contras deserved our help against the Sandinistas. The U.S. had been supporting the previous dictator and found themselves with an unfriendly new regime to deal with. In his state of the Union address in 1985 Reagan said this describing the U.S. mission in Nicaragua "The Sandinista dictatorship of Nicaragua, with full Cuban-Soviet bloc support, not only persecutes its people, the church, and denies a free press, but arms and provides bases for Communist terrorists attacking neighboring states. Support for freedom fighters is self-defense and totally consistent with the OAS and U.N. Charters. It is essential that the Congress continue all facets of our assistance to Central America. I want to work with you to support the democratic forces whose struggle is tied to our own security (Reagan 1985a)."

In a speech soon after at a conservative political action conference he stated about the contras "They are our brothers, these freedom fighters, and we owe them our help. I've spoken recently of the freedom fighters of Nicaragua. You know the truth about them. You know who they're fighting and why. They are the moral equal of our Founding Fathers and the brave men

and women of the French Resistance. We cannot turn away from them, for the struggle here is not right versus left; it is right versus wrong (Reagan 1985b)." These are intensely positive and direct words comparing the contras fight to the one our founding fathers undertook.

These remarks were a key part of the propaganda campaign and established the president at the head of it. Behind the scenes, the government was sustaining the campaign to create an image of the Soviet Union as encroaching villains. Reagan also painted the Nicaraguan government as being one of the worst human rights violators. In a speech about Central American policy in 1984 he levied false human rights violations against Nicaragua saying "there has been an attempt to wipe out an entire culture, the Miskito Indians, thousands of whom have been slaughtered or herded into detention camps where they have been starved and abused (Reagan 1984a)." The campaign used was intense and direct but it would not be easy. Nicaragua was poor and had only just displaced a brutal dictator in Anastasio Somoza. They were not some looming evil that had to be uprooted in most eyes.

Reagan's attempts to sway the public into supporting the contras struggle against communism took many different paths. The Reagan administration built up a public diplomacy bureaucracy to direct propaganda campaigns in painting the contras as the good guys while making the Sandinista regime appear as totalitarian and oppressive. Otto Reich, the person running The Office of Public Diplomacy for Latin America and the Caribbean, was the person lobbying for the contras. This organization helped disseminate white propaganda into the press while also compelling members of the press to get with the message (Parry 1988). Some examples of the white propaganda embedded into news without the disclaimer of government sponsorship include an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal. The op-ed is about an arms buildup in Nicaragua and the possible consequences of it. This piece was done with consultation from the

S/LPD. Another example comes from a story run on NBC about the contras. The piece was prepared with the help of two contractors from the S/LPD who had visited a camp where contra fighters were staying. Other examples include running op-ed pieces in the New York Times as well as the Washington Post for the signatures of opposition leaders Alphonso Rubello, Adelpho Callero, and Arturo Cruz. The campaign to protect the image of the contras and hurt the Sandinistas was an active and well organized effort (Miller 1985).

The pressuring of reporters included Reich telling NPR editors that his office was listening to all of their coverage and that he considered their reporting to be biased after they had reported on a contra attack. He also visited CBS to complain that their coverage of Central America was misinformed and imperfect. He yelled at both the correspondents and Washington bureau chief for hours. He believed that this was necessary to improve the information the American public was receiving on issues important to the Reagan administration (Parry 1988).

Once the U.S. entered the conflict, the Contras were able to increase their fight substantially. Contra rebels were being supplied with weapons to help fight against the Sandinistas (Kinzer 1984). Nicaraguan rebels were training alongside Cuban exiles in Florida to enact guerilla attacks on the Sandinista government (Thomas 1981). The contras were involved in very brutal violence against many civilians and had received instructions from the CIA that encouraged such behavior. In 1984 it came out that the CIA had produced a manual called Psychological Operations in Guerilla Warfare for the contra rebels. In the manual it encouraged the rebels to blackmail civilians, blow up public buildings, and assassinate public officials. This was all in the effort to intimidate and gain support. To promote their cause they were told to talk about their fight as being against the Russian imperialists and not the nationals. This would allow them to gather support from the peasants living within the country (Clarridge 1985). The CIA

claimed the manual was given to the contras so they could “Win the hearts and minds of the Nicaraguan population.” They also claimed the manual was meant to moderate the contras behavior (Brinkley 1984).

Support for this escapade quickly began to shrink within the U.S. and within congress. Despite Reagan and his administrations best efforts to keep the image of the contras a positive one, many reports from within the country and by outside human rights groups such as America’s Watch showed the contras were involved in brutal violence against civilians and were destroying much of the public infrastructure within the country. It also became evident that despite all the work and aid the U.S. had put toward supporting the contras, they had little to no chance of victory over the Sandinistas. In 1983 the UCLA (Unilaterally Controlled Latino Assets) was created by the CIA to bomb bridges and destroy ships in Nicaragua while making it appear as if the Contras were responsible. This led to the mining of more than a few Nicaraguan harbors which destroyed many Nicaraguan boats while damaging 5 foreign boats (Leogrande 1996, 340). This behavior was roundly condemned by the international community and eventually led to World Court decision finding the U.S. in violation of international law, a decision that was quickly ignored by the U.S. (International Court of Justice 1986).

This incident also led to the passing of the Boland Amendment. The first Boland Amendment had been passed on December 8th, 1982 barring the arming, training, or advising of contra rebels in Nicaragua. This had come to pass because of knowledge of the U.S. support of the violent atrocities of the contras against civilians. The second and third Boland Amendments came about to close any loopholes that allowed for any type of aid to the contras (Brown University 1982). These events led to what would become known as the Iran-Contra affair. The U.S. engaged in arms deals with Iran to obtain covert funds to continue funding the contras in

Nicaragua. This revelation showed just how important it had been early on for the administration to show that the contras were freedom fighters. When they had been labeled terrorist by the U.S., the government was no longer able to give them aid. We had broken our standard of not supporting terrorists (National Security Archive).

The human rights violations that were committed by the contras in their fight against the Sandinistas were many and brutal. The America's watch group reported violations of the laws of war by both the Sandinista government and the contra rebels. Though they both had committed atrocities, the government had begun to curtail its abuses. The Contras continued with them throughout the conflict. The International Human Rights Law Group had 145 sworn statements about the abuses by the contras which included rape, torture, mutilation, and other forms of terror against the civilian population (McManus 1985). There were targeted assassinations of health care workers plus the seizing and burning of civilian properties. The contras engaged in behavior outside of the rules of conflict continually. Attacking and torturing civilians and other noncombatants (American Watch Committee 1986, 19-21).

The entire Nicaragua affair was a disaster for the U.S. First by not acknowledging the human rights violations from the beginning the U.S entered into a relationship doomed to fail. Attempting to portray the contras as freedom fighters instead of terrorists cost the U.S. in the international community and violated its own self-professed values on terrorism held within the country. It is rather clear that the contras were responsible for gross human rights violations and violence against civilians. It was an important facet of the tactical plan of attack against the Sandinistas. This attempt to define a group as something other than it was, led the U.S. to give power to a group that committed horrible violations of international law while simultaneously leading to the Iran-Contra affair. The propaganda networks that were set up as well as the

speeches given by the president show a concerted and necessary effort by those in power to transform the way the public saw the contras and the situation in Nicaragua. Once this subterfuge could no longer be held up to scrutiny the government was unable to publically support them in the way they wished, which led to illegal covert actions. Despite all of the power the government has in foreign policy realms, they are wary of public support. The framing of the contras as freedom fighters worked initially because communism and the USSR helped make for negative companions. Eventually the framing and propaganda were not enough to convince the public and congress that such support financially and militarily was necessary.

7. El Salvador

The second case involves a country that does not fall under the Reagan Doctrine. In this case the U.S. supported the military led government in El Salvador against the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), a combination of five leftist militia groups. When describing the reasons for supporting the government in El Salvador Reagan stated our intentions were to "try to halt the infiltration into the Americas by terrorists, by outside interference and those who aren't just aiming at El Salvador but, I think, are aiming at the whole of Central and possibly later South America -- and, I'm sure, eventually North America. But this is what we're doing, is trying to stop this destabilizing force of terrorism and guerilla warfare and revolution from being exported in here, backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba and those others that we've named (Reagan 1981)." With Nicaragua being run by the communist Sandinistas, the U.S. believed it very pertinent to protect El Salvador from any communist or leftist interference.

For years El Salvador had been run by oppressive right wing military groups, many of which had support from the U.S. In 1979 a coup was enacted by various military officers ousting General Carlos Romero from office in order to reclaim the military's good name and to stop government atrocities. This new regime found support from various leftist groups and more moderates hoping some reforms could be enacted because civilians were given positions within the government. The regime was quickly coopted by older conservative military leaders and the security forces continued their violence against civilian by firing into crowds. Eventually all civilians resigned and all parties that hoped for some kind of reform joined with the guerrilla movement against the military regime. The violence continued that year with demonstrations in San Salvador's central plaza being attacked by sniper fire, and a general strike being met with violence killing between 22 and 50 people. Archbishop Oscar Romero, whom had been

nominated for a Nobel peace prize just the previous year, was assassinated for speaking out against the crimes by the government. At his funeral a bomb was thrown into the proceedings accompanied by gun fire leaving close to 40 people dead. The regime was constantly committing acts of terror against its civilians, acts that were enhanced by U.S. support (UN 1993, 27-28).

The military support from the Carter administration continued under Reagan throughout the 1980's. From 1980 to 1985 the U.S. supplied 1.7 billion dollars in aid to El Salvador. A report from the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, a leftist congressional lobby, showed that the Reagan administration had not been honest with aid going to El Salvador. Three fourths of the money was supposed to go towards economic and social development. Instead only 15 percent went towards it, with the rest going towards military operations. This behavior only helped to intensify the civil war within the country (Brinkley 1985).

A report on El Salvador was required every six months from the Reagan administration as a stipulation for continued military aid. If Reagan could show that the El Salvadorian government was reforming, the label of terrorist state would never come into the equation. Reagan reiterated to congress on January 28th, 1982 in a report that the Salvadorian government was improving its human rights record and was centralizing its control over every part of the military. The report showed that abuses by the government on civilians had decreased and that there has been a concerted effort to comply with internationally recognized human rights (Weinraub 1982).

What made Reagan's job so difficult was El Salvador continuing to commit acts that were hard to hide and to spin positively to congress and the American people. Just days before his speech, a massacre took place in El Mozote in which 700-1000 civilians were brutality murdered. People were hacked to death by machetes and many young girls were raped. The

administration was unable to spin this story so they covered it up and the State Department denied it even occurred (Danner 1994).

This cover up and denial by the government ties into attacks also waged with members of the press. Raymond Bonner was a New York Times reporter who, in 1982 while in rebel territory in El Salvador reported on the human rights violations committed by the government including the massacre in El Mozote. This report flew in contradiction with the words of Reagans State of the Union address. This report did not make the Reagan administration very happy. The attacks on him came swiftly. The attacks on Bonner included Ambassador Deana Hinton claiming his reporting was advocacy journalism while Thomas Enders, the assistant secretary of state for Inter-American affairs told congress that there was no evidence for the massacre that Bonner had reported on. The Wall Street Journal was most damning in its criticism of Donner saying he was played by the rebels he was embedded with and that he gave them more credence than the government in his reporting (Miner 1993).

After much pressure the Times transferred Bonner to the financial desk from which he quit soon after. Yet despite all the criticism and pressure put upon Bonner he was eventually vindicated. Hundreds of bones were excavated from El Mozote many of them children showing that a massacre had indeed taken place where Bonner had reported. Yet the damage that was done to the journalism of Bonner and others such as Alma Guuillermoprieto of the Washington Post who had reported on this issue had widespread affects. If a Times correspondent can be moved from his position, then others will fear for their jobs as well, leading to softer coverage of serious issues (Miner 1993).

Reports of atrocities continued throughout the Reagan administration. In 1984 they reported that the military and security personnel in El Salvador were responsible for daily acts of

torture and terror against noncombatants. This would involve rape, burning of flesh, beatings, and executions (Amnesty International 1984). In order to continue militarily supporting the junta regime the Reagan administration attached military aid to El Salvador onto an amendment for a bill intended to help feed starving people in Africa affected by a drought (Ayres 1984). They even helped disperse propaganda from the Salvadorian government about the apparent atrocities committed by the guerilla forces. One such case involves the New York Times picking up a story that guerilla fighters had executed peasants attempting to acquire voting cards (Lemoyne 1988). The government put this story into the State Department booklet that was dispersed to congress and other policy makers to show how evil the FMLN terrorists were. It was later found out that the story was planted by the Salvadorian government. The New York Times would later recant the story (New York Times 1988)

If it was not clear enough that the U.S. was supporting a regime committed to spreading terror over its citizens The United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services put out a report in 2000 examining the likelihood that a member of either the National Guard or the Liberators Battalion of the Treasury Police would have been involved in human rights violations during the 1980's. By using reports from Amnesty International from 1983-1986 it was clear that all branches involved with security within El Salvador were involved in gross human rights violations against civilians. Between 1982 and 1983 roughly 8000 civilians were murdered. By 1984 the killings and abductions started to decrease because of international pressure especially from the U.S. Even though they decreased the number remained quite high with Americas Watch reporting an average of 70-232 people killed each month between 1985 and 1986. All security units within the country practiced torture, kidnapping, and murder as a strict policy to curtail the

FMLN. Even though by the late 1980's the killings had decreased they were still high by any measure of human rights (United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services 2000).

The case of the US supporting the Salvadorian government against the leftist groups fighting them within their country shows how important it was to control the image of such a foreign policy decision. As shown previously, public opinion matters. Support is needed to back such foreign efforts. The Salvadorian government was responsible for many massacres against their civilian population. They were committing actions that were reprehensible and indefensible. To convince the American people and Congress to support them financially it required suppressing the native actions of the government and denouncing the leftist groups fighting the terrorist groups themselves. This example shows how important it is for a government to frame their intentioned allies in the best possible light. When Reagan could no longer hide the atrocities committed he was no longer able to gather support for the idea of financially supporting the Salvadoran government's military efforts. Both Nicaragua and El Salvador show the Reagan administration working to suppress any ideas of terrorism being related to the groups they supported. Once this became no longer tenable their foreign policy agenda had to pivot and public and financial support became untenable.

8. War on Terror

9/11 changed many things in this country and the world at large. The largest terrorist attack in our history shook us very deeply. Were we as safe as we had previously thought? A new enemy had emerged in the shape of Al Qaeda and the Taliban and we were determined to destroy it. Yet an even larger enemy came to shape the foreign policy discussion after 9/11. One that carried with it deep fears of attack from anywhere at any time. This enemy was the act of terrorism.

The natural fear that comes from the threat of terrorism would be utilized by the Bush administration to grow our military industry as well as our presence throughout the world. It would also catapult into existence the modern surveillance state we find ourselves in today. This was all sold as necessary actions to protect against terrorism. While going to war in both Afghanistan and Iraq stole the headlines, the larger framework that involved both was the War on Terror. This war was not only started but was forged through the use of terrorism as a fear factor to push forward ever increasing interventionist strategies around the world. How was Bush able to use this fear and hatred of terrorism to start a war on the concept itself?

First the war on terror must be explained. Unlike most wars which involve two countries fighting each other the war on terror was against a tactic and the groups that would seek to use it. After the attacks on 9/11, President Bush would first use the phrase war on terror when giving some unscripted remarks at Camp David on September 16th, 2001. He would say "This crusade, this war on terrorism – is going to take a while." After these remarks he was criticized for using the word crusade because of its negative connotations for Muslims across the world. He would later apologize for using the word (Perez-Rivas 2001). Yet on September 20th his speech to congress would show why the war on terrorism part of his speech would be more newsworthy. In

this speech Bush would state “our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” Later on in the speech he would declare “And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.” Bush was clearly stating a new policy directive the U.S. would be initiating in regards to foreign operations and he was letting the world know it. In essence with this speech Bush declared a war on terrorism around the globe and the U.S. was going to lead that war against all those who commit terrorist actions as well as protect those people or groups (Bush 2001).

On September 18th, 2001 Bush would sign into law the Authorization for Use of Military Force against Terrorists. This law authorized the U.S. government to use the armed forces against all those involved in the 9/11 attacks as well as anyone who may harbor them. This gave the president power to use any force deemed necessary to complete this objective (US Government Publishing Office 2001). This declaration of a war on terror set up a new and aggressive foreign policy. This new strategy had within it a few important ideas. One being that 9/11 was seen as a part of a trend of terrorist activities and was not an isolated event. Another was that al Qaeda was a real threat that must be taken seriously. Additionally the Bush administration believed that 9/11 showed the ineptitude of previous anti-terrorist policies, policies that would have to be rethought. Lastly it showed how much Bush hated terrorists (Bush 2005, 39).

In 2003, right before the start of the Iraq War, President Bush would release a strategy for combatting terrorism at home and around the globe. The objectives in no specific order were to

defeat Osama Bin Laden and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and the organizations they represented. Destroy all members of their organizations. Stop other states from supporting and harboring terrorist individuals and organizations. This would be done by holding states accountable for state sponsored terrorism. By working with willing states and compelling others, the U.S. would be able to disrupt and destroy the materials and safe havens terrorists need to survive. Weaken the initial conditions terrorist exploit to expand by strengthening weaker states and winning the battle of ideologies. Lastly, protect all U.S. citizens at home and around the world from any form of attacks (Bush 2003b).

Despite much of bluster of Bush's words after the events and the declaration of the war on terror confusion still remained over exactly what it meant and what it would entail. Richard Jackson would argue the "war on terrorism therefore, is simultaneously a set of actual practices, wars, covert operations, agencies, and institutions and an accompanying series of assumptions, beliefs, justifications, and narratives. It is an entire language or discourse." The discourse itself left open questions over what fell under this war on terror (Jackson 2005, 8).

The early phases of the war on terror focused on crushing al Qaeda. This would involve cutting the financial resources of terrorists, fighting al Qaeda globally, and fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. Bush signed into law Executive Order 13224 on September 24th, 2001 blocking terrorist funds. The U.S. also worked within the UN Security Council to pass resolution 1373 to freeze terrorist assets on a global scale. Homeland Security was formed to help facilitate these operations. They took over immigration services and would focus their efforts on protecting U.S. citizens within the borders of the country. The next phase would involve the invasion of Afghanistan. While members of al Qaeda had attacked the U.S. on 9/11, the Taliban was protecting them and gave them a safe haven within Afghanistan. When they would not release

Bin Laden and other members of al Qaeda, the invasion became inevitable. Attacks would start on October 7th, 2001 (Bush 2005, 44-45).

The second phase of the war on terror came from the axis of evil speech Bush gave at his State of the Union address in 2002. The speech tied together North Korea, Iraq, and Iran in an axis of evil. This speech was used to tie these states together by showing how much danger we could be in if one of them acquired nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction. This helped to establish the idea that the U.S. would not wait for another potentially more devastating attack to occur. We would go on the offensive and take a preemptive approach to future attacks. This strategy was employed because Bush believed terrorism offered a different type of threat in comparison to the threat we faced from communism. It could not be contained because there was no state to fight, only decentralized groups around the globe. Deterrence was also off the table because there was no clear person or group to retaliate against in the case of any kind of attack (Bush 2005, 46-48).

The war on terror would also bring with it many changes to the life we live at home and the way we conduct ourselves oversees. One of the first major changes was the passing of the Patriot Act. This act was passed quickly after the 9/11 attacks on the back of fears that the country was not doing enough to protect itself. The act brought with it increased surveillance on everyone with the U.S. It gave law enforcement agencies huge amounts of power and leeway when investigating into possible terrorist actions. It allowed for the indefinite detention of terrorist subjects without the ability to see a lawyer. With the passing of the act Americans were losing many civil liberties guaranteed to them in the constitution in the name of increased protection against future terrorist threats (Congress 2001).

Another policy the U.S. engaged in within the war on terror was a torture program. The tactics were given the name enhanced interrogation techniques to disguise what they truly were, systemic torture and abuse of prisoners in secret prisons across the world. They were set up under the Bush administration and run by the CIA to question and break prisoners suspected of terrorist acts. The techniques used included waterboarding, being placed in confined places, sleep and food deprivation, and other horrible acts. They broke many international laws prohibiting the torture and abuse of prisoners. They worked with lawyers to come up with legal options to justify their actions and convince those committing the actions they would be protected. The torture program became another part of the war on terror justified by the Bush administration as necessary to protect against possible future attacks (Siems 2012).

With the specific details of the war on terror laid out, an important question comes to the forefront, how did the Bush administration sell the war on terror to the American people? 9/11 was a terror spectacle unlike any this country had ever seen before. Planes crashed into the tallest buildings the U.S. had to offer in its biggest and most media saturated city. It was an attack that hit at the core of the U.S.'s identity and would not soon be forgotten. The spectacle of violence would be pounced upon by both the Bush administration and the media in the goal of pushing forwards a climate of fear and righteous anger. Douglas Kellner makes this argument about the environment post 9/11 within the U.S. As al Qaeda used the attacks as a spectacle to promote their own forms of fear across the U.S. so did elites and the media. The Bush administration quickly made the upcoming fight a dichotomy of good versus evil as Reagan did between the U.S. and communism. The war on terror would become Operation Enduring Freedom. We started to live in a binary system. We represented virtue, freedom, and civilization, while terrorists and all those who supported them represented fear and evil (Kellner 2004, 46-48).

The Bush administrations message of fear and militarism was echoed by the media. Not only was a message of necessary war and military expansion espoused by many hawkish pundits on much of broadcast television news programs but also by the foreign policy consultants and experts they would bring on. People such as Henry Kissinger and John McCain had clear ties to the U.S. military industrial complex and their views on war and terrorism were certainly not as independent as many media organizations promoted them as. Not only did the media promote Bush's points on television constantly but much of the time did so without question or opposition. On top if this mostly one sided media conversation the Democratic Party did not do their job as an opposition party to the war on terror policy rhetoric expressed by republicans. This one sided debate was exactly what the Bush administration wanted. Like John Zaller and Michael Baum have argued, when debate remains mostly one sided and there does not exist a strong vocal opposition to the policies being promoted by elites in power the public will mostly acquiesce their power and fall in line with the policies the government pushes forward (Kellner 2004, 48-50).

In the book Selling Fear, Brigitte L. Nacos, Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, and Robert Y. Shapiro also examine how the Bush administration looked to sell fear to the public. Using fear of terrorism can be very persuasive and effective. Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson argue that this persuasion campaign can work especially well if the government does certain things. This includes truly scaring its electorate, giving specific policy ideas that can destroy the danger that causes those fears. The policy ideas given are perceived to be useful in stopping the danger, and the people receiving these ideas believe they can themselves achieve that objective (Pratkanis 1991, 165).

Selling Fear shows the Bush administration doing exactly this. They accentuated who the terrorists were and the threat they posed to our country. They gave a plan for how this enemy would be defeated, the war on terror and all policies that came from it. They also showed the values necessary for completing these goals, most importantly patriotism and support for what your country is doing (Nacos 2011, 35). As President Bush said in his speech to congress on September 20th, 2001 "you're either with us or against us (Bush 2001)." While in the speech he was referring to states in the international community, stressing that the U.S. would not tolerate anyone supporting terrorism, it did also apply to those within the U.S. With such high approval numbers for Bush and the policies he put forward, going against him would appear as unpatriotic and un-American in a time of crisis.

Selling the fear of terrorism was not very difficult after the spectacle that was 9/11. Fear was very real for many Americans. The U.S. has not suffered any terrorist attacks even remotely as deadly as 9/11 in the years since that attack. The fears were not only cultivated by the government but exaggerated to be larger than they truly were. This is what John Mueller argues in his book Overblown. He shows the many ways the threat of terrorism has been overblown by what he calls the terrorism industry in the attempt to keep public fear of terrorism high and the polices against terrorism well-funded. On the first page of the strategy book for Homeland Security it boldly states that terrorists can attack any place in our country, at any time, using just about any weapon (Department of Homeland Security 2002). This statement while technically true propagates a false fear. Technically most things within the laws of physics could get some form of this description. The likely hood of such a thing occurring and the necessary precautions we must take are where the discussion should be taking place. If the threat is given such a wide net in which to operate the possibilities are endless. This leads to the creation of fear and

increased spending on the war on terror to prevent attacks that are not very likely to begin with (Mueller 2006, 6).

Most of the fears that are used in the campaign to start and continue the war on terror can be shown to be exaggerated. The likelihood that an American citizen will be killed in a terrorist attack is incredibly small. Gallop polls have tracked the fear of citizens that they will or a family member will become a victim of a terrorist attack. The category of very or somewhat worried about a future terrorist attack has consistently been between 35 and 45 since the attacks on 9/11 (McCarthy 2015). These numbers have stayed consistent in ways that show how a constant message of fear and dread by both the media and government will lead to a populace that is afraid of such attacks.

The unlikelihood of dying in a terrorist attack by a group or individual shows one reason why the Bush administration built up their propaganda from fear of al Qaeda to the fear of rogue states. States that could possibly develop nuclear or biological weapons that could create large scale destruction that would make 9/11 seem tame in comparison. The focus on the worst case scenario allows the government to set up the most extreme policy stances possible and achieve as much as possible. This focus can be very wasteful on a spending level and can also hide the fact that what they are doing is often unnecessary. If the worst case scenario never happens they can claim their policies have worked and can continue with them. This hides the fact they were very unlikely to happen in the first place. The fear of such attacks helped lead to the war on terror and everything that came after it (Mueller 2006, 4-5).

Other polices such as the expansion of the security and surveillance state at home took convincing as well. While it can be easier to support policies that go after a perceived enemy abroad, polices that happen at home and take away personal liberties are much harder to

swallow. As foreign policy changed post 9/11, so did our domestic policy. The fear of terrorism would be used to increase security measures at home, crushing civil liberties in the process. The question at the center of this change was how many of our civil liberties do we have to give up for better national security. As Phillip Bobbitt points out "There is a virtual universal conviction that the constitutional rights of the people and the powers of the state exist along an axial spectrum. An Increase of one means the diminution of the other. On this spectrum we imagine a needle oscillating between two poles, moving toward the pole of the state's power in times of national emergency or toward the pole of the people's liberty in times of tranquility (Bobbitt 2008, 241)."

We had seen this type of reaction before in the U.S. with the Espionage Act of 1917 and the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. Al Qaeda was fully aware of this when they attacked. Part of their plan was for the US to increase their spending on security and start limiting its own citizen's rights. The Authorization for Military Force against all those involved in 9/11 along with the passing of the patriot act in 2001, gave Bush huge amounts of power and leeway to operate as he saw fit when it came to the security of the U.S. (Nacos 2011, 63).

As with other polices that came about as a result of the war on terror, the press played a large part. The press failed to question the Bush administration's new policy on homeland security as well as torture. There was little to no questioning of the rights violations being committed by our government as there was little questioning over the proposed war in Iraq. Observing the coverage of the passing of the Patriot Act, a drastic change to our countries intelligence gathering procedures and surveillance policy, Nacos saw that major networks and print media failed to parcel out not only what the legislation was but the implications of it (Nacos 2007, 149).

The Department of Justice, who played an imperative part in justifying the reasons why these new measures were necessary, also pushed back against those who questioned them by labeling them as unpatriotic. Attorney General at the time John Ashcroft was very intentional with his words, when attacking those who spoke out. In a testimony he gave on December 6th, 2001 before the Senate Judiciary Committee he stated "to those who scare peace loving people with phantoms of lost liberty, my message is this: your tactics only aid terrorist, for they erode our national unit and diminish our resolve. They give ammunition to America's enemies, and pause to America's friends (Ashcroft 2001)." He did not mince his words. Those who interrogated the policies being put forth were both unpatriotic and helping terrorists.

When it comes to public opinion, the American people were willing to go along with the Bush administration's policies. There were many polls done observing why people supported giving up some liberties for themselves and certain groups in the hope for better security. Studies showed that people who were more afraid of more attacks were less supportive of civil liberties. People who paid more attention to the news were also more fearful of possible new threats. Tied together this showed that a state of fear created by the Bush administration with the help of the media helped push people to be more willing to give up some of their rights for the idea of being safer (Nacos 2011, 68).

The war on terror brought a twofold change to the US. First, our foreign policy became one of active interventionist and expansive policies specifically targeted within the Middle East. We invaded Afghanistan and began targeting all those associated with al Qaeda around the world. At home we saw an expansion of the surveillance state and our civil liberties weakened through fear and new powers granted to the federal government through legislation. Both of these policies under the guise of the war on terror we made possible by the Bush administration

using the intense uncertainty and fear in the country caused by terrorism. This shows how impactful terrorism can be when used to conjure up fear to push forward new foreign policy ideas and initiatives.

9. Iraq War

The Iraq War brought the war on terror to a whole new level of commitment in 2003. While sometimes separated from the war on terror and spoken about in terms of confiscating WMD's and overthrowing Saddam, the Iraq War was certainly an outgrowth of the war on terrors goals. While not obvious at first how it was connected to 9/11, Bin laden, or al Qaeda for that matter, it would soon become the center of US foreign policy and lead to military intervention in a country over seriously questionable reasons.

When the U.S. declared war on Iraq on March 19th, 2003 over 70 percent of American supported the war (Newport 2003). What led to such high support for a war that would have put boots on the ground and led to casualties? Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner bring forward an interesting idea that structures the Iraq War as an extension of the war on terror. They argue that by framing Saddam Hussein and terrorism together, Bush's administration was able to connect the potential war in Iraq with 9/11 and al Qaeda. With 9/11 firmly placed in American minds this connection helped push such a high amount of support for the war (Gershkoff 2005, 525).

Many things helped lay the groundwork for terrorism to be such an effective framing device. For one the press was less than helpful in interrogating the claims of the White House after 9/11. This led to a mostly one sided debate in the media, giving the government a central path into the hearts and minds of the people. A consensus had emerged in Congress about the Iraq War. 96 percent of republican representatives voted for the war along with 39 percent of democrat representatives (Office of the Clerk 2002). The senate showed even more consensus with 97 percent of republican senators and 58 percent of democrat senators voting for the war (US Senate 2002). John Zaller calls this the Mainstream Effect. When there appears to be a consensus that has been arrived at by elites the message becomes singular in its focus. Those

who are most heavily aware of the issues are more likely to be influenced by this consensus and the consensus of their own party. (Zaller 1992, 98).While in most cases Americans are quite ignorant of public affairs, during wartime they become more engaged. Polls showed that 63 percent of Americans were following the war closely (Newport 2003). This means that more Americans than usual were being inundated with whatever the mainstream media and the government were saying. More Americans than ever were susceptible to elite influence over their opinions on the war.

When we examine credibility in the context of the Bush administration, we find their credibility being at an all-time high after 9/11. Bush's approval numbers in the months after 9/11 and leading into the Iraq War generally remained in the 70's and high 60's, never dropping below 57 percent approval. When the war was finally declared his numbers jumped back up to 71 from 58 showing both the natural national unity that occurs in time of war as well as the popularity of the war with the people (Newport 2003). Bush could not have asked for better approval numbers. He had the backing of the country and his credibility gave him the platform to stand on. This allowed his framing of the Iraq War as a continuation of the war on terror to be so effective.

To see this framing in action Gershkoff and Kushner created a terrorism index to observe how frequently the word terror or words related to it such as al Qaeda and Bin Laden were used in the run up to the Iraq War. They find similar intensities in the use of these words in the time right before the Iraq War and the time right after 9/11. Not only were both Iraq and terrorism being used frequently but very often together. From September 12th, 2002 through May 23, 2003 Bush gave 13 speeches. Out of the 13 speeches, 12 referenced Iraq and terrorism in the same paragraph, and 10 in the same sentence. In four of the speeches terrorism came before any

mention of Iraq giving the impression they were linked together. Clearly Iraq was being positioned as a continuation of the war on terror (Gershkoff 2005, 527).

According to Bob Woodward's account of the National Security meetings that occurred after 9/11, Bush was framing the U.S.'s response as a global war on terror that included both Afghanistan and Iraq in its plans. Iraq was included in the plans surrounding the war on terror from the beginning (Woodward, 2002). The only thing that stood in the way was the lack of a connection to 9/11 that Afghanistan had in spades. While the September 11, commission would eventually find that there was no evidence connecting Iraq and al Qaeda, the Bush administration had done its damage (Pincus 2004).

Some examples of the speeches Bush gave include one on March 8th, 2003 right before the start of the Iraq War. He says "The attacks of September 11, 2001 showed what the enemies of America did with four airplanes. We will not wait to see what terrorists or terror states could do with weapons of mass destruction (Bush 2003c)." Iraq was being intentionally connected with potential terrorist actions against the U.S. in the future. Not only were they like the terrorists who attacked us on 9/11, but they also had the potential of inflicting even more damage through the possible use of WMD's.

The 2003 State of the Union Address left no doubt on how the Bush administration viewed Iraq and Saddam. The speech itself continues the trend of linking Iraq with the war on terror by naming them an outlaw regime. In the speech Bush states "Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda." He also describes a hypothetical situation that involves Hussein supporting the 19 attackers with much more deadly weapons leaving an even worse mark upon America than on 9/11. This situation is one the U.S. will not allow

according to Bush. This hypothetical not only links Iraq with 9/11 but also shows how dangerous they may be (Bush 2003a).

The framing of the Iraq War as an extension of the war on terror was a key part in getting support for the war. The linking of the two was no accident. Behind the scenes Bush and his team were working very hard to come up with reasons why the U.S. should invade Iraq. One person who played an important part in this was one of Bush's speechwriter at the time David Frum. Frum outlines the events that led him to find justifications for the war in Iraq and the process of coining the term axis of evil that became so popular after its use in Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address.

Frum recalls being told by Mike Gerson, Bush's chief speechwriter, in the lead up to the 2002 State of the Union Address to provide a justification for a war in Iraq. Bush wanted Saddam to be overthrown and needed a way to sell the country on his idea. Early ideas included pushing the idea of spreading democracy to apart of the world that needed it and helping woman in Iraq that were being oppressed by the current regime. These ideas were eventually squashed from the speech and there remained a space to be filled. Frum saw two oppositions to the idea if a war in Iraq. The first was that there was no proof of a connection between Iraq and 9/11. The other was that though Saddam was an evil man, he was no more evil than someone like Stalin and we contained Stalin without going to war with him. It then become Frum's mission to find a way to link Saddam and 9/11 as well as to make the case that he should be overthrown instead of deterred (Frum 2003, 232-233).

Through his research into World War II, Frum began to see a connection between the axis powers and Saddam. Terrorist organizations along with terror states resembled the threat that Germany, Japan, and Italy were in the 40's. As pearl harbor was warning sign to FDR of the

even worse possibilities that lay in the future if he did not act, 9/11 was a warning of what Iraq could do if they go unchecked going forward. He even links the distrust that Japan and Germany had with each other during the war with the distrust terror states have with each other today. They can still work together despite ideological divisions if their one goal remains hurting the U.S. and western civilization. This goal united terror groups and terror states in a fight against all that is good in this world. They formed an axis of hatred against the U.S. For this reason the U.S. could not let these countries obtain WMDs (Frum 2003, 234-238).

Frum handed off the speech and to his surprise his words on Iraq was used almost verbatim. The axis of hatred became the axis of evil, reflecting theological language that had worked so well for Bush after 9/11 while speaking to a very religious constituency. The State of Union address would make the case for not being complacent with states such as Iraq as well as Iran and North Korea (Frum 2003, 238). Bush would declare in his address "States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic (Bush 2002)."

The Bush administration was looking for the right framing device that could be used to justify invading Iraq. Frum found it in the tying together of terror states and terror groups in the fight against the U.S. Frum believed the U.S. found its true strength in Afghanistan and it could only be expressed by continuing the war on terror into other unfavorable states. It was no mistake the Bush administration continued to connect Iraq with the war on terror. This framing device was strong and added a moralistic aspect to the propaganda campaign.

How did the public respond to this framing? Support for war in Iraq remained high from the start of polling in September 2002 through the start of the war in March 2003. Support never dropped lower than 55 percent. This was despite many polls showing that Americans expected the war to be long, bring with it many casualties, increase the possibility of terrorism at home, and negatively affect the economy. All the usual suspects that should have hurt support of the war did not. Polls even showed that more than 75 percent of Americans believed in the war even if WMD's were not found (Gershkoff 2005, 529-530).

When compared to support for the war in Afghanistan the war in Iraq looks even stranger. The war in Afghanistan had international backing and had clear links to 9/11 with the Taliban and al Qaeda working within the country. Support for the war was 80 percent when it began. Iraq in comparison was expected to a much more difficult and did not carry with it the strong reasons that Afghanistan did. Yet support for the Iraq war at its inception was very close to Afghanistan's. Both Republicans and democrats that followed the issue of Iraq very closely were more likely to support the war. With Bush's 2003 State of the Union address and Colin Powell's February 5th speech on the eve of the war being the two biggest speech's connecting Iraq and terrorism together (Gershkoff 2005, 530).

The Iraq War was sold to the American people as being the inevitable consequence of the war on terror. While the lies about WMD's weigh heavily when looking back on the Iraq war, the intense and focused messaging of the Bush administration falsely tying together 9/11 and Iraq is certainly important as well. Terrorism and the fear from it were great foils for the American public and press in the run up to the Iraq War. While certainly not the only cause for such high public support of the war, it did play a substantial part in convincing many of the importance and necessity of the mission.

10. Conclusion

The effort put into affecting and shaping public opinion with the US is quite substantial. What is used to shape that public opinion can take many different shapes. This paper was about how and why terrorism is used by the federal government to influence the populace to go with whatever foreign policy strategy they have cooked up in their head. Terrorism itself is an important tool in an elite's repertoire for many reasons. It is a complicated term with a broad definition that does not always easily stick. It is a term almost universally negative in its connotation which makes it very political when used to label a person, and act, or group. This means the term carries with it power, power that governments will both try to hide by suppressing its use and let free when they have found something worthy of such a title.

A key part of the thesis is that this course of action is necessary for government to take part in because public opinion while not always the captain of the ship, does affect what a president can or cannot do in international relations. There is good evidence to show that when issues are salient and the majority of Americans support something it will be very difficult for a president to go against their will. Baum and Potter showed that public opinion can only truly do what it is intended to do when a people have good information from opposition elites that can use an independent media to push through that message. For these reasons elites will do everything in their power to make sure their messaging is the only messaging getting across. The will do this by pressuring the media and building consensus so public opinion will be in their favor granting them the power to do as they will.

For our purposes here, public opinion on human rights plays a large part in the work done by Reagan and Bush. While Human rights tend to take a back seat to other foreign policy actions when put against each other, the majority of Americans support human rights around the world.

This makes it difficult to support groups or countries that commit violations against human rights. This was one of the reasons Reagan worked to clean up the image of the groups he and his administration attempted to support during the 1980's.

Another important aspect of the paper is framing. How do the media and the president frame the issues he or she speaks about? Framing is when someone puts emphasis on a certain things, causing the listener to focus on that item of discussion. Not only was the Iraq war framed as an extension of the war on terror with its inclusion in speeches with words such as terror, al Qaeda, and Bin Laden but also the words and framing came from the president and his administration giving it credibility. This framing was constant and persuasive when selling the idea of a war in Iraq to the American people.

The first concrete example showing bringing everything previously discussed into focus was Reagan foreign policy in the 1980's. Reagan came into office wishing to pursue a more active role in pushing back against the USSR and communism around the world. This was a change from the policy of containment that been a mainstay since the end of WWII. This new policy would come to be known as the Reagan Doctrine. Reagan's use of terrorism was in hiding the atrocities committed by the Contras in Nicaragua and the Salvadorian government in El Salvador. He worked hard through various propaganda campaigns to protect the image of those he wished to work with. This was because he did not want any of the groups the US wished to support being labeled as terrorist. This would certainly hurt public approval of his foreign policy idea making it much more difficult for him to proceed.

In Nicaragua the Contras with the help of the U.S. government, fought against the Sandinista a government attempting to take over control in Nicaragua. In their fight to take back the country they were responsible for many terrorist actions. This included killing, torturing, and

kidnapping civilians. They also blew up civilian buildings and caused all kinds of terror in their country. This was covered up by the US, in the hope they could a sell an image of the contras that was in line with the fight for freedom by our founding fathers. Once they were unable to keep this image alive they were stopped from continuing their support. This lead to covert support and the Iran-Contras affair, showing that once they could no longer hide the terrorist actions of the contras they could no longer publically support them.

In El Salvador, the U.S. sported the military run government against the leftist uprisings taking place within their country. This case was very similar to Nicaragua. In order to keep funding and publically supporting the government of El Salvador the U.S. had to give a report every six months showing that improvements had been made to the human rights record of the government. Despite the best efforts of the U.S. to hide stories about atrocities and massacres committed by the Salvadorian government, the truth eventually came through making it very hard to the Reagan to get funding to support the fight in El Salvador.

The second example of the use of terrorism to push foreign policy agendas comes in the form of the Bush administration after 9/11. The attacks on 9/11 were not only the worst terrorist attack in this country's history, but it was also an opportunity that could be exploited by those in power. The war on terror was started in the shadow of this event. The war on terror was various policy changes that encompassed a massive expansion of our military in all parts of the world. The attack on 9/11 gave Bush huge amounts of power to start a war in Afghanistan and expand the surveillance state at home. These polices were hawked by promoting the natural fear that emerged after 9/11. This fear was expanded by grossly exaggerating the levels of threat the county was under and the response that was necessary to stop future attacks.

This fear was also used to start another war in Iraq. By framing the war as expansion on the already popular war on terror and war in Afghanistan, the war on Iraq was shown to be the natural next step. They were propped up as evil and a serious threat to the US especially if they had WMD's that could be used against us in the future. Despite no proof tying them to the attacks on 9/11, the government and an in the bag media sold the American public a war that was not only unnecessary but also quite disastrous in its implications.

The cases shown under Reagan and Bush as well as the research on public opinion and framing all show how terrorism can be such an effective propaganda tool when used correctly to shape public opinion to support whatever polices are being thought up in Washington. The implications of this show how important not only a vigilant media is in combatting the accepted narrative set out by elites but also the importance in a strong opposition that can get the voice heard. This is the only way the public can effectively use their voice against foreign policies that are destructive and misguided.

Future research to expand upon this work should look at other administrations that have grappled with terrorism. This paper focuses on two republican presidents. It would be interesting to examine presidents such as Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. This will paint a better picture of the military industrial complex in Washington. Is there any break in policy agenda, when different parties are in power, or is it much of the same? How successful has terrorism been used in other cases of selling a new foreign policy agenda? This research will expand upon what was done here giving a much better picture of how such agendas are formed and sold to the American people.

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