Justice Intuitions and Popular Support for War: A Theory of Presidential Retributive Rhetoric

Christine Patricia Pelican

University of Oxford
Department of Politics and International Relations
St Benet's Hall

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford.

Michaelmas 2021

Word count: 99,731

Justice Intuitions and Popular Support for War:
A Theory of Presidential Retributive Rhetoric

Christine Patricia Pelican
DPhil in International Relations
St Benet's Hall

Abstract

The popular desire to exact retribution on an adversary is an attractive resource for American presidents to utilise when mobilising support for war. While prior scholarship has identified the critical role of political leaders' communications in making retribution salient to the public, a fine-grained theory of why, how, and when leaders are likely to employ retributive concepts is yet to be developed. This thesis addresses this gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive theory of retributive rhetoric. The theory draws on multidisciplinary research on ordinary people's intuitions and decision principles concerning moral blameworthiness and demonstrates how and when U.S. presidents intuitively employ these concepts in their rhetoric directed to the popular audience. It is argued that when a president wishes to intervene militarily, morally salient harms committed against geographically and culturally distant states are most likely to elicit retributive rhetoric. This thesis also argues that creating a sense of popular moral outrage and an attendant desire for retribution may help explain the popularity of aerial bombing strikes as a foreign policy response.

This work is distinguished from prior scholarship in several ways. It integrates many related but disparate strands of investigation into a unifying theory of retributive rhetoric; it models the performative display of retributive rhetoric as a novel form of "emotional mobilisation"; and it departs from the traditional convention of conceptualising international punishment as revenge, instead focusing on the more psychologically accurate theory of retribution. The expectations and implications of the theory are explored through qualitative analysis of three case studies involving military intervention by the United States: entry into World War II following the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor, the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin crisis precipitating the first official use of military force against North Vietnam, and the 1991 Persian Gulf War following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Contents

Acknowledgements iv
Tables vi

Introduction 1
- The puzzle: Why, how, and when do presidents use retributive rhetoric? 3
- The argument: Bringing in morality 5
- A theory of retributive rhetoric 11
- The contribution and its implications 15
- The plan of the thesis 19

Chapter 1 – The performative logic of retribution 20
- Why retribution? 20
- How do presidents use retributive rhetoric to mobilise support for war? 36
- When are presidents likely to use retributive rhetoric? 82
- Research design and methodology 94

Chapter 2 – America's entry into the Vietnam War 104
- Background 107
- Retributive psychology and America's entry into the Vietnam War 109
- Overall Analysis of the Mobilisation Discourse 129

Chapter 3 – The prelude to the Persian Gulf War, August 1990-January 1991 151
- Background 155
- Retributive psychology and the invasion of Kuwait 157
- Overall Analysis of the Mobilisation Discourse 200

Chapter 4 – America's entry into World War II 215
- Background 219
- Retributive psychology and World War II 221
- Overall Analysis of the Mobilisation Discourse 272

Chapter 5 – Some Additional Plausibility Probes 282
- The Korean War, June 1950 282
- The Global War on Terror, Afghanistan, October 2001 288
- The Global War on Terror, Iraq, March 2003 294

Chapter 6 – Conclusion 305
- The argument 307
- Major findings 308
- Theoretical implications 311
- Policy implications 319
- Normative implications 322
- Future research 323
- Final words 326

Bibliography 327

Acknowledgements

The opportunity to study for a DPhil at Oxford would never have been possible without the encouragement of my family, friends, and colleagues. I am indebted to colleagues and friends at Oxford who kindly offered incisive feedback on draft versions of my work. Todd Hall for formative guidance at crucial points in the early formation of my ideas, and Rodrigo Fracalossi de Moraes, who read my work and discussed it with me many evenings somewhere in Jericho. Oliver Scott Curry guided my thought in many helpful discussions on moral psychology. Arthur Duhé who gave me the precious gift of his friendship, and on the practical side of life, an unending supply of Balliol carrots to fortify me on this *traversée du désert*. Harald Edinger, with whom I shared the highs and lows of the DPhil as we followed a joint path through St Antony's and St Benet's. Gratitude for support and friendship goes to some special DPhil colleagues: my DPhil "sister" Paola Solimena, Lisa Bischoff, Sheng Peng, and Samuel Ramani.

I thank my St Benet's friends also. It was a great privilege to have been part of such a supportive and nurturing community as both a student and a Junior Dean. Thanks to the Master, Richard Cooper for his robust support whenever needed; Bernard Gowers for his unfailing humour and always taking care that my duties to the Hall did not conflict with my academic work; Frances Reynolds for being a wonderfully supportive Dean; Grahame Smith; Father Oswald; Natalie Garbett, Jason Bean and Ali. Special thanks to my Hall advisor Brian Klug, whose kindness was much appreciated and, when obstacles appeared, taught me how to turn a "*broch* into a *brocha*". To the many special ones I am lucky enough to call friends: James Baxter, Joseph Ruane, Thais Rocha da Silva, Ekaterina Zhelenkova, Keon Shahidi, Zachary Oliver. Thanks are also due to the Bodleian's most radical librarian for many laughs and esoteric conversations, Paul "Sully" Sullivan.

Special acknowledgements go to my supervisors. Dominic Johnson, whose guidance, support, and optimism were fundamental at every stage of the journey. His broad disciplinary acumen and capacity to see alternative options helped me invaluably. Likewise, I extend my deepest thanks to my supervisor Andrew Payne, who devoted considerable time and effort to understanding my project in short time. I have benefitted greatly from his specialist expertise, guidance and incisive evaluation of my ideas and written work.

I owe a profound debt of gratitude to my parents, Mary and Patrick Pelican, whose unstinting support made it possible for me to complete this work. My brothers Jim and Joe, sister-in-law Judith, who always encouraged me. John Pelican offered me encouragement and wise counsel along the way. A special word of thanks goes to Ben Macklin for turning my thesis-ridden existence into a glorious pastel pink adventure filled with love and so much laughter. I am very grateful that you are in my life.

Lastly, my principal thanks are due to my children, Amy, Patrick, and Beth. You accompanied me in my heart with every word I wrote. I thank you for your love and patience. This thesis is dedicated to you.

Tables

Table 1.0	The Psychological Chain of Retributive Motive Arousal	51
Table 1.1	The Hierarchy of Harms: Domestic and International Correlates	57
Table 1.2	Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the Case Studies	101
Table 2.0	Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the Gulf of Tonkin Episode	110
Table 3.0	Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the Persian Gulf Crisis	157
Table 4.0	Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the U.S. Entry into World War II	222

In the excitement and fatigue of warfare, revenge is one of the few satisfactions that can be savoured; and justice can often be construed to demand the enemy's punishment, even if it is delivered with more enthusiasm than justice requires.

- Thomas Schelling*, Arms and Influence*

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the performative construal of justice by presidents; the type of justice that demands an enemy's punishment. It asks the questions of why, how, and when American presidents project the language of retribution to sell war. It argues that presidents intuitively inject their mobilisation discourses with retributive language when the public is unpersuaded about the merits of intervention. This distinct type of mobilisation discourse is here called *retributive rhetoric*. The claim that presidents (and their officials) employ retributive rhetoric to enlist popular support for war is not novel, as we can see from Thomas Schelling's observation. However, the significance of retributive rhetoric is under-appreciated in the study of International Relations, and its characteristics are underspecified.

Public opinion exerts considerable influence over presidential behaviour. In various ways, it both determines and constrains presidential action,[1] particularly in the realm of foreign policy, since unpopular policies can translate directly into electoral losses.[2] Presidents, of necessity, then, are acutely sensitive to public opinion about foreign policy.[3] Consequently, democracies rarely go to war in the absence of a national consensus,[4] a factor

[1] Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, *Democracies at War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Michael Tomz, Jessica L. P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo, "Public Opinion and Decisions About Military Force in Democracies," *International Organization* 74, no. 1 (2020).
[2] John Aldrich, John Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida, "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates Waltz before a Blind Audience?," *The American Political Science Review* 83, no. 1 (1989); Christopher Gelpi, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler, "Success Matters," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005); Robin F. Marra, Charles W. Ostrom, and Dennis M. Simon, "Foreign Policy and Presidential Popularity: Creating Windows of Opportunity in the Perpetual Election," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34, no. 4 (1990); Andrew Payne, "Presidents, Politics, and Military Strategy: Electoral Constraints During the Iraq War," *International Security* 44, no. 3 (2020); "Bringing the Boys Back Home: Campaign Promises and U.S. Decision-Making in Iraq and Vietnam," *Politics* 41 (2020).
[3] Matthew A. Baum, "How Public Opinion Constrains the Use of Force: The Case of Operation Restore Hope," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2004); John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley, 1973); Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*.
[4] *Democracies at War*.

implicated in various ways as constitutive of the "democratic peace."[5] Together, these factors entail that if a president favours military intervention, they must become "the country's salesman in chief".[6] Evidence abounds of presidential efforts to influence public opinion,[7] indeed, some presidents have engaged in what has been described as "aggressive foreign policy marketing."[8]

Yet Americans are often reluctant to support the use of force abroad, chary of expending American blood and treasure for causes in distant lands. Thus, the "salesman in chief" usually faces a tough task. Research on popular attitudes to war tells us that citizens care most about issues involving U.S. national and security interests. Variables such as costs (both economic, and human casualties[9]), whether an intervention is a multilateral effort,[10] the likelihood of success,[11] and the policy objective[12] have been shown to be influential. A prevalent assumption threading through this body of research is that the public evaluates these factors by making rational judgements about costs and benefits. However, these factors

[5] Bruce M. Russett et al., *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
[6] Andrew L. Johns, "Introduction," in *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, ed. Alan Frank Kenneth Osgood, and David Halberstam (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010), 1.
[7] Robert Dallek, "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam: The Making of a Tragedy," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 2 (1996); Lawrence Jacobs and Robert Shapiro, "The Rise of Presidential Polling: The Nixon White House in Historical Perspective," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (1995); Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Presidential Manipulation of Polls and Public Opinion: The Nixon Administration and the Pollsters," *Political Science Quarterly* 110, no. 4 (1995); Andrew Z. Katz, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Nixon Administration and the Pursuit of Peace with Honor in Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1997).
[8] A. J. Rosenblatt, "Aggressive Foreign Policy Marketing - Public Response to Reagan's 1983 Address on Lebanon and Grenada," *Political Behavior* 20, no. 3 (1998).
[9] Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*.
[10] Steven Kull, and Ramsay, Clay, "The Myth of the Reactive Public: American Public Attitudes on Military Fatalities in the Post-Cold War Period," in *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force*, ed. Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia (London: Routledge, 2001).
[11] Richard C. Eichenberg, "Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005).
[12] Bruce Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1992); Bruce W. Jentleson and Rebecca L. Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 4 (1998).

and rational processes of evaluation may apply to a more limited set of cases than assumed, especially when the strategic incentives are unclear or uncompelling. Under such circumstances, moral and emotional reasoning processes tend to play a greater role in decision-making. This thesis argues that presidents intuitively understand this, and tailor their mobilisation rhetoric accordingly.

THE PUZZLE: WHY, HOW, AND WHEN DO PRESIDENTS USE RETRIBUTIVE RHETORIC?

Retributive intuitions in International Relations can affect international relations in two main ways. First, these sentiments may affect leaders personally and impact their decisions. Second, leaders may exploit retributive sentiment among the public to sway opinion. The former question may, in many respects, offer a somewhat more straightforward causal chain to investigate, tracing cognition and affect to presidential behaviour. Indeed, numerous scholars have studied how leaders' personal attributes influence policy.[13] While it is no doubt possible to study the effects of retributive sentiment on presidents, it is also a difficult task to retroactively piece together the evidence and draw inferences about which one may feel confident. This thesis addresses the second avenue of research, investigating how presidents utilise retributive sentiment for public persuasion. It develops a theory of presidential rhetoric as a strategic and instrumental activity, and as such, the analysis remains agnostic about

[13] Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001); Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization*, New ed., Princeton Legacy Library (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Robert Jervis, *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017); Rose McDermott, *Presidential Leadership, Illness, and Decision Making* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Janice Gross Stein, "The Micro-Foundations of International Relations Theory: Psychology and Behavioral Economics," *International Organization* 71, no. S1 (2017); Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Who Fights for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflict*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

presidential motives. For present purposes, it is sufficient that the discourse occurs, and exhibits the hypothesised characteristics.

A good place to start understanding retributive rhetoric is the literature on public opinion about war, and its tendency to overlook the fact that non-rational, non-instrumental moral judgements are often embedded in the way individuals view prospective military interventions. While some political psychologists have begun to demonstrate the relevance of morality to foreign policy attitudes,[14] the literature on public opinion about the use of force abroad largely assumes that citizens rarely see the world in a moral manner. One of the few scholars to articulate the crucial role of moral judgement is Peter Liberman in his work on the effects of "moral punitiveness" in international politics. Liberman acknowledges that "[a] sizable literature has repeatedly shown that citizens' expectations that a policy will successfully promote national interests, with a minimum of national sacrifice, are the primary determinant of support for military interventions." However, he identifies a subset of circumstances in which the rational models are less applicable and moral reasoning is more likely to dominate, writing, *"when there is widespread uncertainty about the net benefits of war, moral and emotional dispositions are likely to come to the fore."*[15] This thesis is about presidential behaviour in this subset of cases.

If a president desires military intervention, but persuading the public to support the policy is harder when the public is uncertain about its strategic merits—and—if, under these circumstances, citizens have an increased susceptibility to moral suasion, might presidential

[14] For example, see Joshua D. Kertzer et al., "Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes," *The Journal of Politics* 76, no. 3 (2014).
[15] Peter Liberman, "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 1 (2007): 8-9 [Emphasis added].

mobilisation efforts reflect these factors? Might these circumstances represent a window of opportunity for presidents to employ one of the most potent rhetorical tools available?

THE ARGUMENT: BRINGING IN MORALITY

The main argument of this thesis is that it is precisely under these circumstances that presidents will employ retributive rhetoric. If intervention is preferred, presidents intuitively sense the propitiousness of the timing and the expediency of this rhetorical strategy. So, what *is* retributive rhetoric?

Put simply, this kind of rhetoric attempts to engage one of the most powerful of all human values, the desire for retribution—wanting justice to be done.[16] Retributive punishment is the terminal point in a causal chain of automatic emotional/cognitive processing that becomes triggered when individuals perceive that a harm has been committed. These judgements are mediated by evaluations of the moral blameworthiness of the perpetrator. Individuals rank the moral severity of harms in systematic ways, here called the *hierarchy of harms*. If a perpetrator is deemed morally blameworthy, an emotional reaction of "moral outrage" ensues, the primary component of which is anger, an "empowering" emotion associated with action.[17] Finally, this process leads to the outcome of desiring or enacting retributive punishment. The imperative to act is a moral one: to restore the violated sense of justice by

[16] For example, see Kevin Carlsmith, "On Justifying Punishment: The Discrepancy between Words and Actions," *Social Justice Research* 21, no. 2 (2008); Dale T. Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 52, no. 1 (2001); J. M. Osgood, "Is Revenge About Retributive Justice, Deterring Harm, or Both?," *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 11, no. 1 (2017); Thomas Tripp, Robert Bies, and Karl Aquino, "A Vigilante Model of Justice: Revenge, Reconciliation, Forgiveness, and Avoidance," *Social Justice Research* 20, no. 1 (2007).

[17] Phoebe C. Ellsworth and Samuel R. Gross, "Hardening of the Attitudes: Americans' Views on the Death Penalty," *Journal of Social Issues* 50, no. 2 (1994); Neil Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," in *Handbook of Justice Research in Law*, ed. Joseph Sanders and V. Lee Hamilton (New York and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002).

inflicting retributive punishment on the perpetrator. The ubiquitous nature of, and commitment to, this moral imperative has led scholars to conceptualise it as a human value.[18]

The thesis follows the convention of many psychologists studying punishment by referring to the thought processes and decision rules involved in punitive judgements as "justice intuitions".[19] This nomenclature follows from experimental research in psychology and neuroscience, which suggests that justice and punishment decisions usually are the outcome of intuition rather than deliberative thought. In other words, these decisions are the output of "System One"[20] fast and automatic brain processes, functioning in the manner of a heuristic[21] and engaging the emotions. Conceptually, justice intuitions can be thought of as constituting the broad landscape of moral reasoning concerning norm violations, and empirically, they relate to perceptions of right and wrong, blameworthiness, fairness, and the types of treatments that are considered fitting punishments.

Justice intuitions are not idealised or abstract; they permeate everyday life.[22] Retributive justice is woven into the warp and weft of culture, from the earliest works of literature such as the Homeric tales and the Old Testament, through to modern classics of literature and film.[23] In the legal realm, retribution is deemed a legitimate punitive doctrine, as evidenced by Justice of the Supreme Court Potter Stewart arguing in *Furman v Georgia*

[18] Rachel M. Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
[19] For example, see Kevin M. Carlsmith and John M. Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 40 (2008); Paul Robinson, Robert Kurzban, and Owen Jones, "The Origins of Shared Intuitions of Justice," *Vanderbilt Law Review* 60, no. 6 (2007); Paul H. Robinson and Robert Kurzban, "Concordance and Conflict in Intuitions of Justice, 91 No," *Minn. L. Rev.*(6.
[20] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin, 2012).
[21] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice," 211.
[22] E. A. Lind, "Fairness Heuristic Theory: Justice Judgments as Pivotal Cognitions in Organizational Relations," in *Advances in Organizational Justice*, ed. J. Greenberg and R. Cropanzo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Gerold Mikula, Birgit Petri, and Norbert Tanzer, "What People Regard as Unjust: Types and Structures of Everyday Experiences of Injustice," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 20, no. 2 (1990).
[23] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 31-32.

(1972) that retribution is an "instinct" which is "part of the nature of man".[24] Nonetheless, in contemporary Western societies, to admit publicly a desire for retribution is often viewed as indecorous, or at the least, unsophisticated.[25]

Given the pervasiveness of retribution in human psychology and sociality, would we not then expect to see this impulse permeate the world of foreign policy? In the cut and thrust of democratic politics, would we not expect presidents to use all available means of persuasion in attempting to transform public apathy or hostility into enthusiasm and support? Would we not expect presidents, perhaps for want of more compelling arguments, to try to persuade citizens that the legitimacy of their war policy lies in the fact that they are right — *morally right*—to use state violence? Would we not also expect leaders to attempt to recruit the claims of retributive justice on the human mind to even *conceal* the actual objectives for intervention, or to manufacture a pretext for war when other reasons are lacking? This thesis argues that we would.

And just as important as understanding retributive rhetoric's manifestation is understanding its absence. Sometimes, popular retributive sentiment is inconvenient to political leaders if it conflicts with policy objectives. Observing how leaders refrain from using retributive rhetoric or seek to minimise and denigrate issues relevant to justice intuitions, is equally as informative as observing retributive rhetoric in action.

So, what are the practical implications of retributive rhetoric? In addition to potential changes in public opinion caused by the discourse, it may be associated with substantive foreign policy actions. One potential consequence can be discrete aerial bombing operations, ordered primarily for symbolic purposes. While many foreign policy elites do indeed appear

[24] Quoted in Jane C. England, "Capital Punishment in the Light of Constitutional Evolution: An Analysis of Distinctions between "Furman" and "Gregg"," *Notre Dame Lawyer* 52, no. 4 (1977): 598.
[25] Carlsmith, "On Justifying Punishment: The Discrepancy between Words and Actions."

to genuinely believe in the instrumental efficacy of bombing, another reason why bombing may be popular is that presidential use of retributive rhetoric creates in the popular mind the perception that an injustice has occurred, motivating citizens to desire formal redress of the grievance.[26] Presidents may therefore feel pressure to 'follow through' on their belligerent rhetoric, or else appear weak and thus provide political ammunition for political rivals. Of course, there are several other explanations for the frequent use of bombing as a foreign policy response of first resort; for example one theory is that air strikes are favoured because they are perceived as being less risky than deploying ground troops.[27] However, the claim being made is that given the ubiquity of retribution in human life, it is highly likely that these impulses influence foreign policy interventions, and that previous scholarship has not investigated the relationship between presidential mobilisation discourses and aerial bombing. It is proposed that the role of punitive psychology be considered one among many factors influencing decisions to employ aerial bombing.

This proposition is rooted in the fact that punishment is often inflicted primarily for its expressive function, which can be conceptually and psychologically separated from the substantive costs inflicted by the punishment.[28] One theory of punishment, known as the 'expressive' theory, argues that it is precisely punishment's symbolic, denunciatory function that distinguishes it from mere penalties. Philosopher Joel Feinberg points out that an important characteristic of punishment is its dual nature: the tangible hardship inflicted by the punishment itself, and its more intangible yet equally important social symbolism. Feinberg argues that the "common definition" of punishment, i.e. "the infliction of hard treatment by an authority on a person for his prior failing in some respect (usually an infraction of a rule or

[26] Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," 544.
[27] Eichenberg, "Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005," 142.
[28] Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," 544.

command)" is insufficient because it omits the symbolic or expressive significance of punishment as a means of communicating societal condemnation.[29]

So how effective is retributive rhetoric likely to be in mobilising support for war? Given the description thus far, we might expect it to function in a manner akin to a chemical accelerant, transforming inert or sluggish material into something altogether more vigorous and energised. Yet although retributive rhetoric appears to offer presidents a potent mobilisation tool, its effects may not be particularly effective or dramatic. This likely has less to do with the potency of retributive sentiment as a mover of opinion, and more to do with the inherent difficulty of mobilising public support for war in foreign lands. When a harm has not been committed against the United States directly, retributive rhetoric's influence is likely to be limited. Even appealing to strong emotions and stimulating moral righteousness is not usually enough to create strong support when harms have been committed to third parties. It is expected that retributive rhetoric may increase support for war, but given the baseline resistance and reluctance of the public towards foreign intervention, its effects may be marginal. Yet this will not stop presidents from trying. In fact, these are exactly the circumstances in which presidents should redouble their mobilisation efforts.

This brings us to the methodological problem of assessing retrospectively in the case studies the effects of retributive rhetoric on public opinion. The problem lies in the challenge of disentangling the effects of presidential rhetoric from other concurrent sources of influence, especially mass media. At this distance from events, the primary source of information on public opinion for the researcher is polling results. However, not only are these poll results notoriously unreliable, they cannot tell us what the informational inputs governing respondents' replies were. This analytical problem does not appear to have a

[29] Joel Feinberg, "The Expressive Function of Punishment," *The Monist* 49, no. 3 (1965).

satisfactory solution. Therefore, while the effects of retributive rhetoric are clearly relevant to the theory of presidential rhetoric developed here, it is not the task of this thesis to make those assessments. Inferences about the influence of presidential rhetoric on public attitudes are drawn, but unfortunately must remain tentative, speculative, and supplemental.

Despite the seemingly obvious importance of retribution to human affairs, the role of punishment in international politics is underexplored. However, recent work has begun to redress this omission, making valuable progress in identifying the ways in which punitive sentiment shapes public attitudes and foreign policy.[30] Crucially, some very recent scholarship by Rachel M. Stein argues that retribution is a core value, and identifies the crucial importance of presidential rhetoric in making retribution salient in the minds of citizens during war mobilisation efforts.[31] This work supports a growing body of scholarship in political psychology suggesting that "foreign policy attitudes are partially pre-political, shaped by the broader belief systems that guide our choices outside of IR."[32] The present study takes these key insights from the prior literature as starting points for investigation. At the risk of mixing metaphors, Stein's work identifying the role of rhetoric in making retribution salient to the domestic audience forms a foundational base for the theory, whereas Liberman's identification of the conditions under which moral concerns are likely to influence foreign policy attitudes constitute the springboard for the theoretical investigation.

---

[30] For example, see Peter Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers," *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006); "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War."; "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 2 (2013); "War and Torture as "Just Deserts"," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2014); Peter Liberman and Linda Skitka, "Vicarious Retribution in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq," *Security Studies* 28, no. 2 (2019); Peter Liberman and Linda J. Skitka, "Revenge in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2017); Oded Löwenheim and Gadi Heimann, "Revenge in International Politics," *Security Studies* 17, no. 4 (2008); Rachel M. Stein, "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies," *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 3 (2015); *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*.

[31] "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies."; *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*.

[32] Joshua D. Kertzer and Dustin Tingley, "Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms," *Annual Review of Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2018): 327.

This thesis offers the first comprehensive study of retributive rhetoric for International Relations. It explains why retribution is important in war mobilisation and explicates the systematic decision rules governing judgements of moral responsibility outlined by psychological research, which to date remain largely unexplored within the context of International Relations. It also specifies a detailed inventory of the substantive characteristics of this type of discourse, and how it is projected. Finally, it advances some propositions about the use of aerial bombing that may be associated with this genre of rhetoric, as well as the circumstances in which it is more and less likely that retributive rhetoric will occur, and, tentatively (with due observance of the aforementioned caveats), its consequences.

A THEORY OF RETRIBUTIVE RHETORIC

Recognising retributive rhetoric as a distinct genre of rhetoric is the conceptual starting point in developing this theory. First, it is helpful to begin by delineating the temporal beginning and end points of the theory. The inception point of the analysis is an initial "trigger event" launching an international crisis, and the concluding point is the first use of offensive military force by the U.S., whether acting alone or as part of a coalition. The theory is structured around answers to three main questions: *why, how, and when is retributive rhetoric is employed?*

The answer to the first question of why retribution – as opposed to other punishment perspectives such as consequentialism – has been selected, is because it is the most descriptively accurate punishment perspective *vis-à-vis* human psychology. A large body of psychological research demonstrates that when computing punishment, people privilege

information relating to retribution over information relating to consequentialist punishment goals such as deterrence and incapacitation.[33] Consequentialist punishment objectives are commonly discussed within the domains of philosophy and legal scholarship and tend to be motivated by a normative or ethical focus. However, the empirical business of how people *actually* think about punishment is best captured by the theory of retribution. As one scholar notes, "everyday blamers are capable of violating virtually every rational prescription that moral philosophers, legal scholars, and rational decision theorists hold dear."[34]

More precisely, it is the retributive theory of 'just deserts' that is the most accurate fit to human psychology, and when the words "retribution" or "retributive sentiment" are used in this thesis they refer to just deserts. Just deserts is the view that a perpetrator should be punished proportionately because it is simply what is deserved, rather than because the punishment may have beneficial consequences. A major component of just deserts reasoning therefore is computing proportionality. Judgements relating to proportionality and assessments of the moral gravity of harms and the blameworthiness of offenders are widely shared across cultures and are thought to be the product of intuition rather than deliberative reasoning.[35]

Theorising the "how" question of retributive rhetoric entails explicating how leaders employ concepts salient to retributive psychology within their mobilisation discourse. This type of mobilisation discourse is here called "emotional mobilisation."[36] The discourse of

[33] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice."; Osgood, "Is Revenge About Retributive Justice, Deterring Harm, or Both?."
[34] Mark Alicke, "Blaming Badly," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 8, no. 1-2 (2008): 179.
[35] P. H. Robinson and J. M. Darley, "Intuitions of Justice: Implications for Criminal Law and Justice Policy," *Southern California Law Review* 81, no. 1 (2007): 8-9.
[36] To help structure this part of the analysis in a systematic way, the study draws on Todd H. Hall's framework for modelling forms of "Emotional Diplomacy". Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015), viii.

retribution is modelled along four dimensions: "(1) the situational meaning for an actor that would elicit the emotion; (2) the discourse and expressive behaviours associated with the emotion; (3) the substantive action tendencies the emotion would elicit; and (4) what displaying this emotion would convey to other actors."[37]

The first step of the model is speculatory, requiring the reader to consider the perspective of ordinary citizens in assessing the situational meaning of a crisis trigger event (but, by dint of being human, it is argued these perceptions will also be shared by presidents). This section addresses whether the public was uncertain about the strategic incentives of intervention, and the moral significance of the trigger event. It also discusses the situation from the president's perspective, addressing whether intervention was preferred. The second step models the retributive discourse, analysing the type of language and rhetorical features used by presidents.

Accordingly, the model is drawn from empirical research on punitive psychology from multiple adjacent disciplines. Retributive rhetoric is likely to employ various rhetorical techniques, including the use of narrative and framing to make issues salient to justice intuitions, as well as the use of metaphors and justifications. Some of the more substantive elements will include language expressing moral outrage, personalising the conflict, and emphasising issues of moral culpability such as the enemy's lack of provocation and the proportionality of the proposed retaliation. One important rhetorical device is the so-called

[37] The main primary sources used in this analysis are presidential speeches, and as such, expressive features are less relevant, as they describe behaviour such as gesticulation, etc. Therefore this analysis does not include expressive features associated with just deserts. Ibid., 34.

"savagery trope," which is manifested most prominently as a distinctive "rhetoric of atrocities."[38]

Armed with a comprehensive understanding of the triggers and psychological processes involved in just deserts reactions, the third step of the model considers the substantive actions that may accompany retributive rhetoric. Here, the implications of the association between retributive rhetoric and aerial bombing are considered. The fourth and final step of modelling emotional mobilisation concerns what retributive rhetoric conveys to the mass public. The theory solely concerns rhetoric addressed to the public; it does not include political elites or media figures. As discussed in the previous section, any correspondences between presidential rhetoric and changes in public opinion are treated as tentative.

The *when* question entails deriving a set of propositions about when retributive rhetoric is more and less likely to be employed. Two factors are found to be important: public uncertainty about the strategic merits of intervention, and the severity of the moral harm committed. The converse of this is theorising when we would *not* expect presidents to use retributive rhetoric. This is expected when the material benefits of intervention are clear to the public; when a president does not wish to intervene militarily; in cases of very severe moral harms (because it is redundant); and weaker moral harms (because they are too difficult to inflate into grounds for war).

The plausibility of these claims is investigated using qualitative methods to analyse the public communications of three presidents in the periods preceding the first use of offensive force in three major wars undertaken by the U.S. in the twentieth century. These are

[38] Eran N. Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2007): 183.

the entry into World War II in 1941; the entry into the Vietnam war in 1964; and the entry into the Persian Gulf War in 1991. Case selection and methodology are discussed in the following chapter.

ANALYTICAL CONTRIBUTION

This research contributes to scholarship in specific sub-fields of International Relations: presidential persuasion; moral and psychological approaches to International Relations—particularly scholarship on the role of punishment—and the sources of public support for war. First, presenting a novel theory and genre of rhetoric is an important addition to the study of political rhetoric. It provides an account of the specific political circumstances that make moral and retributive rhetoric an advantageous strategy when presidents seek to influence public opinion to "sell" war. Work in this field has observed that different types of wars correspond to different types of rhetoric,[39] and several genres of rhetoric have been identified, including the highly relevant "rhetoric of atrocities".[40] While this rhetoric emphasises harms that are "personal and physical",[41] extant scholarship does not explain why this rhetoric is used or why practitioners consider it expedient. Situating this rhetoric within the broader landscape of justice intuitions and core harms provides this genre with psychological microfoundations.

The thesis further contributes to the study of presidential communication by helping shed light on a challenge faced by the field, that "theoretical knowledge is inherently limited

[39] Kevin Coe, "The American Presidency at War: An Examination of Three Possibilities for Presidential Rationales," *Communication Studies* 64, no. 5 (2013): 473.
[40] Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts."
[41] Ibid., 186.

without further studies describing the boundaries of crafted talk."[42] Delineating the topography of justice intuitions can help illuminate and specify the boundaries of moral judgments in public opinion that limit the range and potentiality of presidential leadership of foreign policy, at least so far as rhetoric is concerned. The present research helps define how far a president can press certain avenues of persuasion. Not only can retributive rhetoric persuade, but justice intuitions can also function in the opposite direction. If leaders deviate too far from justice intuitions, the pendulum of public opinion will swing to disapproval. This is especially so concerning issues of proportionality. If retributive foreign policy actions violate proportionality, opinion can quickly swing from viewing a president as promoting justice to violating justice. Arguably, this was the case with support for the Vietnam war, which generated mass public protests, and the 2003 Iraq War.

The study can also help shed light on the debate in presidential studies and social constructivist theories about the determinants of international crises. Some scholars argue that what makes a crisis be perceived as such is governed less by situational facts, and more by the way in which it is socially constructed by elites.[43] On this view, presidential rhetoric, essentially, "is, on some level, the crisis itself."[44] John Zaller makes a similar argument in connection to core values, arguing that when elite communications frame situations as linked to core values, individuals are likely to comprehend the matter through the lens of this value in this biased manner.[45]

---

[42] Brandon Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"," *Political Communication* 25, no. 2 (2008): 139.
[43] Richard A. Cherwitz, "Masking Inconsistency: The Tonkin Gulf Crisis," *Communication Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1980); Murray J. Edelman, *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence* (New York: Academic Press, 1971); *Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1977).
[44] Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts," 184.
[45] John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

The thesis goes beyond the constructivist emphasis on language constructing ideas and beliefs by considering how citizens (and presidents) make moral judgements about an initial trigger event independently of a president's rhetoric. In other words, this work differs from constructivist work by virtue of the fact that the moral psychological judgements relating to the facts of the norm violation are deemed to be relevant to the analysis, rather than focusing more prominently on the rhetorical construction of a crisis. It therefore contributes to constructivist research programmes by helping identify and clarify some of the external levers that shape presidential rhetoric.

This research also contributes to work in political psychology on the influences of morality and punishment in international relations. Löwenheim and Heimann made an influential early contribution to this research, and Liberman observes that "more work also needs to be done to identify the range of norms, offences, and frames that can arouse moral punitiveness."[46] This thesis goes some way to addressing this by providing a detailed account of the psychological processes involved in punishment decisions, especially detailing the types of offences likely to arouse the most and least severe punitive sentiment. Likewise, an important aspect of punitive psychology is the importance of provocations, which, it has been noted, "is without concrete basis in our theories of International Relations." Again, the suite of justice intuitions supporting judgements of moral culpability can help provide theoretical foundations.[47]

[46] Liberman, "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War," 27-28.
[47] Todd H. Hall, "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco-Prussian War," *Security Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 2.

The limits imposed by justice intuitions are of course also relevant to research on the public sources of support for war. If rational, cost-benefit calculations upon which these theories are generally premised are less applicable than assumed, then the model for moral judgements outlined in this thesis can provide the beginnings of a dualistic approach to understanding war support, complementing pre-existing rationalist models. This thesis takes a perspective on human decision-making that is consistent with recent research in neuroscience suggesting that so-called "rational" thought processes are not separate from emotional processing, but in fact have emotionality embedded within these systems.[48] To this end, this study may also help illuminate some of the micro-foundations of theories emphasising the role of casualty aversion in conditioning support for war. These theories, and theories that emphasise the role of the policy objective in support for war, relate to moral judgements, but are currently unanchored because they do not specify microfoundations for the inputs into these judgements, which are often forms of moral evaluation. In view of these insights, rationalist theories of public support for war may need to account for the influence of emotional, heuristic processing when individuals reason about threat, costs, and the likelihood of success.

This research may also deepen our understanding of aerial bombing operations. While some scholarship acknowledges that the use of retributive rhetoric may result in weaker accountability constraints for leaders,[49] this thesis goes beyond this claim to make a more specific prediction, connecting retributive rhetoric with a particular type of foreign policy response. This finding may be of interest to scholars of coercion, as scholarship in this field generally assumes that coercion is the universal objective motivating aerial bombing. Second,

[48] Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (London: Picador, 1995).
[49] Stein, "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies," 55.

and relatedly, this research may help illuminate some of the psychological underpinnings of the so-called 'rally effect'. The surge in public support for a president in the initial stages of a crisis could well be rooted in the fact that initial offensive action satisfies popular desires for retribution.

THE PLAN OF THE THESIS

Having here outlined the main argument and discussed the theory, and the study's contributions and limitations, the next chapter details the theory, situating it within prior scholarship. Chapters Two, Three and Four comprise the case studies. The ordering of the cases is governed by theoretical imperatives that will be more easily understood after reading the next chapter, but briefly, Chapter Two is a study of America's entry into the Vietnam War, and Chapter Three is a study of the Persian Gulf War. Both these cases illustrate positive uses of retributive rhetoric. The final case on America's entry into World War II is placed after these chapters because (except for at one brief point), it illustrates an instance of reverse retributive rhetoric. Following this, Chapter Five tests the generalizability of the argument by providing some plausibility probes addressing the three additional major U.S. wars of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: Korea in 1950, Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003. The concluding chapter draws together the major findings of the study and discusses their implications.

CHAPTER 1

THE PERFORMATIVE LOGIC OF RETRIBUTION

This chapter sets out the theory of retributive rhetoric structured around the research questions of why, how, and when presidents employ a retributive discourse to mobilise support for military interventions. The first section explains *why* political leaders attempt to arouse retributive sentiment within the populace, demonstrating the validity of focusing on the retributive perspective. The next section addresses *how* presidents employ retributive rhetoric, modelling its distinctive features. Next, the question of *when* elites are more and less likely to project retributive rhetoric is addressed, explicating some scope conditions. The final section of this chapter discusses the research design, including the rationale guiding the case selection and choice of methodology.

WHY RETRIBUTION?

In order to understand why presidents engage in retributive rhetoric, it is necessary to first understand the phenomenon of retribution. The following section discusses punishment broadly, before narrowing the focus to explain why the theory of retribution is the focus of this research. This is followed by a discussion of how prior scholarship in International Relations has treated the topic of punishment.

What is Punishment? Philosophy and Practise

Punishment is documented in many species on earth, including plants,[1] fish,[2] and non-human primates.[3] Evolutionary models of punishment propose that it evolved in humans as an adaptive mechanism to sustain cooperation by policing behaviour.[4] Punishment is practised in all societies on earth,[5] prompting anthropologists to classify it as a human universal.[6] Retributive reasoning emerges early in children's development,[7] arising directly from moral intuitions. Moral intuitions appear to be shared cross-culturally,[8] although cross-cultural variation in punishment norms and practises are shaped by socialisation processes.[9] Interestingly, the act of punishing appears to be a rewarding activity — people expect to derive satisfaction from it.[10] This is supported by neuroscientific studies showing that simply thinking about punishing activates the reward centres of the brain,[11] with the magnitude of the activation correlating with the magnitude of punishment assigned to hypothetical offenders.[12] Punitive judgements appear to be fast, automatic, highly certain, and resistant to

[1] E. Toby Kiers et al., "Host Sanctions and the Legume–Rhizobium Mutualism," *Nature* 425, no. 6953 (2003).
[2] Nichola J. Raihani et al., "Male Cleaner Wrasses Adjust Punishment of Female Partners According to the Stakes," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 279, no. 1727 (2012).
[3] T. H. Clutton-Brock and G. A. Parker, "Punishment in Animal Societies," *Nature* 373, no. 6511 (1995); Jensen Keith, Call Josep, and Tomasello Michael, "Chimpanzees Are Vengeful but Not Spiteful," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 32 (2007).
[4] Robert M. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 2006); Oliver Scott Curry *et al*., "Moral Molecules: Morality as a Combinatorial System," *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* (2021); Dominic Johnson, *God Is Watching You: How the Fear of God Makes Us Human* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Michael E. Price, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby, "Punitive Sentiment as an Anti-Free Rider Psychological Device," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 23, no. 3 (2002).
[5] Joseph Henrich et al., "Costly Punishment across Human Societies," *Science* 312, no. 5781 (2006).
[6] Donald E. Brown, *Human Universals* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide, Foundations of Human Behavior* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1988); Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011).
[7] Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[8] Oliver Scott Curry, Daniel Austin Mullins, and Harvey Whitehouse, "Is It Good to Cooperate? Testing the Theory of Morality-as-Cooperation in 60 Societies," *Current Anthropology* 60, no. 1 (2019); John M. Darley, "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions," *Annual Review Law and Social Science* 5, no. 1 (2009); Robinson, Kurzban, and Jones, "The Origins of Shared Intuitions of Justice."; Paul H. Robinson, *Intuitions of Justice and the Utility of Desert* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[9] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 54.
[10] Kevin M. Carlsmith, Timothy D. Wilson, and Daniel T. Gilbert, "The Paradoxical Consequences of Revenge," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95, no. 6 (2008).
[11] Charlotte V. O. Witvliet et al., "Retributive Justice, Restorative Justice, and Forgiveness: An Experimental Psychophysiology Analysis," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 44, no. 1 (2008).
[12] Dominique J. F. de Quervain et al., "The Neural Basis of Altruistic Punishment," *Science* 305, no. 5688 (2004).

introspection and rationalisation.[13] So ingrained is this impulse that people will punish even when they incur irredeemable personal costs to do so.[14]

So, what *is* punishment, and what distinguishes it from straightforward harm? Most investigations of punishment have been conducted in the domain of domestic criminal justice. Legal scholars and philosophers propose that punishment must exhibit at least two essential components: it must be a response to a prior wrong, and it requires a rationale or justification. Regarding the former, legal scholar Jon Hamlin notes, the definition must include "an element of the backward looking."[15] This may seem obvious, but it is worth underscoring that punishment cannot be considered punishment if it does not relate to an antecedent event.[16] The second key characteristic - that punishment requires a rationale - has been invoked as the distinguishing factor between legal punishment and cruelty.[17]

Determining the appropriate rationale for punishment has been a central concern for philosophers and legal theorists for centuries. In the philosophical tradition, two main normative principles are appealed to: utilitarianism, or consequentialism; and deontology. On the view of utilitarianism, or consequentialism,[18] punishment is morally legitimate if its benefits to society exceed the costs. Consequentialist theories are therefore future-oriented, aimed at preventing future harm, and, in its pure form, this focus on consequences entails that a punisher should be unconcerned with the moral severity of the harm or the moral

[13] Robinson and Darley, "Intuitions of Justice: Implications for Criminal Law and Justice Policy," 3.
[14] Terence C. Burnham and Dominic D. P. Johnson, "The Biological and Evolutionary Logic of Human Cooperation," *Analyse & Kritik* 27, no. 1 (2005); Ernst Fehr and Simon Gächter, "Altruistic Punishment in Humans," *Nature* 415, no. 6868 (2002).
[15] Alan P. Hamlin, "Rational Revenge," *Ethics* 101, no. 2 (1991): 375.
[16] A relatively recent punitive concept debated by philosophers is the idea of "pre-punishment", the punishment of individuals predicted to commit future crimes. At present, this remains within the realm of speculation and has been explored in science fiction, notably the film *Minority Report*.
[17] Kent Greenawalt, "Punishment," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 74, no. 2 (1983): 344-46.
[18] Henceforth the term 'consequentialism' will be used to describe this punishment orientation.

culpability of the offender.[19] The dominant consequentialist philosophies are deterrence and incapacitation,[20] whereas within the deontological school of thought, the single justification for punishment is retribution.

It is worth noting that these categories of deontological and consequentialist punishment perspectives represent something of "ideal type" categories. While this distinction is useful for academic discussions, it is worth bearing in mind that in fact, it may not be entirely psychologically accurate. Many scholars argue that deontological motives for punishment have consequentialist motives 'built in'. This notion is captured in the common feeling of desiring to "teach a lesson" to a perpetrator to deter reoffending. Indeed, this argument forms the basis of evolutionary explanations for how punishment, which is a costly behaviour in the short-term, evolved.[21] However, even if the retributive impulse contains elements of consequentialism, the felt experience of injustice is usually dominated by a primary feeling of desiring retaliation. This thesis takes the view that while this distinction provides useful terminology for the academic study of punishment, in the empirical world of elite and public attitudes on war, the retributive impulse may well contain consequentialist aspirations, even if they are not powerfully experienced by subjects.

While early theories of retribution prescribe equivalence between a harm and punishment ("an eye for an eye"), newer "neoclassical" legal retributive theories incorporate notions of proportionality, fitting punishment not only to the severity of the crime but to the

[19] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice," 202.
[20] Rehabilitation, restoration, and restitution are additional consequentialist theories, but as psychologists Kevin M. Carlsmith and John M. Darley note, these theories are less relevant to the empirical reality of ordinary people's punitive psychology, as their "primary supporters appear to us to be within academic circles rather than the citizenry." As this thesis is concerned with the punitive decisions of ordinary people, an analytical decision has been made to jettison these theories. This is not to suggest that these are unimportant for legal and philosophical theorising, but rather, they are treated as distractions from the present focus on empirical lay psychology.
[21] Burnham and Johnson, "The Biological and Evolutionary Logic of Human Cooperation."

degree of the perpetrator's moral culpability. As we shall see in the following section, one doctrine of retribution, 'just deserts' has special relevance to human psychology.

Just Deserts: The "naïve psychology of punishment"

Because consequentialist and deontological theories of punishment are normative philosophies, one cannot assume they capture the empirical reality of ordinary people's punishment motives. A series of psychological studies investigating punitive decision-making takes these philosophical theories as a starting point for investigating whether, and to what extent, they correspond to the actual punishment motives of ordinary people. Reviewing this research, psychologist John Darley concludes that we now have "a relatively clear picture of the naïve psychology of punishment".[22] The scholarly consensus is that "people are intuitive retributivists"[23] and there is scant evidence suggesting that consequentialist intentions are an empirically significant determinant of punishment motivations, validating Friedrich Nietzsche's insight that punishment is "overdetermined by utilities of all kinds."[24]

Beyond finding that ordinary persons are "intuitive retributivists", psychologists studying punishment attitudes have found that human psychology most closely aligns with one particular legal doctrine of punishment, that being, "just deserts". Just deserts, as a legal theory, goes beyond retaliation to encompass evaluations of moral blameworthiness and proportionality,[25] the idea that "the punishment should fit the crime". For these reasons, the

[22] Darley, "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions," 2.
[23] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice," 211.
[24] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche and Walter Kaufmann, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 81.
[25] Examples of this literature include: Alfred Blumstein and Jacqueline Cohen, "Sentencing of Convicted Offenders: An Analysis of the Public's View," *Law & Society Review* 14, no. 2 (1980); Kevin Carlsmith, John Darley, and Paul Robinson, "Why Do We Punish? Deterrence and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 2 (2002); Kevin M. Carlsmith, "The Roles of Retribution and Utility in Determining Punishment," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 42, no. 4 (2006); John Darley, Kevin Carlsmith, and Paul Robinson, "Incapacitation and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment," *Law and Human Behavior* 24, no. 6 (2000); Phoebe C. Ellsworth and Lee Ross, "Public Opinion and Capital

theory of just deserts is the focus of this study, and thus answers the 'why' research question concerning the focus on retribution.

This evidence should not be understood to mean that people never punish from a consequentialist perspective, or that individuals do not vary in their punitive behaviours. Darley and colleagues Kevin Carlsmith and Paul Robinson argue that different punishment perspectives can be induced by thinking about harms at either a micro (individual) or macro (societal) level, and whether the offence is temporally proximate or distant. They propose that just deserts reasoning is more likely to be triggered when one considers specific individuals, and when the situation is temporally proximate. A utilitarian perspective, on the other hand, is more likely to be triggered when one is thinking at the societal level and the harm is temporally distant.[26] It could be that people endorse consequentialist goals at a societal level, but when faced with sentencing a specific individual, just deserts motives dominate. As we will see, just deserts reasoning appears to be activated when there is a high degree of specificity in terms of the crime (e.g., graphic details) and the identification of specific offenders and victims.

Individual Differences

If punishment is so deeply ingrained in the human psyche and just deserts captures the empirical reality of punitive psychology, we must ask how these judgements are affected by individual personality dispositions and/or membership of particular demographic groups, especially in relation to foreign policy. Generally, evidence suggests that certain dispositional

Punishment: A Close Examination of the Views of Abolitionists and Retentionists," *Crime & Delinquency* 29, no. 1 (1983); Norman J. Finkel et al., "Recidivism, Proportionalism, and Individualized Punishment," *American Behavioral Scientist* 39, no. 4 (1996); V. Lee Hamilton and Steve Rytina, "Social Consensus on Norms of Justice: Should the Punishment Fit the Crime?," *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 5 (1980); Robinson and Kurzban, "Concordance and Conflict in Intuitions of Justice, 91 No."

[26] Darley, Carlsmith, and Robinson, "Incapacitation and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment," 677-78.

factors do increase punitiveness, including strong beliefs in a 'just world',[27] feeling that morality is central to identity,[28] and individuals who use a "cognitively simple" reasoning style.[29]

Nonetheless, a review of the literature on punishment concludes that while individual differences exist, they are eclipsed by the more general tendency towards retribution.[30] Carlsmith and Darley conclude that individual differences matter, but are "easily dwarfed by the more universal sensitivity to the retributive factors."[31] This tendency cuts across demographic groups. In a separate study, Carlsmith, Darley and Robinson conclude that "demographic variables are not strongly linked to attitudes about just punishments."[32] Empirical research in criminology supports this claim, with "variables like race, gender, and social class" tending to "explain no more than 10% of the variance in predictions of punitive public attitudes […] on their own, they are not particularly strong explanations of punitiveness".[33] Other studies have found little evidence to support differences in punitive judgements along the dimensions of age, or religiosity.[34] The evidence for gender differences in punitiveness is mixed, with some studies finding little difference,[35] whereas other studies

[27] Cheryl R. Kaiser, S. Brooke Vick, and Brenda Major, "A Prospective Investigation of the Relationship between Just-World Beliefs and the Desire for Revenge after September 11, 2001," *Psychological Science* 15, no. 7 (2004).
[28] Wilhelm Hofmann et al., "Moral Punishment in Everyday Life," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 44, no. 12 (2018): 1700-08.
[29] David A. Welch, *Justice and the Genesis of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28.
[30] Henceforth, the word "retribution" is substituted for "just deserts", primarily on aesthetic grounds.
[31] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice," 206.
[32] Carlsmith, Darley, and Robinson, "Why Do We Punish? Deterrence and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment," 295.
[33] A. King and S. Maruna, "Is a Conservative Just a Liberal Who Has Been Mugged? Exploring the Origins of Punitive Views," *Punishment & Society* 11, no. 2 (2009): 150.
[34] Hofmann et al., "Moral Punishment in Everyday Life," 1700.
[35] For an overview, see Besiki Kutateladze and Angela M. Crossman, "An Exploratory Analysis of Gender Differences in Punitiveness in Two Countries," *International Criminal Justice Review* 19, no. 3 (2009).

have demonstrated that males have a higher preference for punishing individuals perceived as acting unfairly.[36]

The relationship between political ideology and punitive dispositions is a rather confusing one, and resonates with a parallel debate in International Relations about the relative importance of situational versus dispositional factors.[37] Differing moral values have been identified as constituting the central ideological cleavage between liberals and conservatives,[38] and evidence suggests that conservative, authoritarian worldviews are associated with increased punitiveness.[39] However, when it comes to the use of force abroad, political scientists Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley note that liberal-conservative orientations "are typically poor predictors of foreign policy attitudes", and moreover, that "social groups have not been found to differ greatly on foreign policy issues."[40] Supporting this, Peter Liberman finds that political ideology (and nationalism) played a weak role in elite support for ousting Saddam Hussein in the 1991 Gulf war, suggesting "a more complex relationship

---

[36] Tania Singer et al., "Empathic Neural Responses Are Modulated by the Perceived Fairness of Others," *Nature* 439, no. 7075 (2006).
[37] Zeev Maoz, "Revisionism or Misinterpretation? A Reply to Professor Walker," *Political Psychology* 8, no. 4 (1987); Zeev Maoz and Anat Shayer, "The Cognitive Structure of Peace and War Argumentation: Israeli Prime Ministers Versus the Knesset," ibid.; S. Walker, "Personality, Situation, and Cognitive Complexity: A Revisionist Analysis of the Israeli Cases," ibid.
[38] Gian Vittorio Caprara et al., "Personality and Politics: Values, Traits, and Political Choice," ibid.27, no. 1 (2006); Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian Nosek, "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96, no. 5 (2009); Jonathan Haidt and Jesse Graham, "When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize," *Social Justice Research* 20, no. 1 (2007); Kertzer et al., "Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes."; Hulda Thorisdottir et al., "Psychological Needs and Values Underlying Left-Right Political Orientation: Cross-National Evidence from Eastern and Western Europe," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2007).
[39] Richard Centers, Robert William Shomer, and Aroldo Rodrigues, "A Field Experiment in Interpersonal Persuasion Using Authoritative Influence," *Journal of Personality* 38, no. 3 (1970); D. S. Dustin and H. P. Davis, "Authoritarianism and Sanctioning Behaviour," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 6, no. 2 (1967); N. T. Feather, "Reactions to Penalties for an Offense in Relation to Authoritarianism, Values, Perceived Responsibility, Perceived Seriousness, and Deservingness," ibid.71, no. 3 (1996); H. E. Mitchell and D. Byrne, "The Defendant's Dilemma: Effects of Jurors' Attitudes and Authoritarianism on Judicial Decisions," ibid.25, no. 1 (1973); J. R. Silver and E. Silver, "Why Are Conservatives More Punitive Than Liberals? A Moral Foundations Approach," *Law and Human Behavior* 41, no. 3 (2017); James D. Unnever, Francis T. Cullen, and Bonnie S. Fisher, ""A Liberal Is Someone Who Has Not Been Mugged": Criminal Victimization and Political Beliefs," *Justice Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2007).
[40] Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley, "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model," *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (1987): 1100.

between ideology and military assertiveness".[41] Overall, the evidence suggests that individual differences in punitiveness clearly exist along several dimensions, but are not necessarily manifested in views on foreign policy.

While individual differences in punitiveness may be largely overshadowed by the universal bias towards retribution, this does not limit cultural variation in punitive practises. In his study on norms of revenge, Jon Elster found that regions in which the rule of law and political institutions were historically weak had stronger punitive norms of vigilantism.[42] This suggests that the external environment (in this case, the strength of socio-political institutions) correlated with the development of punishment norms. Likewise, Rachel M. Stein finds cross-national variance in the strength of punishment norms.[43] However, evidence suggests that *judgements about the moral wrongfulness* of harms are likely to be highly similar across cultures. As James Q. Wilson explains, punishment practises are the result of "learning, culture, norms – all of the components of the social bond." However, he adds, these "are contrivances, not instincts, created for collective but not for individual advantage and maintained by creaky and uncertain institutions rather than by powerful and always-present emotions."

While Wilson also acknowledges that norms "constrain or subvert the operation of the moral sense", his distinction between norms and the emotions underpinning them is important. In contrast to Stein's important work focused at the level of norms, the present study is focused at the individual-psychological level. To quote Wilson once more, this thesis takes his advice to "look behind the rules and the circumstances that shape them to discover what fundamental dispositions, if any, animate them."[44] A comparative study investigating

[41] Liberman, "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War," 27.
[42] Jon Elster, "Norms of Revenge," *Ethics* 100, no. 4 (1990).
[43] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*.
[44] James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 24.

the sources of punitiveness in the United States, Canada, and Germany helps illustrate the worth of this endeavour. The authors found a high degree of similarity between the punitive attitudes of Americans and Canadians, and these groups assigned harsher sentences than did the Germans. Despite this apparent cultural variation, the study found that respondents from all three countries *agreed on the degree of moral wrongfulness of crimes*, suggesting that the individual psychological processes involved in evaluating the moral severity of harms shows a high degree of cross-cultural consistency, despite varying punishment norms.[45]

Punishment in International Relations

- The Just War Tradition, International Law, and a Clarification of Terms

It is useful at this point to set out how the psychological intuitions of justice are reflected in the history of ethical and legal thought about the morality of war. In the Western world, the earliest writings on the ethics of war are traced back to ancient Greece and later Rome, in the writings of the Stoics. Stoic thinkers espoused a conception of war based on two dominant assumptions: that universal natural laws shaped human behaviour, and that the international sphere was inherently a domain of peace, with conflict constituting an anomalous interruption to this underlying state. By the Middle Ages, these ideas gradually evolved through the writings of theologians and philosophers into a recognisable canon of writings known as just-war theory, which in turn became embedded in modern international law.[46]

The perspective of this thesis is that in common with other legal domains, these traditions have necessarily emerged from universal psychological intuitions about justice, and are consistent with this aspect of human psychology in important ways. Some of the main

[45] M. B. Kugler et al., "Differences in Punitiveness across Three Cultures: A Test of American Exceptionalism in Justice Attitudes," *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 103, no. 4 (2013).
[46] Stephen C. Neff, *War and the Law of Nations: A General History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3-4.

dimensions of uniformity are the centrality of issues such as provocation, self-defence, and the types of retaliatory acts deemed morally and legally permissible. Despite these congruences, however, just-war theory and international law often depart from the empirical reality of how people think about justice and punishment, mainly because they are formulated on moral/religious *ideals*, rather than empirical psychological reality. A space opens between normative theorising and 'real life' psychological processing, as noted by Stephen C. Neff, who writes that Christian just-war thought was laced with

> the musty odour of the scholar's chamber rather than the bracing air of the field of battle. Just-war doctrine might be described as a distinctly 'top-down' approach to war. That is to say, it was deductive in character, based on a very small number of general principles, derived from general natural law and Christian scripture rather than from any careful empirical analysis of war itself. Just-war writing therefore always had an aura of artificiality, an intricacy and detail that appealed more naturally to the subtle debater or logician than to the battle-hardened general. Never, in short, has writing about war been so largely the province of people so removed from the actual practice of the subject.[47]

International law contains a similar mixture of congruences and incongruencies with psychological justice intuitions. A suite of retaliatory acts of state violence (short of war) have been legislated. First, the term retaliation is a general term for vengeance, and in the history of legal thought, simple retaliation has not been sanctioned as lawful. A second category of retaliatory acts is reprisals, which originated in the Middle Ages and related to actions undertaken by victims of property theft taken to force a perpetrator to make amends.

[47] Ibid., 68-69.

However, by the 18th century, the remit of reprisals was broadened to include state uses of force, and by the 19th century, some reprisals had a punitive element. Consistent with justice intuitions concerning proportionality, the permissible intensity of reprisals was evaluated on the harm incurred by the victim, which was codified in 1934 by the Institute of International Law. Post-1945, reprisals became illegal under international law and the UN General Assembly renamed reprisals "countermeasures", which were made legal so long as they did not involve the use of force. Retorsion is another form of state response in international law, describes and measures whereby a state takes reciprocal discriminatory action against the citizens of another state which has first enacted a law discriminating against its own citizens.[48]

From a psychological perspective, all these legal justifications are relevant because they describe various actions that are rooted in retributive intuitions. They are social and legal constructs stemming from the psychological impulse that lies at the heart of this study. Furthermore, it may be argued that they are international law defences which 'dress up' and justify fundamentally retributive acts. Michael Byers notes that as a consequence of the UN's prohibition on reprisals, some countries "have persistently sought to extend the right of self-defence to include acts designed more to punish than defend."[49]

However, although legal theorising and ethical writings may be rooted in universal justice intuitions, these traditions depart from public attitudes about war in important ways. This is because their primary *raison d'etre* is to regulate the retributive urge and formalise reasons to justify the use of force. The very purpose of moral theorising is to set limits on this aspect of human nature that manifests in interstate violence.[50] It is hardly surprising that

[48] Ibid., 123-30.
[49] Michael Byers, *War Law* (London: Atlantic, 2005), 59.
[50] James Turner Johnson, *The Quest for Peace: Three Moral Traditions in Western Cultural History* (Princeton Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1987), xii.

survey research often reveals a mismatch between just-war principles and lay-persons' attitudes on matters integral to war. For example, research shows that American citizens are not committed to the just-war principle of non-combatant immunity when foreign citizens support an adversary of the U.S.[51] Thus, just-war theory and international law have evolved to incorporate a high degree of normative complexity, making it difficult to trace a direct line between justice intuitions and legal traditions.

- **Conceptual Clarifications in the International Relations Literature**

The International Relations literature on interstate punishment tends to conflate the terms of retribution and revenge. Scholars tend to use the term "revenge" to describe any and all kinds of retaliation or retribution. However, revenge and retribution are not identical conceptually.[52] Importantly, revenge typically refers to retaliatory acts occurring in the realm of interpersonal relations, whereas retribution, in addition to being a legal doctrine of punishment, is used in the psychological literature to refer to the empirical punitive decision-making processes, of which just deserts is the most accurate psychological fit. Thus, in the context of state violence against other states, it is argued that retribution is a more appropriate term, as revenge describes interpersonal behaviour that is outside of the legal realm. Despite these differing terms, however, the referent psychological processes, beliefs and actions described in prior work under the term "revenge" are largely identical to those understood as retribution or just deserts in this thesis.[53] As such, this issue appears to be more of a matter of semantics than of describing different substantive phenomena. However, in setting out these

[51] Scott D. Sagan, "Not Just a War Theory: American Public Opinion on Ethics in Combat," *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2018).
[52] Robert Nozick identifies five dimensions of difference. Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 366-68.
[53] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 38.

distinctions, it is hoped that this thesis may contribute to clarifying the use of these terms in International Relations scholarship.

- **Prior Scholarship on Punishment in International Relations**

Work on moral values and foreign policy finds that values structure foreign policy attitudes in predictable ways.[54] Kertzer *et al* argue that attitudes about the use of force are rooted in moral values, even though these may not be traditionally pacific values.[55] Consonant with this, Stein conceptualises retribution (or "revenge") as a moral value,[56] a designation this thesis also adopts. Several studies have demonstrated that retribution has direct effects in international relations.[57] Peter Liberman in particular is notable for a series of studies detailing how punitive sentiment affects support for war and torture,[58] and public and elite support for the Iraq wars.[59] While his work has been pioneering, Stein describes his oeuvre as amounting to a "proof of concept", demonstrating that retribution does influence attitudes about the use of military force. However, Stein notes that Liberman's work fails to specify how and when latent retributive sentiment is likely to be activated and made salient to politics.[60] Stein's own work addresses this, proposing that presidential communications accomplish this.

---

[54] Richard K. Herrmann, Philip E. Tetlock, and Penny S. Visser, "Mass Public Decisions to Go to War: A Cognitive-Interactionist Framework," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 3 (1999); Hurwitz and Peffley, "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model."; Miroslav Nincic and Jennifer Ramos, "Torture in the Public Mind," *International Studies Perspectives* 12, no. 3 (2011); Brian C. Rathbun, "Hierarchy and Community at Home and Abroad: Evidence of a Common Structure of Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs in American Elites," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 3 (2007).
[55] Kertzer et al., "Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes."
[56] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*.
[57] Löwenheim and Heimann, "Revenge in International Politics."; E. Harkavy Robert, "Defeat, National Humiliation, and the Revenge Motif in International Politics," *International Politics* 37, no. 3 (2000); Emil Souleimanov and Huseyn Aliyev, "Blood Revenge and Violent Mobilization: Evidence from the Chechen Wars," *International Security* 40, no. 2 (2015); Welch, *Justice and the Genesis of War*.
[58] Liberman, "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture."; "War and Torture as "Just Deserts"."
[59] "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers."; "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War."; Liberman and Skitka, "Vicarious Retribution in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq."; Liberman and Skitka, "Revenge in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq."
[60] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 17.

Additionally she finds that some democracies are more belligerent than others, finding a correlation between higher rates of conflict and more punitive domestic social norms.[61]

Stein's work specifying the crucial mechanism that makes retribution salient to the public is important. She argues that citizens' retributive sentiment becomes activated "when (and only when)" force "is framed as a punishment".[62] Stein proposes that three elements are necessary in a leaders' framing of a crisis for this to occur: (1) a clear act of wrongdoing; (2) a clear perpetrator; and (3) a proposed military response.[63] However, this formulation is slightly rudimentary, as it misses much of the detail required to activate retributive motives. For example, the first element stating that there must be a clear act of wrongdoing is underexplored, as not all kinds of wrongdoing will elicit retributive feelings. Social psychologists confirm that "in all societies, it is those violations arousing moral emotions that trigger the retributive reaction, rather than violations that produce nonmoral emotions or no emotions at all."[64] As we will see, the type and degree of harm triggering a crisis is an important component of retributive reactions, and represents a lacuna in Stein's account.

Furthermore, Stein acknowledges that various mitigating factors inform punitive decisions, noting "the effect of revenge may be heightened or attenuated by certain situational and dispositional factors, such as nationalism, interest in foreign affairs, the strategic stakes of the conflict, and the availability of vivid information about the adversary's transgression. However, these factors are all proposed as potential moderators, which is separate from the more fundamental question of what makes revenge salient in the first place."[65] Relegating the

---

[61] "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies."; *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*.
[62] *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 19.
[63] Ibid., 92.
[64] J. M. Darley and T. S. Pittman, "The Psychology of Compensatory and Retributive Justice," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 7, no. 4 (2003): 333.
[65] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 17, note 10.

moderators of punishment to subsidiary points leaves a gap in Stein's theory, because these factors can potentially reduce or negate entirely the desire for retribution — even in the presence of the three elements of her theory. For example, in the case of murder, punishment can be withheld if intent was absent.[66] The theory developed here incorporates these moderators, explaining how they condition punitive judgments and showing how presidents employ these concepts in retributive rhetoric.

Other important omissions in Stein's work are the roles of moral outrage in generating the desire for punishment and the role of proportionality in regulating punishment severity. Likewise, her account of when presidents are likely to use retributive framing could benefit from further research specifying these conditions in more detail, as she simply states that retribution can become salient to the public "in many different scenarios".[67] The present study builds upon Stein's valuable work, specifying how moral outrage and proportionality function, and detailing two propositions about when presidents are expected to be more likely to engage in this rhetoric. Finally, whereas Stein conducts statistical analysis and explores her hypotheses through short illustrative examples, she admits that her work "does not purport to explain specific conflicts".[68] In contrast, the empirical investigations in this thesis attempt to explain specific conflicts through in-depth case studies, focusing on how the political and moral context was more, or less, conducive to the use of moral rhetoric and whether presidential behaviour corresponded to these expectations.

The foregoing discussion illustrates *why* retribution is an important topic of study. It is the focus of this thesis because it most closely resembles the empirical reality of human punitive decision-making. That is, humans appear to be powerfully biased towards retribution

[66] Darley, "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions," 8.
[67] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 19.
[68] Ibid., 64.

rather than consequentialist punishment. Although individual differences in punitive attitudes exist, psychologists find that these differences are not of great significance. Even the correlation between conservative orientations and higher support for aggressive foreign policy is not as straightforward as may be assumed. Cross-nationally, variation in punishment norms is noteworthy, but this does not conflict with the claim that the bias towards retribution appears to be universal, as norms and the underlying psychological tendencies giving rise to them are two separate levels of analysis. It is the latter which is the focus of this thesis, and the theory builds on some important insights from previous scholarship. Liberman's work identifying the importance of retribution in International Relations is foundational, as is Stein's identification of the key role of presidential communication in making retribution salient to the public. These insights provide the springboard for this study.

HOW DO PRESIDENTS USE RETRIBUTIVE RHETORIC TO MOBILISE SUPPORT FOR WAR?

This section addresses *how* presidents attempt to mobilise support using retribution. First, some theoretical assumptions concerning the role of presidents and the nexus between presidential rhetoric and public opinion are discussed. The following section develops the concepts of retribution, and models a distinctive 'idiom' of retributive rhetoric using the framework set out for modelling emotions in Todd Hall's *Emotional Diplomacy*.

Some Assumptions

- **Presidents Care About, and Are Constrained By, Public Opinion**

In order to proceed with developing a theory of retributive rhetoric, it is necessary to demonstrate that presidents are concerned about public opinion and craft their rhetoric

accordingly. After all, if presidents did not try to persuade the electorate with their communications, there would be little point in developing a theory of mobilisation rhetoric. In fact, presidents appear to be acutely attuned to public opinion. Not only do they consult public opinion polls, but polling operations are institutionalised within the White House,[69] and the White House also conducts public relations operations.[70] This information informs leaders' communications, which have been shown to be based on calculations of public opinion.[71] Scholars label presidential communications that are created in order to persuade the public as "crafted talk"[72] or "framing".[73]

Of course, this concern with public opinion is wholly rational in a democracy. As well as popular retributive sentiment constituting a tool of persuasion and opportunity for leaders, they must avoid using it carelessly. Brandon Rottinghaus writes that presidential persuasion will be successful only insofar as it matches "that which the public will accept",[74] and Powlick and Katz state that "presidents only succeed at leading public opinion when there is some correlation between their international goals and popular values."[75] If presidents must present their policies in ways that broadly align with citizens' widely held values, then the relevance of studying the role of retribution in political persuasion becomes clear.

---

[69] Jacobs and Shapiro, "The Rise of Presidential Polling: The Nixon White House in Historical Perspective."; Lawrence R. Jacobs, "The Recoil Effect: Public Opinion and Policymaking in the U.S. And Britain," *Comparative Politics* 24, no. 2 (1992); Jacobs and Shapiro, "Presidential Manipulation of Polls and Public Opinion: The Nixon Administration and the Pollsters."
[70] Jarol B. Manheim, "Strategic Public Diplomacy: Managing Kuwait's Image During the Gulf Conflict," in *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, ed. W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
[71] Paul and Hinckley Brace, Barbara, *Follow the Leader: Opinion Polls and the Modern President* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).
[72] Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"."
[73] Dennis Chong and James Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007).
[74] Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"," 140.
[75] P. Powlick and A. Katz, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus," *International Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (1998): 52.

Retributive psychology constitutes an important and under-theorised set of boundaries delineating what citizens will find acceptable, fair, and legitimate policy, and therefore can be a powerful constraint upon leaders. Yet leaders tread a fine line when engaging in a performative discourse of retribution, as transgressing the boundaries of justice intuitions can have deleterious political consequences. Excessive punishment violates norms of proportionality and arouses disapproval.[76] Additionally, despite the strong bias towards retribution, many people profess to believe that taking revenge is wrong.[77] In one study, Gollwitzer *et al* found that people spontaneously approve of personal retaliation, but on reflection, report that they disapprove of it. The authors conclude that "this suggests that seeing justice done *via* revenge is still an important part of our motivational architecture, but that this desire has at least partly been curbed by cultural and societal institutions and narratives."[78] In short, the pendulum of public opinion can easily swing against retribution if a leader is perceived to diverge too far from prevailing norms.

- **Variation In, and the Determinants Of, Mobilisation Rhetoric**

The propensity of political leaders to construct exaggeratedly evil images of foreign enemies to arouse popular animosity was noted by early theorists of International Relations.[79] Richard Ned Lebow observes that presidents engage in "justification-of-hostility" rhetoric, the purpose of which is "not to force an accommodation but to provide a *casus belli* for war." The role of provocation is a critical element in this narrative, which is often constructed in ways that will arouse public anger and obscure genuine political motives.[80] Relatedly, Todd

[76] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 56.
[77] Hans Crombag, Eric Rassin, and Robert Horselenberg, "On Vengeance," *Psychology, Crime & Law* 9, no. 4 (2003).
[78] Kugler et al., "Differences in Punitiveness across Three Cultures: A Test of American Exceptionalism in Justice Attitudes," 527.
[79] George F. Kennan and John J. Mearsheimer, *American Diplomacy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (New York: New American Library, 1955).
[80] Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 29.

Hall advances a "theory of provocations", noting that political leaders sometimes engage in a performative discourse of outraged reactions in response to moral violations, which can result in rash and aggressive foreign policy choices.[81]

From the 1980s, rhetoric scholars began identifying presidential war/crisis rhetoric as a distinct genre.[82] Political argument has been classified into four main typologies: (1) instrumental arguments; (2) arguments concerning identity; (3) scientific arguments; and (4) ethical arguments. Retributive rhetoric is essentially a form of ethical argument. Ethical arguments constitute "a reconstruction, the articulation of an alternative that meets normative criteria." In this case, the normative criteria are justice intuitions, which as discussed, are rooted in powerful emotions. The connection to emotion has been identified as a critical factor in making arguments persuasive.[83]

Scholarly opinion is divided over the degree of homogeneity and predictability of war rhetoric, and may be grouped into three alternative views. The first is that presidential rhetoric does not change significantly over time, and is shaped predominantly by the duties and constraints of office. The second is that variation occurs and is attributable primarily to presidents' individual characteristics, particularly political ideology and/or personality traits. The third view is that variation exists, and is determined primarily by the exigencies created by the situational circumstances of particular crises, as presidents endeavour to respond strategically.[84]

---

[81] Hall, "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco-Prussian War."
[82] Carol Winkler, "Parallels in Preemptive War Rhetoric," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2007): 303.
[83] Neta Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4-36.
[84] Robert L. Ivie, "Presidential Motives for War," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 3 (1974): 471-73.

Regarding the first view, scholars have identified a set of recurring substantive and stylistic characteristics that lend a degree of predictability to war mobilisation discourses across presidents.[85] Robert Ivie finds a "relatively rigid and truncated "logology" of war motives – despite major variations in the nature of the enemy, the intensity of the threat, the personality of the presidents, and the general historical milieu".[86] Furthermore, Kevin Coe finds that (absenting G. W. Bush from the analysis), war rationales from World War II to the close of the century were highly similar across both political parties.[87]

Yet it is simply erroneous to assume that variation is not significant. War mobilisation rhetoric across presidents will necessarily feature some recurring conventions due to the common objective of attempting to rouse support and justify the use of force. While acknowledging these similarities, it should be recognised that the similarities are superficial, masking substantial, deeper variation.[88]

The view that the individual dispositions and attributes of presidents primarily shape rhetoric is also problematic. While these characteristics undoubtedly have some effect on rhetoric, other scholars have demonstrated that these are likely to have a weaker causal influence on mobilisation rhetoric than the external circumstances of a crisis. Bonnie Dow's examination of crisis rhetoric during the Carter and Reagan years leads her to conclude that the heterogeneity of rhetoric is rooted in variations in the features of crisis situations.

---

[85] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990); *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Theodore Otto Windt, "The Presidency and Speeches on International Crises: Repeating the Rhetorical Past," in *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric*, ed. Theodore Otto Windt and Beth Ingold (Dubuque, Los Angeles: Kendall/Hunt, 1987).
[86] Ivie, "Presidential Motives for War," 344.
[87] Coe, "The American Presidency at War: An Examination of Three Possibilities for Presidential Rationales," 479.
[88] Ibid.

According to Dow, so pronounced is the variation in crisis rhetoric that she doubts it can rightly be considered a discrete genre of political speech.[89]

Furthermore, the presidential office may constrain presidents from expressing their emotions in policy. While the degree of rationality in models of leaders' decision-making is fiercely debated, with some scholars arguing that rationality is rarer than may be assumed,[90] there is some experimental evidence suggesting that experienced political elites are more likely to process information in a more rational manner compared to respondents in psychological experiments,[91] further militating against the idea that individual dispositions dominate. As Stein argues, presidents are "rational actors who care first and foremost about retaining political power. Consequently, their decisions about the use of military force will be based on an assessment of how both the costs and benefits of fighting will impact their chances of staying in office."[92] As this thesis remains agnostic about leaders' motives and instead focuses on observable behaviour, it is not necessary here to align with either side in this debate.

However, while not denying the influence of presidents' internal motives, the emphasis of the theory is nonetheless on the determining effects of the moral characteristics of the external circumstances of a crisis, arguing that presidents will engage in rhetoric that is devoid of emotional appeals when the public perceives that the strategic incentives are clear and public support is strong, and that when these conditions are absent, they will attempt retributive rhetoric. As we will see from the empirical studies to follow, the differing

[89] Bonnie J. Dow, "The Function of Epideictic and Deliberative Strategies in Presidential Crisis Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 53, no. 3 (1989).
[90] Brian Rathbun, "The Rarity of Realpolitik: What Bismarck's Rationality Reveals About International Politics," *International Security* 43, no. 1 (2018); Brian C. Rathbun, *Reasoning of State: Realists, Romantics and Rationality in International Relations*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
[91] Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, D. Alex Hughes, and David G. Victor, "The Cognitive Revolution and the Political Psychology of Elite Decision Making," *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (2013).
[92] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 55.

exigencies of various crises do give rise to significantly different degrees of retributive rhetoric use.

Indeed, lending further credibility to the view that rhetoric varies according to circumstance is the very fact that scholars have identified different types of crisis rhetoric. Crisis speech can be either "consummatory" or "justificatory", the former devoted to portraying the U.S. as avoiding conflict, while the latter is devoted to rationalising military retaliation.[93] Furthermore, Robert Ivie identifies "victimage" rhetoric, in which the enemy is portrayed as a savage and the president conveys U.S. actions as defending freedom against force, irrationality, and aggression.[94] Eran Ben-Porath describes a "rhetoric of atrocities," in which presidents deploy a "savagery trope" emphasising human rights abuses. The rhetoric of atrocities provides narrative descriptions of specific, rather than generalised, atrocities, most commonly rape, torture, and the victimisation of children. Ben-Porath finds a positive correlation between a president's use of atrocity rhetoric and the onset of military force. Conversely, when presidents wish to avoid involvement in a prospective war, they refrain from personalised stories and instead stick to abstract terms and statistical information.[95] Another variant is "sacred rhetoric," in which absolutist language is used to indicate non-negotiable boundaries.[96] Portraying the moral sacredness of an issue engenders more extreme

[93] Richard A. Cherwitz and Kenneth S. Zagacki, "Consummatory Versus Justificatory Crisis Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50, no. 4 (1986): 295.
[94] Robert L. Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War," *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 4 (1980).
[95] Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts."
[96] Morgan Marietta, *The Politics of Sacred Rhetoric: Absolutist Appeals and Political Persuasion* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012).

attitudes,[97] and if an issue is perceived as sacred, cost-benefit reasoning is replaced by adherence to deontological commitments.[98]

While these studies illuminate crucial individual features of retributive rhetoric, they are generally incomplete because they fail to explain why it is that different rhetorical choices are made. One study that does demonstrate how external circumstances of a situation determine rhetoric is valuable, but is weakened by the limited range of the empirical material (three speeches).[99] Another study by Colleen Shogan identifies seven political conditions governing the use of presidential moral rhetoric. Four conditions are conducive: (1) when public support is "uncertain or marginal"; (2) when policy is complex; (3) when a president has been elected with the expectation of providing moral leadership; and (4) when Congress threatens to assume leadership on an issue. The three conditions in which presidents are expected to refrain from moralising are: (1) divisiveness within the president's own party; (2) when the president is the subject of a personal scandal; and (3) when a president's political authority is weak.[100] This study provides valuable evidence on the topic of interest, and corroborates Liberman's observation about public uncertainty being a window of opportunity for moral rhetoric. However, this study is again limited by its narrow empirical material, as the primary material covers presidents' Inaugural and Annual Addresses only. Therefore, the analysis does not encompass war mobilisation rhetoric.

- **How do Presidents Know What Kind of Language Will Evoke Justice Intuitions?**

[97] P. E. Tetlock et al., "The Psychology of the Unthinkable: Taboo Trade-Offs, Forbidden Base Rates, and Heretical Counterfactuals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78, no. 5 (2000).
[98] Linda J. Skitka and Elizabeth Mullen, "Understanding Judgments of Fairness in a Real-World Political Context: A Test of the Value Protection Model of Justice Reasoning," *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 28, no. 10 (2002).
[99] Dow, "The Function of Epideictic and Deliberative Strategies in Presidential Crisis Rhetoric."
[100] Colleen J. Shogan, *The Moral Rhetoric of American Presidents* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 14-15.

An assumption of this thesis is that leaders' employment of retributive rhetoric is rooted in an intuitive, common sense understanding of morality that leaders possess as (presumably) neurotypical, socialised members of society.[101] As such, they rely on the same psychological architecture as citizens, including heuristics for processing moral information. As one scholar of presidential rhetoric notes, "[p]owerful people who make the actual decisions which lead to war or peace share to a large degree the same images, or generalised perceptions of reality, as ordinary people."[102] Indeed, a recent meta-analysis of experimental results and polling data on the posited "gap" between elite and mass foreign policy attitudes suggests that the differences are due more to demographic characteristics rather than differences in cognition.[103] This intuitive understanding of the kinds of issues that are likely to be deemed fair or unfair, or morally good or bad, allows leaders to operate with an internal conception of public opinion that informs their public communications.

This thesis assumes that there is a common understanding of, and sensitivity to, justice intuitions in presidents, elites, and citizens alike, although these groups may not react in the same ways. However, it is assumed that this background knowledge allows leaders to rely on their political instincts to guide their rhetoric.

Indeed, Powlick and Katz write that "[o]fficials proceed under the assumption that they have an accurate grasp of what the populace accepts as legitimate in the area of foreign policy."[104] Leaders likely rely on an implicit "theory of mind" to judge this, and to select the type of language that will be morally persuasive. Theory of mind is the ability "to explain and predict the actions, both of oneself, and of other intelligent agents." Within theory of mind,

[101] This statement may be legitimately contested in light of recent events in U.S. politics.
[102] Ivie, "Presidential Motives for War," 337.
[103] Joshua D. Kertzer, "Re-Assessing Elite-Public Gaps in Political Behavior," *American Journal of Political Science* (2020).
[104] Powlick and Katz, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus," 52.

"simulationist" accounts propose that our 'mind-reading' abilities allow us "to project ourselves imaginatively into another person's perspective, simulating their mental activity with our own."[105] Thus, it is argued that presidents need not draw upon any formal knowledge when engaging in retributive rhetoric.[106] They simply utilise their own intuitions of justice to craft retributive rhetoric on the basis of a kind of 'folk psychology' which is integral to moral judgement."[107]

- **A President's Preference to Intervene is an Intrinsic Property of Retributive Rhetoric**

As previously discussed, Stein's work is important in many ways, but particularly so for demonstrating that retribution becomes salient to the public via presidential rhetoric. In so doing, Stein has furnished the foundations for the present study by establishing that retributive rhetoric is used as a mobilisation tactic. It is worth clarifying here that this thesis, following Stein, presupposes that when presidents use retributive rhetoric, it is because a president either wishes, or is resigned to, the need for military intervention. This thesis submits that retributive rhetoric is a deliberate, strategic, rhetorical tactic, and thus, a president's intention to intervene is an intrinsic property underpinning this behaviour. The significance of this assumption will become evident in the case studies, as its occurrence is taken to be an indicator of a president's preference to intervene.

[105] Peter Carruthers and Peter K. Smith, "Introduction," in *Theories of Theories of Mind*, ed. Peter Carruthers and Peter K. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-5.
[106] An example of this is was evident in WWI, when "value-laden folk theories of popular emotion held by elites and other decision-makers" shaped political strategies. Todd Hall and Andrew A. G. Ross, "Rethinking Affective Experience and Popular Emotion: World War I and the Construction of Group Emotion in International Relations," *Political Psychology* 40 (2019).
[107] Steve Guglielmo, Andrew E. Monroe, and Bertram F. Malle, "At the Heart of Morality Lies Folk Psychology," *Inquiry* 52, no. 5 (2009).

This may seem rather obvious, but it is an important point. Clearly, presidents will use retributive rhetoric when they wish to mobilise support for an intervention, and they judge that support needs to be created. Why is it that a president would desire military intervention, but the public not? Most obviously, presidents are responsible for protecting the national security of the state, whereas the public is not. This may lead to mismatches between elites' and ordinary citizens' attitudes towards foreign policy,[108] labelled the "foreign policy disconnect."[109] Alternatively, this disconnect may also be caused by information asymmetries between these two groups.[110]

- **How Effective is Retributive Rhetoric?**

As previously stated, the primary analytical task of the thesis is to explain presidential discourse, not the public's reception of it. However, the response to retributive rhetoric is still an important issue and is relevant to the case studies. The effectiveness of presidential persuasion is contested. Writing in 1948, Hans Morgenthau considered that "the government is the leader of public opinion, not its slave."[111] Research since offers a mixed picture. Some work suggests that presidents' ability to move public opinion is marginal,[112] and that the

[108] Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984); Eugene R. Wittkopf, *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, N.C and London: Duke University Press, 1990).
[109] Benjamin I. Page et al., *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[110] Matthew Baum and Tim J. Groeling, *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Michael Colaresi, "The Benefit of the Doubt: Testing an Informational Theory of the Rally Effect," *International Organization* 61, no. 1 (2007).
[111] Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. ed. (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1985), 591.
[112] George C. Edwards, *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace*; Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Presidents as Opinion Leaders: Some New Evidence," *Policy Studies Journal* 12, no. 4 (1984); Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*; Brandon Rottinghaus, "Strategic Leaders: Determining Successful Presidential Opinion Leadership Tactics through Public Appeals," *Political Communication* 26, no. 3 (2009).

president largely responds to, rather than influences, the media.[113] It is especially hard for presidential communication to change opinion on foreign policy issues,[114] with the most pessimistic studies alleging that presidents achieve this only if the public already supported the use of force prior to any presidential persuasion attempts.[115]

On the other hand, work focusing on rhetorical techniques such as framing emphasises the efficacy of presidential communication in manipulating public preferences,[116] and argues that the president does influence the media,[117] especially during conflicts.[118] The crux of this contestation may be ultimately reducible to the methodological difficulty in measuring the effects of presidential rhetoric on public opinion.[119] Reflecting on this debate, it seems reasonable to assume that public "opinion and policy interact, necessitating that leaders both react to and lead public opinion.[120]

Yet retributive rhetoric should hold some persuasive power, especially in cases of public uncertainty. This follows from the wealth of evidence presented thus far concerning the universality and automaticity of moral judgements and evidence demonstrating that

---

[113] Edwards, *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit*; George C. Edwards and B. Dan Wood, "Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress, and the Media," *The American Political Science Review* 93, no. 2 (1999); B. Wood, "Who Influences Whom? The President and the Public Agenda," *American political science review* 93, no. 2 (1999); B. Dan Wood and Jeffrey S. Peake, "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Agenda Setting," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 1 (1998).
[114] Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"."
[115] Douglas C. Foyle, "Leading the Public to War? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administrations Decision to Go to War in Iraq," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16, no. 3 (2004).
[116] Dennis Chong, "How People Think, Reason, and Feel About Rights and Liberties," *American Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (1993); Robert M. Entman, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
[117] Jeffrey S. Peake and Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, "The Agenda-Setting Impact of Major Presidential Television Addresses," *Political Communication* 25, no. 2 (2008).
[118] Justin Rex, "The President's War Agenda: A Rhetorical View," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011).
[119] George C. Edwards, "Presidential Rhetoric: What Difference Does It Make?," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (Texas: A&M University Press, 1996).
[120] Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"," 141.

political attitudes are, in part, shaped by morality.[121] Furthermore, evidence suggests that moral arguments are likely to be more persuasive than non-moral, or consequentialist arguments. Non-moral content entails cognitively demanding and time-consuming mental processing, unlike moral content, which elicits emotion, and is automatic. This should give retributive rhetoric a natural advantage over, for example, expository justifications for war, especially if the public is uncertain. Tehila Kogut and Ilana Ritov write that "stimuli that evoke more immediate emotional responses may take precedence over less affect-rich stimuli, even if the latter have more important consequences."[122] Moreover, because retribution is a human universal, rhetoric activating latent retributive sentiment is likely to 'land' with the popular audience, as messages that match traits held by an audience are more compelling.[123]

In light of the foregoing, it is predicted that official communications appealing to this core value are likely to be persuasive, but the effects may be small due to the baseline difficulty in influencing public opinion. As discussed, the methodological difficulties of disentangling the effects of presidential rhetoric from other sources of influence, particularly print, television, and online news media prevent strong inferences being drawn on this issue. For example, evidence predating the internet suggests that higher rates of exposure to television news correlates with higher support for the use of force.[124]

---

[121] Caprara et al., "Personality and Politics: Values, Traits, and Political Choice."; Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations."; George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, Third ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); G. Scott Morgan, Linda J. Skitka, and Daniel C. Wisneski, "Political Ideology Is Contextually Variable and Flexible Rather Than Fixed," *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 37, no. 3 (2014); Thorisdottir et al., "Psychological Needs and Values Underlying Left-Right Political Orientation: Cross-National Evidence from Eastern and Western Europe."

[122] Tehila Kogut and Ilana Ritov, "The "Identified Victim" Effect: An Identified Group, or Just a Single Individual?," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 18, no. 3 (2005): 158.

[123] Matthew Feinberg and Robb Willer, "From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?," *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 41, no. 12 (2015): 1667.

[124] Shanto Iyengar and Adam Simon, "News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing," *Communication Research* 20, no. 3 (1993).

It is therefore impossible practically to disentangle the effects of rhetoric from other sources of information in the formation of public opinion when looking retrospectively. To work backwards from poll results to presidential rhetoric would be to infer causes from results, perhaps incorrectly ascribing influence to presidential rhetoric when other factors were equally or more influential. Naturally, public opinion will be discussed in the case studies, but claims that rhetoric caused shifts in public opinion cannot be made with any degree of confidence. For present purposes, it is enough to assume that presidents *can* influence public opinion *to some extent*, but the precise measure of this is not theoretically important.

Modelling Retribution: 'Emotional Mobilisation'

The following section models retribution in four steps: (1) the situational meaning that would trigger moralistic thinking and elicit the emotional reaction; (2) the discourse; (3) the substantive action tendencies associated with the discourse; and (4) what displaying this discourse would convey to other actors."[125] These steps are outlined below.

To help the reader locate themself, it is helpful to clarify which actors are the relevant *loci* of attention at each step. Step One concerns emotion experienced by the mass population, capturing perceptions of a crisis trigger event. Steps Two and Three of the model, dealing with the discourse of retributive rhetoric and the substantive actions associated with it, relate to the president. The final step of the model, discussing the reception of retributive rhetoric, again relates to the popular audience.

[125] Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*, 34.

Emotional Mobilisation Step One:

The Situational Meaning That Would Trigger Moralistic Thinking and Elicit the Emotion

Step One addresses common perceptions of an initial event that triggers an international crisis. When considering how all parties will evaluate such an event, the central argument of this thesis is that as well as strategic considerations concerning material interests, individuals will intuitively compute the moral significance of the event – especially when the material costs and benefits appear uncompelling. U.S. entry into wars is often precipitated by singular "trigger events",[126] and these stand as the analytical inception point of the theory. A trigger event usually involves a normative or legal violation and is often framed by leaders as representing a provocation.

While it is well-theorised that presidents can create crises rhetorically, it is also the case that sometimes public perceptions lead the process, and a president is in the position of responding to events already perceived by the public as serious.[127] This argument runs *contra* to Stein, who argues that latent retributive sentiment *only* becomes activated with retributive rhetoric. The present argument is that the public will form moral judgements in a fast, automatic heuristic manner upon becoming appraised of the initiating events, even before the president or other top officials have commented publicly. This was the case, for example, in two international crises: the Soviet attack on a Korean airliner in September 1983, and attacks in Beirut one month later. In both cases, the public perceived these events as having great significance prior to President Ronald Reagan addressing them.[128] In such cases, in the

[126] David McKean, "After Iraq: The Trigger Doctrine," *Survival* 54, no. 1 (2012).
[127] Dow, "The Function of Epideictic and Deliberative Strategies in Presidential Crisis Rhetoric," 296.
[128] Ibid., 295.

immediate aftermath of the event, the obvious magnitude of the harm should speak for itself without further elaboration through elite communications.

The development of this theory begins by outlining how moral judgement operates. Social psychologist Neil Vidmar has specified a psychological causal chain for retributive motive arousal involving five stages represented visually below.[129] The final stage is irrelevant to the theory developed here, as the temporal unit of analysis does not extend this far. However, the five prior stages are incorporated into the Emotional Diplomacy framework and explained in turn.

Table 1.0 The Psychological Causal Chain of Retributive Motive Arousal[130]

Stage I		**Stage II**		**Stage III**		**Stage IV**		**Stage V**
Cognitive perception of the gravity of the harm	→	Emotional/ moral evaluation of perpetrator blame-worthiness	→	Steps 1 & 2 = judgement of "case seriousness"	→	Emotional reaction of moral outrage	→	Degree of moral outrage dictates severity of punitive response

- **Stage I: Perceptions of Harms**

[129] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 57. The original model has six steps, but the sixth step (concerning the return of outraged emotion to pre-crisis levels) is irrelevant to the present study's theoretical timeframe and is therefore excluded. .

[130] It is important to note that Vidmar's model separates cognition and emotion as discrete processes, but the author notes that this is for explanatory convenience only. As outlined previously, the model of mental processing adopted in this thesis is based on Antonio Damasio's research suggesting that cognitive and emotional processing are fused. This thesis reproduces this framework for the same explanatory purposes.

The first element of psychological processing of a harm relates to a computation of its moral magnitude. This concerns the act itself, rather than attributes of the perpetrator. One of the novel theoretical contributions of this thesis is the formulation of an index of moral judgements about harms, called the hierarchy of harms. This is drawn from a sizeable body of research, predominantly conducted within the discipline of criminology about how people rank the severity of different types of harms. Just as the sensitivity towards retribution appears to be cross-demographically robust, so judgements about the seriousness of crimes have been found to be consistent across gender, class, and race,[131] and again, these judgements are made with ease.[132] In a review of this literature, Paul H. Robinson and Robert Kurzban confirm that opinions converge upon a set of "core harms" outside of which the level of agreement decreases.[133] These are (beginning with the most serious): "physical aggression (to persons or property); unconsented to takings; and deception or deceit in exchanges."[134] These three categories of "core wrongs" were corroborated in a follow-up study three years later.[135] Although research in social psychology emphasises how different political orientations are associated with different moral profiles,[136] these disagreements are unlikely to affect judgements about core harms significantly. While these differences exist, they tend to manifest over issues falling outside of the three core harms, for example sexual

[131] Marlene Hsu, "Cultural and Sexual Differences on the Judgment of Criminal Offenses: A Replication Study of the Measurement of Delinquency," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 64, no. 3 (1973); P. Rossi, "The Seriousness of Crimes: Normative Structure and Individual Differences," *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 2 (1974).
[132] Cass R. Sunstein, Daniel Kahneman, and David Schkade, "Assessing Punitive Damages," *The Yale Law Journal* 107, no. 7 (1998).
[133] Paul H. Robinson and Robert Kurzban, "Concordance and Conflict in Intuitions of Justice," *Minnesota Law Review* 91, no. 6 (2007): 1890.
[134] Ibid., 1880.
[135] Od Jones and R. Kurzban, "Intuitions of Punishment," *University of Chicago Law Review* 77, no. 4 (2010): 1633.
[136] Caprara et al., "Personality and Politics: Values, Traits, and Political Choice."; Graham, Haidt, and Nosek, "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations."; Haidt and Graham, "When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize."; Thorisdottir et al., "Psychological Needs and Values Underlying Left-Right Political Orientation: Cross-National Evidence from Eastern and Western Europe."

morality[137] and environmental issues.[138] The fact that abortion is such a divisive and contested issue between liberals and conservatives actually supports this, as abortion may be perceived as a Category One harm by those who oppose it, whereas supporters may view abortion as one aspect of a woman's right of bodily autonomy. In light of the above, it is proposed that judgements about the core harms will be largely consistent across demographic groups and political ideologies.

Evidence from studies investigating rankings of crime seriousness are here placed into an index called the 'hierarchy of harms.' Following Robinson and Kurzban, bodily harm is the most serious, followed by harm to property. The third category includes both deception in exchanges and victimless crimes, as the latter has been identified as a relevant category in additional studies.[139] Harms in the first category are the most potent for generating consensus on the moral gravity of the offence. As we move away from this category, consensus weakens.

With an understanding of the hierarchy of harms in hand, what role does it play in the theory? To recap, it is harms that are deemed moral in nature that elicit the retributive response.[140] The more serious the harm, the more serious the retributive reaction. When an offence is committed, the hierarchy of harms should serve as a reliable guide to the intensity of moral outrage that certain offences will generate. Category One harms that cause death and/or injury will automatically be appraised as the most serious kind of offence, and should

[137] Jonathan Haidt and Matthew A. Hersh, "Sexual Morality: The Cultures and Emotions of Conservatives and Liberals," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 31, no. 1 (2001).
[138] Matthew Feinberg and Robb Willer, "The Moral Roots of Environmental Attitudes," *Psychological Science* 24, no. 1 (2013).
[139] Victimless crimes are understood as crimes in which "a reactor to the offence perceives a threat to the value system of the group." Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 36. A. Adriaenssen et al., "Public Perceptions of the Seriousness of Crime: Weighing the Harm and the Wrong," *European Journal of Criminology* (2018); Mark Warr, Robert F. Meier, and Maynard L. Erickson, "Norms, Theories of Punishment, and Publicly Preferred Penalties for Crimes," *The Sociological Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1983).
[140] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice."

have a natural mobilising effect. Harms in Category Two are likely to be deemed serious, but because they do not involve injury or death, will elicit more ambivalence about intervention. Category Three harms are likely to elicit the most ambiguity about intervention in the eyes of the public, and therefore are likely to have weak mobilising effects.

- **Transporting Judgements of Case Seriousness to the International Context**

The psychological findings on the rankings of moral seriousness of harms are likely to have international correlates, and part of the novel contribution of this thesis is to investigate this. The psychological and criminological literatures demonstrate clearly that individuals become outraged about particular kinds of harms in the domestic context, and it is highly plausible that the contours of these categories are likely to be preserved across contexts. To borrow some fitting phrasing from a scholar theorising individual-level experiences of humiliation and betrayal to the international realm, the perceptions of moral harms "are an analytical assumption rather than a statement of fact", and these categories share "a family resemblance with the international without being identical to it."[141] As such, it is argued that individuals may evaluate analogous harms committed in the international sphere in a similar manner to how they evaluate domestic harms. This scalable part of the theory is exploratory and creative, and in effect makes a theoretical 'bet' that these dynamics do translate to the international context, examining the analytical leverage that can be gained by doing so.

Category One harms are perhaps the least problematic to translate to the international context. Harms causing death or physical injury to U.S. nationals fall into this category. These acts violate norms enshrining paramount values, specifically against brutal violence. They are the types of acts categorised in the law as *mala in se*, or, wrong in and of

[141] Khaled Fattah and K. M. Fierke, "A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 1 (2009): 71.

themselves, not because an authority declares them so.[142] Transported to international relations, these kinds of norms have the "bright-line, absolute, or unthinkable qualities of a taboo."[143] Such acts include the killing and injury of non-combatants, the use of nuclear weapons, and humanitarian abuses such as torture. Obvious examples of Category One harms include the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the atomic bombings of Japan in 1945, and the September 11th 2001 attacks against the U.S. homeland.

Category Two harms, relating to property, should map onto perceptions relating to invasions or occupations of one state's territory by another. State sovereignty and territorial integrity are recognised internationally as the "territorial integrity" norm, articulated in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter proscribing "any use of force by one state against the political sovereignty or territorial integrity of another."[144] According to Jeffrey Legro, it is a relatively robust norm, predating 1945 and thus exhibiting durability.[145] Another aspect of these harms in the context of international relations is that territorial invasions victimise another nation, thus lessening the sympathy felt by Americans. Humans most readily sympathise with those most like us, as it is easier to imaginatively enter into the minds, or engage in role-taking, of those with whom we are alike.[146] When Category One harms are committed against foreign nations, the psychological remoteness from the victims will diminish the moral outrage experienced by Americans. Therefore, in translating the hierarchy of harms to the

[142] Kugler et al., "Differences in Punitiveness across Three Cultures: A Test of American Exceptionalism in Justice Attitudes," 1083.
[143] Daryl G. Press, Scott D. Sagan, and Benjamin A. Valentino, "Atomic Aversion: Experimental Evidence on Taboos, Traditions, and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 1 (2013): 189.
[144] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 51-63.
[145] Jeffrey Legro, "Which Norms Matter? Revisiting the "Failure" of Internationalism," *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (2003).
[146] Dennis Krebs, "Empathy and Altruism," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32, no. 6 (1975); Dennis L. Krebs, "Altruism: An Examination of the Concept and a Review of the Literature," *Psychological Bulletin* 73, no. 4 (1970); Bill Underwood and Bert Moore, "Perspective-Taking and Altruism," ibid.91, no. 1 (1982).

international arena, this category also includes Category One harms committed to foreign countries.

Category Three harms, cheating on agreements and victimless crimes, may also have analogues in international behaviours. Cheating on agreements, for example, might be correlated with reneging on treaty commitments (or refusing to participate in treaties). Victimless crimes may correlate to situations such as harms causing environmental damage where the effects are diffuse and no single set of victims can be identified.

Of course, some harms may involve offences that involve multiple categories. For example, a territorial invasion may, in addition to seizing property (i.e., territory), involve injuring and/or killing inhabitants. The categories are not mutually exclusive, and categories will likely fuse, but the severest moral harm involved is likely to dominate perceptions of the overall category to which a trigger event belongs.

Table 1.1 The Hierarchy of Harms: Domestic and International Correlates

	Category 1: High Gravity	**Category 2: Medium Gravity**	**Category 3: Low Gravity**
	Physical Harm	**Harm to Property**	**Deception in Exchanges/Victimless Crimes**
Domestic crime examples	Murder, grievous bodily injury, rape	Damage to property/goods, stealing	Cheating on agreements or contracts, non-payment of fines or taxes/Drug use, prostitution
Corollaries in international relations	Military attacks on U.S. territory; mass casualty events involving U.S. nationals (civilians and soldiers, although attacks on civilians may be evaluated more seriously)	Territorial invasion/attacks to a third country	Reneging on international agreements; commercial injuries

Because this part of the theory is exploratory and tentative, it may be subject to several objections, some of which are briefly addressed. First, at the more general level, a common theoretical objection to work in International Relations which translates individual-level psychological processes to the realm of state behaviour is the so-called 'levels of analysis' problem. Stein's work identifying the mechanism linking retributive attitudes to foreign policy *via* presidential discourse deals effectively with this objection by proposing that the retributive impulse is "an individual attribute, which national leaders can activate and direct towards support for certain types of policies." Recognising these individual-level

processes that take place among the citizenry means that "[r]evenge need not be a motive of the anthropomorphized state or even of individual leaders in order to shape state behaviour. Instead, it can arise out of the interaction between elected leaders, who behave strategically in order to secure support for their policies and maintain their position in power, and ordinary citizens who rely on their core values to form their opinions about complex foreign policy questions."[147] The present study adopts this understanding. The theory atomises the thought of individuals into the component parts comprising moral judgements, and these judgements are then assumed to be represented collectively.

One obvious challenge is that the categories of moral harms may not translate to the realm of international politics as easily as posited. Yet, there are compelling reasons suggesting that this may be valid. First, according to George Lakoff, if leaders use metaphors describing war as a violent crime, events will be understood by citizens *solely in terms of their morality*, and *not* their political or economic dimensions.[148] This finding lends strong support to the argument that moral judgements are likely to track the hierarchy of harms, especially when presidents use retributive rhetoric with its emphasis on atrocities.

Second, International Relations scholarship has already identified this process of psychological evaluation taking place in the realm of international politics. Trigger events, by their nature, represent some kind of norm-violating provocation. In the context of international relations, provocations are defined as "actions or incidents that state actors perceive as intentionally and wrongfully challenging or violating their values and goals, thereby eliciting outraged reactions that spur rash, aggressive responses. By this definition, provocations are thus constituted by their effects: outraged reactions."[149] This definition

[147] Rachel M. Stein, "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies," 109, no. 3 (2015): 570.
[148] George Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf," *Cognitive Semiotics* 4, no. 2 (1992): 28.
[149] Hall, "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco-Prussian War."

usefully acknowledges the role of values in what constitutes a provocation and describes the reaction of moral outrage and its substantive outcomes.

Another reason to support the idea that the moral judgements precipitating retribution are translatable to the realm of international politics comes from the prior work on punishment in International Relations emphasises that, as a core value, retribution is "trans-situational" – meaning that it structures evaluations of wrongdoing in the domestic *and* international context.[150] As such, it appears that attitudes towards crime may naturally overlap to war. Michael Sherry argues that American leaders' responses to the 9/11 attacks, resembled reactions to crime, and that the 'war on terror' was "a giant policing action for Globalcop", noting the "fungibility of war and crime in the fears, interests, media coverage, and political manoeuvring of American life."[151] Furthermore, public attitudes about foreign policy are just as stable as those concerning domestic policy.[152]

If there are good reasons to support transporting the findings of moral psychology on harms to the international context, a more fine-grained objection could be raised about the transportability of the rankings of harms. This is a valid concern, to which the response is that the categories are approximations, which necessarily sacrifice complexity and nuance. Their boundaries are currently fuzzy, especially concerning the numerical magnitude of the harms. So where do we draw the boundaries of magnitudes when scaling up? For example, are Category One harms likely to be perceived with the occurrence of one death, one hundred deaths, or one thousand deaths? Alternatively, these perceptions may travel in the reverse direction, as illustrated by the point supposedly articulated by Stalin, that "one death is a

[150] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers."; Stein, "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies."; *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*.
[151] Michael Sherry, "Dead or Alive: American Vengeance Goes Global," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1 (2005): 262.
[152] Hurwitz and Peffley, "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model," 1102.

tragedy; a million is a statistic." The relation may even be non-linear, or there could be unexpected synergetic effects when a harm involves multiple categories.

To this writer's knowledge, these perceptions do not appear to have been measured or tested directly, making it difficult to find an empirical basis upon which to draw these distinctions. This lack of precision is a problem, but not an insurmountable one. In the absence of prior theory to guide this endeavour, the present work remains agnostic about this issue of scalability and, in order to proceed, takes a broad-brush approach. The issue of numerical parameters is bracketed on the basis that this is a theoretical first cut and the details may be left unspecified at this stage. For the present purposes, it is sufficient that there is a general correspondence between these moral categories in the domestic and international contexts. This part of the theory can be more finely calibrated with future work. But for now, what is needed is an account of the categories of the moral harms in order to proceed with developing the theory.

One aspect of the theory that should be addressed here is how factors such as psychological harms fit into the hierarchy of harms, especially acts which elicit the emotion of humiliation in the victim state. Humiliation, according to one scholar of international relations, is understood predominantly as "the violated dignity of injured self-respect of a generic individual".[153] According to another source, it is "the emotional response to the perceived undeserved decline of one's status in the eyes of others."[154] The effects of humiliation in international politics cannot be ignored. Suffering national humiliation has been shown to incite terrorist acts[155] and to increase states' preferences for conflict, with

[153] Todd H. Hall and Andrew A. G. Ross, "Affective Politics after 9/11," *International Organization* 69, no. 4 (2015); Michael Masterson, "Humiliation and International Conflict Preferences," *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 2 (2022).
[154] Joslyn Barnhart, *The Consequences of Humiliation: Anger and Status in World Politics*, Cornell Scholarship Online (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 3.
[155] Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins 2009).

some research suggesting this is because humiliation causes decreased sensitivity to costs while simultaneously increasing sensitivity to status loss.[156]

So, how do judgements about core wrongdoing interact with the emotion of humiliation? Simply, the experience of humiliation amplifies the retributive impulse. If any of the offences specified in the hierarchy of harms also incur a humiliating dimension to them, the degree of punishment deemed appropriate is likely to increase. Humiliation injuries pertain to the category of interpersonal psychological injuries, as compared to the hierarchy of harms which is drawn from research on attitudes to criminal offenses. Of course, some harms which are also criminal acts are almost universally perceived as having an inherently humiliating aspect for the victim, for example sexual violations or acts which undermine gender expectations, especially in relation to men. In contrast, some acts will only be perceived as humiliating if prevailing cultural norms make it so. Cross-cultural variation in what counts as a violation of dignity and self-respect, and what degree of offence counts as a humiliation injury will therefore vary reflecting every nation's culture.

Additionally, some acts that fall outside of the conceptual structure may, for cultural reasons, carry a humiliating dimension which could amplify a small infraction into a larger international disagreement or crisis. In this way, the experience of humiliation may cause disproportionate effects in interstate relations.

Given that this thesis focuses solely on the U.S. context, cross-cultural variation in what counts as humiliation is largely irrelevant. For context, however, recent experiences of American national humiliation include the events in Mogadishu, Somalia, in October 1993, when photographs of the bodies of U.S. military personnel being dragged behind vehicles

[156] Masterson, "Humiliation and International Conflict Preferences."

were publicly circulated, and the 9/11 attacks, which president George W. Bush described as a "profound humiliation".[157]

The hierarchy of harms categories may need refining, but they are not arbitrary. They are derived from a large swath of studies demonstrating that these categories reflect elementary notions that people converge upon in a domestic context. As just discussed, there are good reasons to suggest that the process of evaluating moral culpability in the domestic sphere also applies to moral culpability in the international sphere. Therefore, it is reasonable to use the data on harm rankings in the domestic sphere and extrapolate from these to build a comparable model that stands as a starting point. The harm rankings relating to domestic crimes are not blindly applied to the international sphere, however, but are modified to account for contextual differences. That this part of the theory has some opacity does not invalidate the transfer of categories from one domain to another; it simply asks the reader to keep an open mind and accept that the categories, at this stage, are impressionistic sketches that may *approximately* capture these moral distinctions.

Another potential objection may concern what appears to be an assumption that citizens will perceive harms uniformly. Of course, it is to be expected that perceptions will vary, and this will be affected by how issues are framed. Nevertheless, variation is expected to be less significant than the larger, *general* tendency to rank harms according to how they register with our social-emotional psychology, as detailed in the moral psychological research. Framing effects (i.e. media or political spin) should not be so powerful as to obscure these general moral categories, so long as the basic facts of the situation are not completely concealed or misrepresented.

---

[157] Roxanne L. Euben, "Humiliation and the Political Mobilization of Masculinity," *Political Theory* 43, no. 4 (2015); Paul Saurette, "You Dissin Me? Humiliation and Post 9/11 Global Politics," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2006).

- **Stage II: Evaluation of Intent**

Assessments of the type of harm are only one part of the computation of the overall moral seriousness of an offence. The other component is an emotional reaction based on perceptions of the blameworthiness of a perpetrator. Judgements of blameworthiness repose upon a suite of mitigating factors that can reduce or even negate judgements of guilt altogether.[158]

The most critical of these factors is intent. Psychologist Dale T. Miller writes "there may be no more well-established finding in the aggression literature than the finding that unintentional acts of harm provoke less anger and less retaliation than do intentional acts of harm."[159] Intentional behaviour elicits more blame than unintentional acts.[160] People will experience moral outrage even when no harm occurred but an individual intended to cause harm.[161]

Just as with evaluations of the moral severity of harms, there is a high level of consensus in judgements of intentionality, indicating the presence of what some researchers call an underlying "folk concept of intentionality". [162] Harms in which intent is unambiguous are classed as "prototypical" meaning there is no question that the offender acted of their own volition. "Non-prototypical" harms, on the other hand, are those in which intent is unclear, and in such cases, contextual factors moderate moral judgement, conditioning the severity of punishment.[163] These are the kinds of variables laying at the heart of mitigating defences in law, and include circumstances in which responsibility is diminished, for example insanity.

---

[158] John M. Darley and Mark P. Zanna, "Making Moral Judgments," *American Scientist* 70, no. 5 (1982): 515.
[159] Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," 536.
[160] Guglielmo, Monroe, and Malle, "At the Heart of Morality Lies Folk Psychology."; Tyler G. Okimoto and Michael Wenzel, "The Other Side of Perspective Taking: Transgression Ambiguity and Victims' Revenge against Their Offender," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 2, no. 4 (2011).
[161] C. Daniel Batson et al., "Does Personal Morality Exacerbate or Restrain Retaliation after Being Harmed?," *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 26, no. 1 (2000); Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge."
[162] Bertram F. Malle and Joshua Knobe, "The Folk Concept of Intentionality," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 33, no. 2 (1997): 102.
[163] Robinson and Kurzban, "Concordance and Conflict in Intuitions of Justice," 1848-54.

As some researchers have noted, mitigating factors indicate a "disabled choice mechanism."[164] In other words, they speak to the issue of intent.

Another facet of intent concerns the foreseeability of the consequences of a harm.[165] Research suggests that when a victim believes that an offender did not mean to cause harm (for example in the case of an accident), the victim may still hold the perpetrator responsible if the victim thinks the perpetrator could have foreseen the harm. Harms, then, can be unintended but foreseeable.[166] Relatedly, perceivers also consider whether the actor should and could have acted to prevent the harm. Failure to do so when the "should" and "could" conditions are affirmative garners blame, as it is considered to be "an intentional rejection of one's obligation."[167]

Provocation, the importance of which in international relations has been discussed previously, is another important mitigating circumstance.[168] Offences are judged less punitively when harms occur as retaliation for a prior harm, and retaliation may be viewed as more justified.[169] An additional set of mitigating factors concerning the reasons for an offence are important.[170] Offences undertaken for morally noble (unselfish) reasons will decrease punishment, whereas offences undertaken for morally base (selfish) reasons will increase punishment.[171] Offenders who furnish reasons for an offence are judged less punitively, probably because furnishing an explanation conveys respect to the victim, which again

[164] Guglielmo, Monroe, and Malle, "At the Heart of Morality Lies Folk Psychology," 460-61.
[165] David A. Lagnado and Shelley Channon, "Judgments of Cause and Blame: The Effects of Intentionality and Foreseeability," *Cognition* 108, no. 3 (2008).
[166] Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," 537.
[167] Guglielmo, Monroe, and Malle, "At the Heart of Morality Lies Folk Psychology," 449-52.
[168] Darley and Zanna, "Making Moral Judgments," 516.
[169] Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," 534; Paul H. Robinson and John M. Darley, *Justice, Liability, and Blame: Community Views and the Criminal Law* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995).
[170] Guglielmo, Monroe, and Malle, "At the Heart of Morality Lies Folk Psychology," 452.
[171] Fiery Cushman et al., "Accidental Outcomes Guide Punishment in a "Trembling Hand" Game," *PLoS ONE* 4, no. 8 (2009): 2.

diminishes negative reactions to the offence.[172] Closely related to provocation is the mitigating reason of self-defence, which is again familiar from the legal domain.[173] In international relations, presidents often employ this as a reason for citizens to support the offensive actions of their nation.[174]

Finally, another variable affecting attributions of moral responsibility is the degree of remorse shown by an offender. In some cases, a sincere apology can reduce the desire for retribution,[175] perhaps because it redresses the violated sense of justice,[176] and reaffirms the moral rule that was violated.[177] Cultural differences mediate the mitigating power of remorse. In one study comparing American and Japanese participants, the Japanese appeared more sensitive to apologies than Americans,[178] which may be attributed to differences between the individualist *versus* collectivist nature of these societies respectively.[179]

- **Stage III: Case Seriousness**

Evaluations of the seriousness of a harm (as per the hierarchy of harms) and the degree of perpetrator blameworthiness (a harm's wrongfulness) combine to form the composite judgement of what is termed *case seriousness*.[180] This moral judgement is "integral to the theory of retribution", and "does not have a place within the utilitarian positions."[181] This

[172] Miller, "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice," 537-38.
[173] Darley and Zanna, "Making Moral Judgments."
[174] Matthew A. Baum, *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age* (Princeton, N.J. and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).
[175] Trudy Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
[176] Osgood, "Is Revenge About Retributive Justice, Deterring Harm, or Both?," 9.
[177] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 52.
[178] Ritsu Itoi, Ken-Ichi Ohbuchi, and Mitsuteru Fukuno, "A Cross-Cultural Study of Preference of Accounts: Relationship Closeness, Harm Severity, and Motive of Account Making," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 26, no. 10 (1996).
[179] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 51.
[180] Carlsmith, Darley, and Robinson, "Why Do We Punish? Deterrence and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment."
[181] Carlsmith, "The Roles of Retribution and Utility in Determining Punishment," 442.

overall judgement of the moral magnitude of a harm plays a crucial role in the theory, as it is argued that public evaluations of case seriousness lead presidents to engage in less or more retributive rhetoric, which is discussed more fully in the subsequent section considering when presidents are more and less likely to use retributive rhetoric.

- **Stage IV: Moral Outrage**

Moral outrage is a crucial factor of the theory; it is the emotional 'accelerant' that presidents hope will transform public apathy into support for war. Moral outrage has been described as "the phenomenology of injustice"[182] and is comprised of feelings of anger, contempt and disgust, which some scholars call the "punitive emotions." [183] Moral outrage is thought to arise automatically in the manner of a heuristic and is the product of intuition.[184] Of course, heuristics inevitably inject bias into human judgement,[185] and with moral outrage, the bias is towards retributive punishment. The higher the perceived case seriousness of an offence, the more intense the emotional response will be.[186] Although the causal model places moral outrage as a subsequent step following cognitions of case seriousness, this causal chain may not always follow this neat sequence. Vidmar notes that sometimes an individual "may adjust her cognitions to ascribe blame after the fact of anger arousal."[187]

Prior scholarship on moral outrage in the political context identifies three forms: personal, performative, and popular. Personal outrage is largely irrelevant to this research, as the study is agnostic as to whether presidents or their aides experience genuine outrage. However,

[182] Darley, "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions," 2.
[183] Hofmann et al., "Moral Punishment in Everyday Life," 1708.
[184] Carlsmith and Darley, "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice," 211-13.
[185] Jason Brownlee, "Cognitive Shortcuts and Public Support for Intervention," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 2-3 (2020).
[186] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 34.
[187] Ibid., 43.

performative outrage, defined as "the public display of enraged behaviour" by elites, and popular outrage, defined as "a socially constructed collective domestic response", are both highly relevant.[188] These terms and concepts are adopted in the analysis.

- **Stage V: The Retributive Response**

The degree of moral outrage elicited by an offence is important, since it is "a substantial predictor" of the degree of punishment that will be assigned."[189] In short, the more injurious the harm, the more moral outrage is experienced; and the more moral outrage experienced, the more severe is the punishment. Thus, moral outrage plays a crucial role in regulating the proportionality of punishment.[190] Indeed, the concept of proportionality is relevant in all domains of aggression, from individual-level interpersonal violence[191] to states' use of force in Just War theory,[192] and legal theory.[193] Proportionality, however, is often a subjective matter. As Vidmar points out, "[n]otions of proportionality are time bound, culturally bound, and subject to individual differences", and thus should be treated as an empirical, rather than normative, principle.[194]

Moral outrage and retributive responses are likely to be heightened in response to acts committed by perpetrators identified as belonging to a perceived 'out-group', which, in the context of international relations, is a marker associated with nationalism. Retribution is

[188] Hall, "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco-Prussian War," 3.
[189] Darley, "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions," 3-4.
[190] Liberman, "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture," 290.
[191] Kennichi Ohbuchi and Toshihiro Kambara, "Attacker's Intent and Awareness of Outcome, Impression Management, and Retaliation," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 21, no. 4 (1985).
[192] Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (New York and London: Little, Brown and Co., 2010), 32.
[193] Martin Wasik and Andrew Hirsch, "Statutory Sentencing Principles: The 1990 White Paper," *Modern Law Review* 53, no. 4 (1990): 509.
[194] Vidmar, "Retribution and Revenge," 39-40.

heightened in cases where the perpetrator is socially distant, yet the victim is socially close,[195] and when observers perceive the victim to be similar to themselves."[196] Conversely, retributive responses are weaker when a harm is committed against foreign peoples, rather than fellow citizens."[197] One factor by which outgroups are characterised, and has been shown to increase punitiveness, is racial identity. Indeed, it has been argued that the relative ease of generating public consent for wars against racially different nations explains support for imperial wars.[198] Evidence suggests that racial identity powerfully conditions punishment against offenders who have harmed collectives, but not against offenders who have harmed individuals.[199] In the context of international relations, identity variables can also be associated with regime type. After all, the normative explanation for the democratic peace stems from the foundational observation that democracies are more pacific towards one another than towards autocracies.[200]

It should also be noted that the U.S. has long embraced punitive logics, both domestically and in its international relations. Domestically, the U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, reflecting a harsher punitive sentencing ethos than comparable democracies. This highly punitive cultural tradition undoubtedly affects attitudes towards the use of force abroad. According to Anthony F. Lang, Jr, foreign interventions are influenced by states' self-perceptions of identity, such that interventions reflect and perpetuate "the

[195] Hofmann et al., "Moral Punishment in Everyday Life," 1706.
[196] Ernestine H. Gordijn, Daniël Wigboldus, and Vincent Yzerbyt, "Emotional Consequences of Categorizing Victims of Negative Outgroup Behavior as Ingroup or Outgroup," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 4, no. 4 (2001).
[197] Liberman, "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture," 288.
[198] Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*, 151-52.
[199] Silver and Silver, "Why Are Conservatives More Punitive Than Liberals? A Moral Foundations Approach," 436.
[200] See, for example, M. Doyle, "The Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995); Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986).

history of a national community that certain members of that community wish to valorize."[201] Thus, in making the U.S. the sole focus of this research, it should be borne in mind that there exists a pre-existing cultural context that is more supportive of punishment than other nations. This is particularly relevant in terms of generalising the results of this study to other national contexts.

Wrapping up this first step of the modelling process, we should now understand the psychological causal chain underpinning retributive punishment decisions. When a morally relevant harm has been committed, automatic judgements take place assessing the severity of the harm and the perpetrator's intent. Certain reasons why a harm was committed may mitigate punitive reactions. When a judgement of case seriousness has been formed, the heuristic emotional outcome is moral outrage, a combination of anger, contempt, and disgust. The degree of moral outrage experienced is a reliable guide to the severity of punishment deemed appropriate. The next section outlines how these factors are manifested in retributive rhetoric.

Emotional Mobilisation Step Two:

The Discourse – The Idiom of Retribution

With the elements of retributive reasoning now in hand, this section draws together the foregoing research and constructs the second step of the theoretical model, outlining the characteristics of retributive rhetoric as a performative discourse of official emotion. Recalling that the critical factor in just deserts is deservingness, we should expect presidents to emphasise past harms, with a focus on making an enemy 'pay', which, from a purely

[201] Anthony F. Lang, *Agency and Ethics: The Politics of Military Intervention,* Suny Series in Global Politics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 27.

retributive stance, should not have any future-oriented goals attached. Using their intuitive folk psychological understanding of justice intuitions, presidents should also accentuate the factors which increase judgements of moral blameworthiness. This includes the intentionality of the perpetrator, the enemy's lack of provocation, the innocence of the victim, the enemy's ability to foresee the consequences of the harm, denying morally worthy reasons for enemy behaviour, and portraying the enemy's lack of remorse.

This will be accomplished by the technique of "framing" events to convey these points. Frames can be thought of as "alternative perspectives on a visual scene",[202] and are used by leaders to mobilise policy support "by encouraging them [citizens] to think about those policies along particular lines" and by connecting a policy to a commonly-held value.[203] Framing encompasses other rhetorical techniques including justifications, metaphors, and analogies. One common framing tactic is for leaders to stigmatise enemies by depicting them as morally corrupt or debased. Another framing tactic is juxtaposing national ideologies,[204] exalting American political and social culture while denigrating the enemy's ideology using good *versus* evil terms. Justifications are also expected to be a major aspect of retributive rhetoric. Whereas framing is achieved by carefully emphasising or diminishing relevant information, justifications are conceptually different, being explicit statements introducing new information with the aim of changing minds.[205]

Retributive rhetoric relies heavily on the use of narrative, personalising events and relating them in a story-like manner. Humans like stories; they are one of the most efficient tools available for simplifying complexity. The power of narrative lies in its ability to capture

[202] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice," *Science* 211 (1981): 453.
[203] Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," 106-16.
[204] Ivie, "Presidential Motives for War," 342.
[205] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 42.

"the audience's experience of the world," and works by "suggestion and identification", as opposed to argumentation, which requires inference and deliberation.[206] In contrast to narratives, descriptive but more abstract language using terms such as "war crimes", "atrocities", and "genocide" are less effective in capturing attention.[207] Stories, on the other hand, enable situations to be recalled with greater ease, and narratives are also received with increased credulity.[208]

Presenting a situation in narrative form enables three further techniques which are likely to activate justice intuitions: personalising the situation, vivifying harms, and using "decivilizing vehicles" to denigrate an enemy. Regarding the first, stories are often concerned with specific people, and personalisation increases empathic responses.[209] Psychologists have confirmed an "identifiable victim effect", whereby people are more sympathetic and feel a greater moral responsibility towards identified victims. This effect has a double-edged quality, as it also intensifies punitive sentiment towards identifiable wrongdoers, in contrast to non-identified ones.[210] We would thus expect retributive rhetoric to identify victims and construct figureheads for demonisation.

Relaying vivid and visceral depictions of harms has the effect of amplifying "the public's retributive bellicosity".[211] This is especially evident in two related forms of rhetoric

---

[206] Walter R. Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51, no. 1 (1984).
[207] Benjamin R. Bates, "Audiences, Metaphors, and the Persian Gulf War," *Communication Studies* 55, no. 3 (2004).
[208] Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Paul Waldman, *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists, and the Stories That Shape the Political World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[209] Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts," 185.
[210] David Fetherstonhaugh et al., "Insensitivity to the Value of Human Life: A Study of Psychophysical Numbing," *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 14, no. 3 (1997); Deborah Small and George Loewenstein, "Helping a Victim or Helping the Victim: Altruism and Identifiability," ibid.26, no. 1 (2003); Deborah A. Small and George Loewenstein, "The Devil You Know: The Effects of Identifiability on Punishment," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 18, no. 5 (2005).
[211] Liberman, "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture," 301.

previously mentioned, “victimage” and “atrocity” rhetoric. The effectiveness of a narrative containing descriptions of vivid harms committed against identified people may be linked to the “availability heuristic”,[212] whereby political actors associated with vivid violent acts are recalled more easily, and can thus be more easily stigmatised, leading to rapid and less judicious judgements. Therefore, support for intervening against an “evocative foe” will be greater than would be expected in the absence of vivifying framing.[213] Finally, “decivilizing vehicles” are rhetorical techniques portraying enemies as uncivilised or even sub-human,[214] which lower an audience’s empathy towards the enemy.

With the goal of retributive rhetoric being to arouse moral outrage, it is expected that leaders will express official emotion performatively, projecting personal moral outrage by directly employing the words “outrage”, “condemn”, and their variants. Similarly, varying permutations of “justice” will be invoked, for example stating that “justice demands” action, or that there is a need to act “in the name of justice”, etc. Other common terminology may include statements about “righting a wrong,”[215] or “doing the right thing.”[216] Additionally, presidents will express the punitive emotions of anger, contempt, and disgust.

Another rhetorical device one would expect of retributive rhetoric is the use of metaphor, figurative language which is closely associated with effective persuasion. Metaphors “structure cognition”,[217] and create a “powerful perceptual link between the two

[212] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability," *Cognitive Psychology* 5, no. 2 (1973).
[213] Brownlee, "Cognitive Shortcuts and Public Support for Intervention," 262.
[214] Robert L. Ivie, "Speaking “Common Sense" About the Soviet Threat: Reagan's Rhetorical Stance," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 48, no. 1 (1984).
[215] Carlsmith, Darley, and Robinson, "Why Do We Punish? Deterrence and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment," 285.
[216] Osgood, "Is Revenge About Retributive Justice, Deterring Harm, or Both?," 4.
[217] Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf," 25.

things" which "become constitutive of reality".[218] Metaphor use leads to more favourable appraisals of a speaker and their arguments; they affect inferences drawn from a speech; and increase the likelihood of attitude change.[219] This is important in respect of viewing crises in moral terms, as noted previously with George Lakoff's observation that metaphors describing war as a violent crime induce individuals to think about war in solely moral terms. We should therefore expect retributive rhetoric to invoke the metaphors involving violent crimes such as those against the person (i.e., murder, assault, kidnapping, rape), and other crimes such as arson and theft. [220] Likewise, the use of analogy would be expected. Presidential use of analogies is viewed as highly consequential; with some scholarship attributing war outcomes to their use.[221]

Finally, presidents often use language framing a crisis as a confrontation between good and evil. While Liberman argues that moral dispositions will be influential when "conflicts are framed in absolute, good versus evil terms,"[222] this kind of framing is tangential to justice intuitions concerning judgements of moral culpability. Of course, describing a person or persons as evil will help reinforce perceptions of moral blameworthiness, but it is not directly connected to psychological evaluations of wrongdoing. Distinctions between good and evil are primarily a form of religious rhetoric, reflecting Christian concepts.

- **Retributive Restraint and Reverse Retributive Rhetoric**

[218] Bates, "Audiences, Metaphors, and the Persian Gulf War," 451.
[219] Stephen J. Read *et al*., "When Is the Federal Budget Like a Baby? Metaphor in Political Rhetoric," *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 5, no. 3 (1990).
[220] Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf," 28.
[221] For example, see Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Barbara Spellman and Keith Holyoak, "If Saddam Is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush? Analogical Mapping between Systems of Social Roles," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62, no. 6 (1992).
[222] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers," 694.

Just as important as specifying expectations about the positive use of retributive rhetoric, is specifying expectations about its non-use and the circumstances when we would *not* expect to see it. Retributive rhetoric is significant in three ways: its commission; its omission; and what is called *reverse retributive rhetoric*. The first has now been detailed above. The second, the omission of retributive rhetoric, is expected when a Category One harm has occurred, mainly because in such cases, retributive sentiment is generated naturally by events, rendering retributive rhetoric redundant. This phenomenon is here called *retributive restraint*. Finally, reverse retributive rhetoric describes instances when presidents attempt to minimise or diminish aspects of crises relevant to justice intuitions. This may occur when a president wishes to dampen popular emotion because military engagement does not fit with their current political agenda. These manifestations of retributive rhetoric, including what its absence signifies, are all part of the repertory of retributive rhetoric.

Drawing this section together, the idiom of retribution will be framed with a retrospective focus on the moral harms committed. Presidents are likely to adopt a moral framing of events, and to relate events in personalised narratives. Case seriousness will be emphasised, including affirmations of the perpetrator's malintent and denials of mitigating circumstances. Expressions of moral outrage will occur, emphasising the punitive emotions and language relating to justice. Enemies and victims are expected to be identified, with the former demonised and portrayed as morally abhorrent, and atrocities will be emphasised. Conversely, when presidents do not wish to inflame popular emotion, perhaps because it has been generated already by events, they are expected to downplay the characteristics relevant to justice intuitions, and refrain from personalising and vivifying events, preferring more abstract framings.

- **Distinguishing Between Alternative Rationales**

So, how does one distinguish retributive rhetoric from non-retributive rhetoric? Essentially, this distinction maps onto the difference between deontological and consequentialist motives for action. Two main dimensions separate these rationales: temporal perspective, and the presence or absence of language that references moral themes. In line with retribution's deontological nature, retributive rhetoric will have a retrospective orientation, emphasising the need to redress past harms while the beneficial future consequences of retaliation should appear unimportant. Retributive rhetoric will emphasise justice intuitions relevant to moral blameworthiness. Negative retributive rhetoric will attempt to minimise these same features.

In contrast, non-retributive, consequentialist rhetoric will have a prospective temporal orientation, emphasising the positive consequences of action. In the context of foreign policy, this will often invoke the need for preventive action to safeguard security or national interests. The pure consequentialist view (the philosophical view, that is), proposes that consequentialist justifications for punishment should be entirely unconcerned with the moral culpability of the perpetrator, and be focused entirely on the wider, societal benefits of punishment, rendering emotional and moral arguments entirely irrelevant. However, in the real world of international politics, it is not expected that non-retributive rationales will be entirely devoid of emotion. It is, however, expected that emotion and moral language will be scarce. For practical purposes, this thesis henceforth refers to non-retributive rhetoric as *expository* rhetoric.

Of course, it is to be expected that mobilisation discourses will contain both kinds of rationales at various times. However, it is also expected that at various times one of the two types will dominate. Observing this fluctuation is, in itself, informative, shedding light on

presidential motives (bearing in mind that when we see presidents use retributive rhetoric, we can assume their policy preference is intervention).

Emotional Mobilisation Step Three:

Substantive Action Tendencies

Emotional mobilisation may often be accompanied by characteristic substantive foreign policy actions. The most consequential of these actions associated with a president's use of retributive rhetoric are small scale aerial bombing operations. The association may be particularly close when a president has used retributive rhetoric to garner support to prosecute a wider war, but may not wish to engage in full-scale conflict immediately,[223] or if circumstances prevent immediate action.[224] In such cases, one-off, limited bombing operations may occur. These actions serve to satisfy the public desire for retribution (which also may have been created naturally by events, rather than rhetoric) and thus help protect a president's reputation by appearing 'strong' vis-à-vis an adversary. This suggests that bombing limited bombing operations may sometimes be motivated by its expressive capacity rather than by straightforward coercion.[225]

Bombing is such a highly visible and symbolic action (compared to economic sanctions, for example), it performs the function of expressing societal condemnation,[226] thus satisfying the popular desire for retribution in an electorate that has collectively experienced moral outrage. This dynamic is captured in the "expressive" theory of punishment, which proposes that it is precisely punishment's symbolic, denunciatory function that distinguishes it from mere penalties. An additional line of evidence supporting this connection comes from

[223] Which, as we will see, appears to describe the events in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964.
[224] Likewise, this appears to describe the Doolittle Raids on Japan in 1942.
[225] Coercion here includes compellence and deterrence strategies.
[226] Feinberg, "The Expressive Function of Punishment."

neuroscientific studies on punishment. Brain imaging research shows that punishers are not satisfied when targets do not incur actual harm: in such cases the neural signatures of reward associated with punishment are absent.[227]

Translating this to the political realm, retributive rhetoric may create public expectations for leaders to follow through with a swift retaliatory response in order to avoid domestic "audience costs" and criticism from political rivals for appearing weak.[228] While successful retributive rhetoric may broaden a president's latitude to use force, it may in fact narrow longer-term policy options, since it may be harder for a president to settle a crisis with anything short of destruction of the adversary's regime.[229] However, a limited bombing operation may work to satisfy the popular expectation of punitive action, leaving the public more accommodating to a negotiated settlement, if politically desired.

And when a president does follow through by authorising retaliatory bombing, this act of satisfying the popular retributive impulse may help account for so-called 'rally effect' surges in popular support for presidents in the initial stages of conflicts.[230] Although scholarship has attributed this phenomenon to factors such as nationalism,[231] and the degree

[227] Darley, "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions," 11.
[228] Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage*, 30.
[229] Steven Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), xix.
[230] Patrick James and Athanasios Hristoulas, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy: Evaluating a Model of Crisis Activity for the United States," *Journal of Politics* 56, no. 2 (1994); Patrick James and John R. Oneal, "The Influence of Domestic and International Politics on the President's Use of Force," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (1991); Charles W. Ostrom and Brian L. Job, "The President and the Political Use of Force," *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 2 (1986).
[231] Colin R. Kuehnhanss, Joshua Holm, and Bram Mahieu, "Rally 'Round Which Flag? Terrorism's Effect on (Intra)National Identity," *Public Choice* 188, no. 1-2 (2020).

of elite criticism or consensus about the use of force,[232] the retributive lens may provide additional psychological micro-foundations for this phenomenon.

Indeed, the retributive dimension of bombing has not gone unnoticed by scholars. Michael Sherry observes that "[t]he capacity of the bomber to secure easy vengeance in the guise of military necessity had long been one of its attractions."[233] Further supporting the association is the fact that concepts relevant to retributive justice intuitions are evident in some empirical justifications for discrete aerial bombing operations. For example, when, in 1981, Israel bombed a nuclear reactor under construction in Osirak, Iraq (justifying the strike as pre-emptive self-defence), the state claimed to have respected proportionality by bombing the site on a Sunday to minimise foreign worker casualties.[234]

The argument that aerial bombing is used in this symbolic manner intersects with a scholarly debate about the use of strategic and nonstrategic military violence. Theories of aerial bombing identify a strategy referred to as "punishment", which, in this context, refers to the deliberate targeting of civilians for instrumental purposes. This type of strategy, which of course was used extensively in World War II, has attracted scholarly interest because it appears to represent a puzzle. The consensus among analysts is that the ability of air power to achieve political objectives, is uncertain.[235] For example, in an important 1996 study of some of the major bombing campaigns of the 20th century, Robert Pape concluded that punishment

---

[232] Richard Brody and Catherine Shapiro, "Policy Failure and Public Support: The Iran-Contra Affair and Public Assessment of President Reagan," *Political Behavior* 11, no. 4 (1989); Richard A. Brody, *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
[233] Michael S. Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 142.
[234] Byers, *War Law*, 72.
[235] Proponents of airpower often point to one empirical example in which air power is deemed to have been decisive – the 1991 Instant Thunder campaign, conducted during the Iraqi Gulf War. However, as Colin S. Gray cautions, the idea that air power independently tipped the scales to victory is a misrepresentation. Gray argues that the air component was dependent upon support from other special forces and technology.[235]

bombing is an unsuccessful strategy.[236] He states, "[m]odern nation states have extremely high pain thresholds when important interests are at stake, which conventional munitions cannot overcome. Low to moderate levels of punishment inspire more anger than fear; heavy bombardment produces apathy, not rebellion."[237] And yet, as he observes, "confidence in the efficacy of punishment frequently persists despite disconfirming evidence."[238] Scholarship evaluating the success of air power since World War II has converged on the conclusion that air power's rates of success in achieving policy goals is low.[239]

The puzzle, therefore, is why do states continue to use bombing, if it is ineffective? Naturally, this question suggests that elites may in fact use bombing non-strategically and non-instrumentally, and that retributive instinct may underlie such offensives**.** Indeed, this behaviour is typical of a wider phenomenon in international affairs in which ostensibly punitive responses are repeatedly undertaken, despite their demonstrable failure to achieve given ends.[240]

However, recent scholarship on civilian victimisation argues that punishment is indeed usually undertaken with the view that it will be instrumental in achieving military and political goals. Alexander B. Downes notes that punishment is a coercive strategy premised on the idea that the weight of civilian losses, or civilian pressure generated by such losses,

---

[236] For counterarguments, see John A. Warden, "Success in Modern War: A Response to Robert Pape's Bombing to Win," Security Studies 7, no. 2 (1997); Barry D. Watts, "Ignoring Reality: Problems of Theory and Evidence in Security Studies," ibid.
[237] Robert Anthony Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 316.
[238] Ibid., 326.
[239] Susan Hannah Allen, "Time Bombs: Estimating the Duration of Coercive Bombing Campaigns," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 1 (2007); Matthew Adam Kocher, Thomas B. Pepinsky, and Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War," *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (2011); Micah Zenko, *Between Threats and War: U.S. Discrete Military Operations in the Post-Cold War World* (Stanford, California: Stanford Security Series, 2010).
[240] For example, international sanctions have been criticised on similar grounds.

will force a target government to capitulate. On this view, "civilian victimisation is thus a calculated risk, not an irrational gamble."[241] Likewise, Benjamin A. Valentino finds that mass killing is a strategic activity for some political leaders to achieve political goals, and that it is viewed by its advocates as a rational policy.'[242]

While the mass bombing of civilians may indeed be driven by attempts to manipulate the victim state's calculus of costs and benefits,[243] this is a coercive strategy that takes place within the context of wider conflicts. In contrast, the type of bombing focused upon in this thesis is a different class of events: small-scale bombing operations that appear to have a primarily symbolic purpose. This class of events has been labelled "discrete military operations" (DMOs) by Micah Zenko.[244] Thus, detailed discussions of mass civilian targeting through strategic bombing falls outside the purview of this thesis.

What is relevant to add, however, is that just as punishment bombing victimising civilians may have a strategic rationale, so too are the DMOs associated with retributive rhetoric. These types of operations are strategic in that their primary aim is to satisfy the retributive sentiment generated among the populace and protect a president's reputation. Their limited, small-scale character means that inflicting serious material harm on the victim state is a secondary concern. Yet in much the same way as large scale punishment operations are strategic in terms of being perceived as instrumental, so too are these smaller scale

[241] Alexander B. Downes, "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War," *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2006): 170.
[242] Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, N.Y.
London: Cornell University Press, 2004).
[243] Downes, "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War."
[244] Zenko, *Between Threats and War: U.S. Discrete Military Operations in the Post-Cold War World*.

operations. The goal with the latter, however, relates primarily to public relations with the domestic audience.

Finally, it is worth clarifying that the present argument is not that retributive rhetoric is the sole reason underpinning the use of air power. Although there is some debate about the efficacy of bombing,[245] the instrument unquestionably has several advantageous attributes, such as its perceived ability to reduce casualties, swiftness, and precision. These factors undoubtedly contribute to this instrument's popularity as a foreign policy response. The claim advanced is that the effects of retributive rhetoric should be considered as part of a multivariate explanation for the popularity of aerial bombing as a foreign policy response.

Emotional Mobilisation Step Four:

What Displaying the Emotion Conveys

Quite simply, engaging in retributive rhetoric displays to the domestic audience that a president wishes to escalate a crisis to the level of employing military force; that other, more preliminary measures such as diplomacy, mediation, or sanctions are no longer appropriate. While this is the message conveyed, we must also consider how this discourse is likely to be received by the domestic audience. This question encompasses two related but separate issues concerning mass attitudes towards the use of force: how the discourse is likely to be processed by the domestic audience, and how persuasive it is likely to be. These are considered next.

[245] Allen, "Time Bombs: Estimating the Duration of Coercive Bombing Campaigns."; Michael Horowitz and Dan Reiter, "When Does Aerial Bombing Work?: Quantitative Empirical Tests, 1917-1999," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 2 (2001); Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*.

WHEN ARE PRESIDENTS LIKELY TO USE RETRIBUTIVE RHETORIC?

The final section of theory development examines the two conditions affecting the likelihood of presidents using retributive rhetoric. These conditions are when the public is uncertain about the strategic incentives of military intervention, and when a trigger event is a Category Two harm. Addressing the first condition, an important preliminary task is to delineate the role of public opinion in the theory. Public opinion enters the framework only insofar as *presidents' perceptions* of public support. These perceptions may be derived from various sources, including political instinct, elite advice, and more concretely, polling results. Thus, the question of how the public *actually* decides to support the use force is subsidiary to presidents' perceptions. Nonetheless, given this theoretical link, it is helpful to explore the dynamics of public support for war, which is addressed in the following section.

How Does the Public Form its Attitudes About the Use of Force Abroad?

Mass attitudes on foreign military intervention are generally assumed to be driven by concerns about national security and the risks, costs, and benefits entailed in military action.[246] Scholarship investigating how these attitudes are formed is contested. Broadly speaking, scholarship falls into two theoretical approaches, with one branch assuming that citizens have low information about, and give little attention to, foreign affairs, and thus their views are predominantly shaped by cues from political elites. The contrasting branch posits more agency to citizens, assuming that judgements are made more independently, based on cost-benefit reasoning processes. For the purposes of this review, these approaches are referred to as the 'elite cues' and 'cost-benefit' literatures respectively.

[246] Andrew Kohut and Robert Toth, "Arms and the People," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 6 (1994).

While both the elite cues and cost-benefit literatures have yielded important insights, the work has several shortcomings, which become especially apparent when one views potential conflict through the prism of moral psychology. One of the most problematic aspects of the cost-benefit approach is the assumption that citizens make their decisions guided by self-interest and by way of rational evaluation. This assumption is endemic to both branches of public opinion scholarship. For example, Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler interpret their findings as evidence of a public that "forms its attitudes regarding support for the war in Iraq in exactly the way one should hope they would: weighing the costs and benefits"; and observe that "the scholarly consensus is nearly unanimous in favour of the "rational cost-benefit" model."[247] Likewise, Stein's work in the elite cues approach supports the rationality assumption (albeit here in relation to presidents), stating that she shares "with much of the existing literature on the domestic politics of international conflict, that leaders are rational actors."[248]

This assumption tracks what some have labelled the "selfishness axiom" endemic to rationalist scholarship, in which personal gain is taken to be the metric most people are driven to maximise. Yet research in experimental laboratories and in natural settings shows that this assumption is consistently violated.[249] And as we have seen, Liberman's work investigating the influence of punitive psychology on public attitudes identifies a specific condition – when strategic incentives are ambiguous – in which people become less rational and tend to rely more on emotional and moral reasoning.[250] This is surely problematic for the public opinion

[247] Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler, "Success Matters," 12.
[248] Stein, *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge*, 55.
[249] Joseph Patrick Henrich, *Foundations of Human Sociality: Economic Experiments and Ethnographic Evidence from Fifteen Small-Scale Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[250] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers," 693-94.

literature, because emotional judgements, by virtue of their automatic, heuristic nature, do not conform to the cost-benefit model of decision-making.[251]

The failure to include emotional judgements triggered by moral stimuli as inputs into the decision-making process is endemic in this literature. For example, Reiter and Stam ask: "When does the public offer its consent to initiate a war for the protection of national security?" The question is revealing because it implicitly assumes that national security issues are the sole metric for judgements about intervention, excluding completely the fact that moral concerns, too, are embedded in the way people view international crises. An equally valid question these authors could pose is: "When does the public offer its consent to initiate a war to right an injustice?"

Likewise, Bruce Jentleson's work on the importance of the policy objectives of a military intervention in shaping support reflects a unidimensional, instrumental conceptualisation of objectives, missing entirely the fact that when it comes to how leaders "sell" a war, policy objectives are often presented as moral imperatives to right a wrong.[252] Jentleson and Britton come close to acknowledging the role of moral reasoning in decisions, attributing the popularity of the "restraint" objective to *values* held at both the domestic and international levels. Yet, still they conclude that their results are evidence of a "rational and reasoning public."[253] In a similar manner, Gelpi, Feaver and Reifler find that beliefs about the "rightness or wrongness" of a war are an important input into public opinion, yet curiously, conclude that decisions are made rationally.[254]

---

[251] J. Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment," *Psychological Review* 108 (2001).
[252] Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force."; Jentleson and Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force."
[253] "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force," 398.
[254] Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler, "Success Matters," 8.

In fact, some experimental and survey evidence demonstrates that judgements about war are *primarily* governed by moral rules, not by rational calculations about material consequences.[255] Certainly, this all points to a disconnect between what moral psychology and neuroscience tell us about human decision-making and the rationalist assumptions of the public opinion research in International Relations. Recalling Damasio's research, it is erroneous to conceptualise rational mental processing as operating free of emotional input. Furthermore, the rationalist theories largely fail to include the moral dimensions of crisis situations that should elicit stronger emotional responses. As stated previously, it is reasonable to assume that while rational and emotional processes are not discrete, it is likely that one process may be more dominant, depending on the content of the informational stimuli. Taking this forward, following Liberman, let us grant that rational decision-making may dominate and provide a useful approximation of decision-making in cases when prospective wars represent a clear threat to Americans' self-interest and the public is clear about the merits of intervention. However, this is a limited set of cases. In many cases, the merits of intervention are not clear-cut, and when there is ambiguity about incentives, rational models may be a poor fit to describe the empirical phenomenon of public attitude formation. In such cases, the morality of a crisis may have more significant effects on public attitudes.

So, does the elite cues approach fare any better in capturing how the public forms its support for war? A major problem of this approach is the empirical difficulty in disentangling the effects of presidential rhetoric from those of other informational sources, and from the presumed ability of individuals to evaluate matters independently of both. As Powlick and Katz note, "we are limited in our ability to determine the antecedent cause of movement in the polls: Is public approval of a policy reflecting public preferences or government success

[255] Jeremy Ginges and Scott Atran, "War as a Moral Imperative (Not Just Practical Politics by Other Means)," *Proceedings Royal Society B* 278, no. 1720 (2011).

in building support through deft public relations?"[256] This complexity is increased when one factors in the influence of media reporting. Tim Groeling and Matthew Baum make a convincing case that media coverage operates to a large extent independently of elite messages, and is dominated by the professional incentives of journalists.[257] Furthermore, Kertzer and Zeitzoff show experimentally that cues from social peers are equally — and sometimes more — influential than those from elites.[258]

In over seven decades of scholarship on public opinion and foreign policy, the question of how and why individuals support or oppose the use of force is still unresolved. Like so many debates within the discipline of International Relations, it seems that the literature has become siloed into opposing theoretical approaches, when the empirical reality of human decision-making is most likely a mix of both.

The present study tests Liberman's observation that individuals are likely to use both cost-benefit reasoning and are influenced by elite cues, and that there are circumstances in which one kind of processing will predominate. To recap, he identifies that "[u]nder the right conditions, it seems, a distinct moral logic appears to affect public attitudes about punitive wars." The circumstances he identifies are when the "strategic incentives," or the "costs and benefits," of intervention are "ambiguous," or "weak or uncertain."[259] Additionally, he notes that "[p]rudence, nationalism, and habitual inattention to foreign affairs should all limit the role of morality in foreign policy attitudes."[260] Extant cost-benefit models are therefore likely

[256] Powlick and Katz, "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus," 51.
[257] Tim Groeling and Matthew A. Baum, "Crossing the Water's Edge: Elite Rhetoric, Media Coverage, and the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon," *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 4 (2008): 115.
[258] Joshua D. Kertzer and Thomas Zeitzoff, "A Bottom-up Theory of Public Opinion About Foreign Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 3 (2017).
[259] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers."
[260] Ibid., 693.

to operate in tandem with moral heuristics, the latter activated by uncertainty and elite discourse. When material incentives for intervention are clear, however, rational calculation may predominate. But when material incentives are less clear, moral heuristics may be in active operation and dominate reasoning processes. Plausibly, over the course of a given mobilisation period, individuals will oscillate between these models.

Empirical support for this is provided by Liberman's study of the 2003 Iraq War. In the prelude to the war, as threat increased, strategic factors dominated and attenuated the influence of punitive dispositions.[261] These observations serve to confirm the validity of the cost-benefit literature on public support for war, and the primacy of the factors addressed in this work. However, when these factors are ambiguous, space opens for the subset of cases to which this theory relates, when moral dispositions enter and become influential in reasoning about war.

A final factor influencing the employment of retributive rhetoric is the pressure for presidents to take a 'tough' stand to avoid appearing weak. As we will see from the Vietnam case study, the desire to fend off partisan criticism most certainly encouraged President Johnson to engage in retributive rhetoric about the events in the Gulf of Tonkin. It is not included in the theory as a condition for retributive rhetoric as it is argued that this kind of domestic pressure is unlikely, on its own, to cause a president to try to incite violence against another state.

Condition 1: Public Uncertainty About the Strategic Incentives for Intervention

[261] Liberman and Skitka, "Revenge in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq."

Liberman argues that mass attitudes will be more susceptible to "moral punitiveness" when the "strategic incentives" or the "costs and benefits" of intervention are "ambiguous" or "weak or uncertain". This dynamic of public opinion connects to presidential behaviour when presidents become aware that the public perceives an intervention in this way (*via* a folk psychology theory of mind, political instincts, and polling data). This conjunction of factors may then lead presidents to employ retributive rhetoric. Thus, we can think of clear strategic incentives as a fault line separating when presidents are more and less likely to attempt retributive rhetoric.

To probe this correspondence, we must first unpick what is meant by "strategic incentives", as well as clarify the terms "ambiguous", "weak", and "uncertain", since these are critical to the theory. Jentleson defines strategic interests as "military alliances, geographic proximity, or geographical primacy", as well as economic interests.[262] Entailed within strategic incentives is the idea of the "national interest", which, according to statistical analysis conducted by Reiter and Stam, is "[t]he central factor determining whether a public will consent to war". These scholars identify the relevant variables as an adversary's degree of power and level of threat presented, and its history.[263]

The terms "ambiguous" and "weak or uncertain", as they relate to public perceptions of strategic incentives are rather nebulous. Ambiguous strategic incentives are qualitatively different from weak or uncertain strategic incentives. Ambiguous strategic incentives imply that the merits are hard to discern or are inexact. On the other hand, weak strategic incentives implies that they are simply uncompelling. Finally, if the public is uncertain about strategic

[262]Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," 51.
[263] Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*, 148-49.

incentives, this could imply that the incentives are clear, but for various reasons, the public remains unpersuaded. Furthermore, Liberman does not specify the sources of these public perceptions. Plausibly, these perceptions could stem not only from cost-benefit assessments of the strategic incentives, but from epistemic limitations, such as incomplete information, or inattention. Additionally, the public could be certain about the strategic merits of intervention, but uncertain about its moral legitimacy.

Although there may be some overlap, these terms are distinct. It is likely that ambiguous, weak, or uncertain public perceptions of the strategic incentives and costs and benefits of intervention arise from all the above processes. One solution to this lack of clarity is to be guided by two common denominators present in each of these distinctions. The first is that in every scenario, there is public *reticence* about intervention. The second is that these perceptions, however they arise, manifest as low support in polling data. Therefore, in the analysis that follows concerning public perceptions about the strategic incentives for war, the blanket term of public *reticence* is used to encompass Liberman's factors of "ambiguity", "weak", and "uncertain" and when a president perceives low public support (often inferred from polling data), which will be used as an empirical proxy/indicator to measure this.

Liberman's claims are consonant with psychological research on the effects of uncertainty, which serves to intensify both positive and negative emotional reactions.[264] Additionally, uncertainty heightens susceptibility to framing effects. Sniderman and Theriault find that citizens are most likely to be susceptible to framing when they are ambivalent about an issue, finding that "[a]mbivalence is the key. Just so far as citizens simultaneously have

[264] Timothy D. Wilson, Yoav Bar-Anan, and Daniel Gilbert, "The Feeling of Uncertainty Intensifies Affective Reactions," *Emotion* 9, no. 1 (2009).

reasons both to support a course of action and to oppose it, that is, just so far as they are ambivalent, they will be susceptible to framing effects."[265]

Ambiguity has also been identified as a factor magnifying the effects of cognitive biases in perceptions of victory in warfare. Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney note that "[w]hen outcomes are ambiguous, people are likely to rely even more heavily on their pre-existing beliefs to assess the situation, and to be especially susceptible to interpretive frames constructed by the media or elites."[266] Uncertainty about intervention is also likely to be more pronounced in the early stages of a crisis as it unfolds, precisely the window of opportunity for presidential mobilisation. In comprehending the details of a new foreign crisis situation, the public often lacks knowledge of the geopolitical situation and the national stakes. Rounding out this discussion of the first condition, then, it is expected that presidents are more likely to use retributive rhetoric when the public is reticent about intervening and a president perceives low public support.

Condition 2: Category Two Harms are Most Conducive to Retributive Rhetoric

The foregoing condition is important because it tells us what must be missing (public support, due to a lack of clear strategic incentives) to heighten the likelihood of retributive rhetoric occurring. The second condition relates to this subset of cases in which the space for retributive rhetoric has opened. This is where judgements about the morality of a crisis situation enter the framework. As a general rule of thumb, this works in an inversely

[265] Paul M. and Theriault Sniderman, Sean M. , "The Structure of Political Argument and the Logic of Issue Framing," in *Studies in Public Opinion: Attitudes, Nonattitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*, ed. Willem E. Saris and Paul M. Sniderman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 137.
[266] Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 82-83.

proportional manner: the higher the case seriousness, the lower the expectation of retributive rhetoric.

When Category One harms are perceived, these events, owing to their moral severity and high impact, fall largely outside the realm of moral rhetoric. By virtue of their severity, these events will automatically generate popular retributive sentiment, rendering presidential mobilisation attempts redundant. Ben Porath notes that "[s]ome situations may not require that presidents employ the rhetoric of human rights abuses, particularly when responding to a direct attack on American soil."[267] An example of this is found in the intervention in Afghanistan following the September 11th 2001 attacks. As Anna Galeotti notes, the intervention was "backed by the whole nation, as well as by the international community, and considered justified without requiring persuasion or spinning […] The attack on Afghanistan was seen as a legitimate act of self-defence after an unprovoked aggression."[268]

Category Two harms are precisely the conditions under which it is expected that retributive rhetoric is most likely to occur. These harms are serious, but do not possess the "bright line" quality of Category One harms, generating more ambiguity about the merits of intervention (especially if the trigger event victimises a third party). Presidential rhetoric scholar Theodore Otto Windt notes that it is when a crisis *does not involve a direct attack on the U.S.* that presidents employ recognised tropes associated with crisis mobilisation, namely, claiming to be in possession of "New Facts" and contrasting the benevolent motives of the U.S. against the nefarious motives of the enemy, as well as transforming the situation from a

[267] Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts," 197.
[268] Anna E. Galeotti, *Political Self-Deception* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 219.

practical to a moral issue.[269] The absence of an attack against the American homeland creates a harder task for presidents to justify a case for war.

Category Three harms, although morally relevant, are likely to lack the strength to motivate retributive reactions. Moreover, these types of harms are unlikely to possess the qualities that could easily be constructed or confabulated through presidential rhetoric into more serious harms, unless, of course, leaders are willing to pursue high risk strategies of serious deception. Retributive rhetoric may be used, but in these circumstances, it is expected to be weak or infrequent.

What Conditions Militate Against the Use of Retributive Rhetoric?

To recap, the circumstances under which we would not expect retributive rhetoric, i.e., we would expect retributive restraint, are as follows: when the strategic incentives for intervention are clear; when trigger events fall into Categories One or Three; and when a president does not wish to intervene. In terms of reverse retributive rhetoric, we would expect to see this when a president wishes to diminish a crisis, usually because their preference is to avoid military intervention.

Do Presidents Use Retributive Rhetoric for Non-Mobilisational Purposes?

It is perfectly plausible that presidents may employ retributive rhetoric in response to political pressure from rivals to avoid appearing weak. As we will see in the Vietnam case study, Lyndon Johnson's concerns about actual and anticipated criticism from Barry Goldwater featured prominently in his thoughts during the Gulf of Tonkin crisis. It is argued that while

[269] Windt, "The Presidency and Speeches on International Crises: Repeating the Rhetorical Past," 127-31.

presidents may engage in *some degree* of retributive rhetoric for domestic/reputational purposes, it is unlikely to be as extensive as when a president is using this kind of discourse to purposely mobilise the public behind a preferred foreign intervention. Presidents may be wary of pressing this angle too far, in case they do incite a public desire for a retributive act to which the president is not fully committed. This question opens an interesting avenue for a future research project, in which the use of retributive rhetoric as a reputation guarding tool is the main focus.

Falsifying the Theory

We must also ask what the kinds of observations would prove the theory wrong. Essentially, these revolve around assumptions about the purposes of, and circumstances in which, we expect to see retributive rhetoric. One of the most obvious ways of falsifying the theory would be if the conditions for retributive rhetoric lined up (i.e. a reticent public, a Category Two harm, and a president wishing to intervene militarily), but the president failed to employ retributive rhetoric. Additionally, if the public was uncertain about strategic incentives, and a president wished to intervene, but the case seriousness of a trigger event was a Category One or Three moral harm, this would disprove the relevance of the hierarchy of harms as a guide to predicting the use of presidential retributive rhetoric. Finally, the absence of popular reticence is another dimension upon which the theory could be falsified. If the public was clear about incentives and supported intervention, we would not expect to see presidents engaging in this tactic.

Retributive Rhetoric: An Under-Theorised Mobilisation Tool

The foregoing has outlined a comprehensive theory of retributive rhetoric, explaining why, how, and when presidents use this discourse. It has addressed why presidents use retributive

rhetoric, explaining retribution's powerful role in human decision-making. How presidents use retributive rhetoric was modelled, detailing how judgements of moral culpability are arrived at; how these justice intuitions are employed by presidents in retributive rhetoric; the association between retributive rhetoric and aerial bombing; and what this discourse signals to an audience. The final section of the theory has addressed when presidents are more and less likely to use this discourse, delineating the conditions which are expected to be conducive to and to militate against its use.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Scope Conditions and Limitations

The choice to focus on the rhetoric employed by U.S. presidents is justified on several fronts. The position of the U.S. as the global hegemon throughout the 20th century entails that its foreign policy has been consequential in shaping global politics. Because of its capacity to project its power globally, the U.S. is responsible for, or has been a major contributor to, some of the major wars of the last century. As Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall argue, post-1945, the U.S. "is the sun that delimits the entire [international] system's structure."[270] Therefore, studying retributive rhetoric in the context of U.S. politics provides direct insight into the machinations of arguably the most significant and active political-military establishments available for study. Focusing on retributive rhetoric in the context of the U.S. is, on these grounds, intrinsically valuable. Of course, the drawback of a study based on a single country is that generalisability of the findings to other countries cannot be claimed.

[270] Daniel and Logevall Bessner, Fredrik, "Recentering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (2020).

The main theoretical focus on the president is justified on the basis that the president is the ultimate decision-maker and principal voice of authority in any given mobilisation discourse. Presidential communications form the centrepiece of governmental mobilisation efforts, and importantly, in times of crisis, the press tends to follow the official government line,[271] relying on politicians as primary sources in political coverage.[272] During World War II for example, Roosevelt's speeches formed the basis of the public debate, and his 23rd February 1942 fireside chat was discussed in 382 newspaper editorials.[273] Furthermore, themes in presidential speeches are often analysed by governmental bodies and used as a template for other official communications. Although the president is the primary locus of theoretical interest, where relevant, the analysis also includes other elite civilian and military officials involved in propagating the administration's policy positions.

In presenting a theory of retributive rhetoric, this thesis does not pretend to provide an exhaustive explanation of presidential foreign policy behaviour. Presidents act on the basis of a wide variety of motives, and alternative explanations for presidential behaviour likely constitute equally valid and valuable parts of a constellation of influences. The claim of this thesis is that the retributive lens offers an additional and important aspect of presidential behaviour to be considered. Two scope conditions of this research requiring justification are first, the focus on rhetoric aimed at citizens rather than Congress and other foreign policy elites, and second, the temporal unit of analysis in the case studies.

[271] Steven Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory."
[272] David A. Lewis and Roger P. Rose, "The President, the Press, and the War-Making Power: An Analysis of Media Coverage Prior to the Persian Gulf War," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2002): 560.
[273] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 69.

The primary focus of this study is on the domestic audience, which largely excludes foreign policy elites. The empirical psychological research on retribution from which this theory is derived was conducted on ordinary citizens, and paints a picture of "laypersons' intuitions"[274] of justice. Thus, focusing on speech directed towards ordinary citizens provides a more accurate fit between the theory and its application in the present work. Presidents do use retributive rhetoric in their communications with Congress, as evidenced in congressional speeches which are also broadcast publicly. However, it is plausible that presidents will communicate with political elites slightly differently, given the latter group's political knowledge and expertise. Indeed, greater foreign policy sophistication may attenuate these individuals' punitive inclinations,[275] and presidents may sense this and adjust their rhetoric accordingly.

An additional reason is practical, that much of a president's dealings with Congress takes place behind closed doors in White House briefings and other meetings, of which only incomplete records of the president's words remain. Focusing on presidents' communications to the public, with all relevant information available in the public domain, narrows the analytical task and makes it more tractable. Certainly, a study of presidential retributive rhetoric directed towards elites would make an interesting companion study to the present work.

The second limitation is the restricted temporal boundaries of the theory. The pre-war period is selected because, as with all democracies, this is the most relevant period for mobilising public support for military intervention. A variety of mobilisation techniques may be employed in the pre-war period, demonstrating variation in the interrelationship between

[274] Darley, Carlsmith, and Robinson, "Incapacitation and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment."
[275] Liberman, "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War."

rhetoric and public opinion. Naturally, studying rhetoric over the course of wars would be a logical next step to extend this research. However, this would constitute a separate study beyond what is feasible for this project. Instead, the current study is positioned as laying the groundwork for a more temporally expansive theory of retributive rhetoric encompassing the entirety of wars.

Case Selection

To borrow from John Gerring's terminology, the U.S. is the "primary unit of analysis", and the individual case studies are "within-unit cases".[276] The analytical decision to select cases solely from the U.S. is guided by several considerations. First, the periods studied mark the introduction to important, destructive wars, therefore each case has intrinsic value. Second, and relatedly, there is ample primary and secondary source information available for each. Third, restricting the study to the U.S. allows country-specific variables to be held constant. The case selection is guided by Jason Seawright and John Gerring's advice to "provide (1) a representative sample, and (2) useful variation on the dimensions of theoretical interest". With these objectives in mind, the research utilises a "diverse" design to provide representativeness and diversity along the dimensions of theoretical interest outlined in the above scope conditions.[277] Diverse cases "are likely to represent the full variation of the population" although this may not represent the distribution of the cases in the population.[278]

[276] John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 344.
[277] "Representativeness" in this study relates to representativeness within recent U.S. history, which is the restricted focus of this work. As will be discussed in the concluding chapter, avenues for future research include studies providing representativeness in international relations as a whole and across all possible regime types and socio-cultural contexts.
[278] Jason Seawright and John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 296-302.

The case selection is also guided by Jack Levy's observation that cases should be "theoretically defined classes of events".[279] The temporal period of interest is the period from the initial trigger event to the initiation of military action. The World War II and Vietnam cases are subdivided into two phases because the circumstances and public opinion changed before and after the trigger events. Analysing these cases in two parts, pre- and post- trigger event, demonstrates important within-case variation along the dimensions of interest.

The first case study investigating the events in the Gulf of Tonkin (spanning 2nd – 8th August 1964) is selected for several reasons. First, this case applies the novel analytical lens of retribution to a period of American history that is controversial and intriguing. Johnson's former Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, wrote in his autobiography that many people consider this episode "as the most controversial period in the 'Twenty-five-year War.' No wonder. For three decades, intense debate has swirled around what happened in the Gulf."[280] This case is divided into two phases. The first phase prior to the outbreak of hostilities saw public reticence about the strategic incentives of intervening in Vietnam, largely attributable to a generalised lack of knowledge about the situation. Most Americans at that time knew little of Vietnam, and it seemed to have little relevance to American national or security interests. Little was made of the first attack against U.S. vessels, so perceptions did not really change until the second attack, which marks the beginning of the second phase of the analysis.

In terms of case seriousness, in reality, the damage caused by the second attack was non-existent. However, assuming the public evaluated the crisis on the basis of the government and media reports, the case seriousness would have been portrayed as a Category

[279] Jack S. Levy, "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no. 1 (2008): 2.
[280] Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 300.

Two harm, corresponding to harms against property (it was reported that no U.S. casualties had been sustained.) The two North Vietnamese attacks elicited two very different reactions, once again illustrating the powerful effects of retributive psychology. Whereas the first attack went unanswered, perceptions of the second attack precipitated Johnson to seek a congressional resolution authorising intervention and to launch the offensive bombing operation of 'Pierce Arrow'. This case is valuable because it illustrates the performative logic of retribution employed for political ends.

The second study is the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait on 2nd August 1990 to the United Nations response led by the United States (commencing with air strikes on 17th January 1991). Unlike the other two cases, this case began with a single trigger event which led President George H.W. Bush to embark upon a five-and-a-half-month mobilisation discourse. Perceptions of the strategic incentives for intervention appeared ambiguous to the domestic audience, resulting in public reticence and low support. Just like the Vietnam case, citizens' knowledge of Kuwait and Iraq prior to the crisis was low, and most were unfamiliar with Saddam Hussein.[281] The Kuwaiti regime had no strong connection to the U.S., which would have weakened retributive responses (recalling that retributive sentiment is weaker when a harm is committed against foreign peoples, rather than fellow citizens[282]). The case seriousness of the trigger event was Category Two, as the Iraqi invasion correlates to harms against property. The theory predicts that these factors mean that like the Gulf of Tonkin, this war had to be 'sold' to the public to some degree. This is a striking case, because the discourse employed by President Bush evolved over the period to include morally salient justifications in response to low public support for intervention.

[281] Ben-Porath, "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts," 188.
[282] Liberman, "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture," 288.

The third case, U.S. entry into World War II in 1941, begins with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and spans up to the first use of American offensive force on 18th April 1942). Prior to Pearl Harbor, public support for entering the war as a belligerent was ambivalent. However, after Pearl Harbor, perceptions of the case seriousness of the situation dramatically transformed in line with expectations of a Category One harm. Not only did the attack cause a high number of casualties and extensive damage to military equipment, but it was apparently unprovoked and unexpected by the U.S., which was not officially a belligerent party at the time. Political elites and citizens alike were united in an extraordinary surge of patriotic unity and rushed to support war.

It is testament to the powerful sway retribution holds on the human mind that overnight, almost all uncertainty about the need to intervene in the war evaporated. The analytical leverage of the diverse design is enhanced by the fact that post-Pearl Harbor, this case may be treated as an "extreme" case, as the case seriousness was extremely high. As such, it adds value as it represents "a conscious attempt to maximise variance on the dimension of interest, not minimise it."[283] It is also the only case in the study in which the United States was attacked on the homeland, providing a contrast to the other two cases which concern interventions in third countries.

The theory predicts that pre-Pearl Harbor, faced with an ambivalent public and a Category Two harm, Roosevelt would have engaged in a retributive discourse - *had he desired intervention*. What we see in this period is a gradual evolution in his official communication from a consequentialist discourse to one invoking themes likely to activate justice intuitions. After Pearl Harbor, with the situation now representing a Category One

[283] Seawright and Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," 302.

harm and high public support for intervention, the theory predicts that Roosevelt would not engage in retributive rhetoric, because it was unnecessary. Both predictions are borne out in the case study. The case is particularly valuable because the second phase provides an example of an occasion when a president engages in retributive restraint and reverse retributive rhetoric in order to diminish popular retributive sentiment (towards Japan).

Taken together, the three cases provide variation in the duration of mobilisation periods (ranging from a single week to several months), and a variety of types of intervention (singular, discrete bombing operations to full-blown military engagement). The cases involve three different presidents, in three geopolitical contexts. The Gulf War case is an instance in which all the indications for positive retributive rhetoric line up; in that sense, if retributive rhetoric occurs, it offers a 'most likely' confirmatory case supporting the theoretical propositions. The Vietnam and Japan cases offer more nuance, as they contain negative instances of retributive rhetoric.

Table 1.2 Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the Case Studies

Case	**Strategic Incentives Uncertain/Public Reticence?**	**Category of Harm**	**Presidential Desire to Intervene?**	**Retributive Rhetoric Expected?**
Vietnam pre-trigger (- to 2nd August 1964)	Yes	3	Ambivalent	No
Vietnam post-trigger (2nd - 8th August 1964)	Yes	2	Yes	Yes
Gulf War (2nd August 1990 -	Yes	2	Yes	Yes

17th January 1991)				
Japan pre-trigger (September 1939 – 7th December 1941)	Yes	2	No, evolving to yes	No, evolving to yes
Japan post-trigger (7th December 1941 – 18th April 1942)	No	1	Yes	No (towards Japan)

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach as this allows for granular analysis of presidential communications, which constitute the primary material. Detailed textual analysis of presidential speeches and other public communications are analysed to trace the mobilisation discourses, showing both consistency and variation in the framing and rationales for intervention. In terms of primary sources, U.S. government publications are utilised, with the main source being records of presidential speeches and press briefings. Where relevant, the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series is consulted. Additionally, official statements to the press, media reports, and polling data are utilised. The Gulf of Tonkin case makes use of the Pentagon Papers and the recordings of President Johnson's telephone calls. Secondary sources are also widely consulted, including autobiographies and memoirs. However, the latter are viewed with the understanding that autobiographical writings may be written in a justificatory, partial manner.

Whereas some studies analysing discourse employ a quantitative approach, this has not been selected in the present study because this would fail to account for important contextual factors. For example, evidence from "initiated statements" – those in which leaders make statements without prior prompting – may provide more be illustrative of retributive rhetoric as a performative discourse, as presidents are more likely to shape these statements strategically than when responding to reporters' or interviewers' questions.

CONCLUSION

This chapter specifying the theory has explained why, how, and when presidents use retributive rhetoric. It has explained that retribution is the most prevalent punishment perspective cross-culturally in response to violations that are considered moral harms, and that retributive judgements are arrived at by way of automatic heuristic processes. Following this, the chapter outlined the concepts that are relevant to evaluations of moral blameworthiness, and provided a ranking of the degrees of seriousness of morally salient harms. The next section detailed how these concepts are likely to be drawn upon in presidential speech. Following this, the chapter laid out the expectations about when it is more and less likely that the external circumstances of a crisis are likely to engender retributive rhetoric. Finally, this chapter discussed the research design and the rationale governing the case selection. The next chapter begins the empirical investigations, starting with the events that precipitated America's formal entry into the Vietnam War.

CHAPTER 2

AMERICA'S ENTRY INTO THE VIETNAM WAR, AUGUST 1964

The attacks were deliberate.
The attacks were unprovoked.
The attacks have been answered.

- Lyndon B. Johnson
  Syracuse University, 5th August 1964[1]

One bullet and you went to war – Helen's face is insignificant by comparison.

- Senator Albert Gore, Sr., (D-Tenn)[2]

4th August, 1964, Washington

At 11:36pm, President Lyndon B. Johnson stood before television cameras in the Fish Room of the White House and began an address to the American people. At that very moment, he stated, United States' aircraft were bombing North Vietnam in retaliation for a second attack against two United States Navy destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, an area of the South China Sea. The initial attack, which had occurred two days previously, had resulted in a single bullet hole to the hull of the destroyer U.S.S. Maddox.[3] Chalking this up to local

[1] Miller Centre, "August 5, 1964: Remarks on Vietnam at Syracuse University" *University of Virginia, Miller Centre*, 2021, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-5-1964-remarks-vietnam-syracuse-university
[2] Quoted in Joseph C. Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969), 202.
[3] Edwin E. Moïse, *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 79.

misadventure, Johnson had simply issued a protest note to Hanoi. However, after the second attack, he told Americans, "[r]epeated acts of violence must be met not only with alert defence, but with positive reply." He concluded his speech by informing the audience that he was seeking Congressional approval for a resolution allowing him to "take all necessary measures" to defend Southeast Asia.

In fact, the status of North Vietnam's "new act of aggression" as Johnson described it, was highly uncertain. Several hours after the first reports had reached Washington, the Captain of the Maddox had sent messages expressing doubts about whether the attack had actually happened. Regardless, the administration pressed ahead, drawing up plans for a reprisal bombing. Johnson's address made no reference to the unconfirmed nature of the second attack. Nor did he mention that the U.S. had been engaged in a variety of provocative actions, including commando raids on the nights immediately preceding both purported attacks on the destroyers. The public was also unaware that Johnson had been carrying in his pocket the draft text of the resolution he now sought long before recent events in the Tonkin Gulf offered themselves as a propitious moment to bring it before Congress.[4]

In a joint congressional hearing two days later, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara described the North Vietnamese actions as "unprovoked and deliberate attacks in international waters on our naval vessels."[5] *The following day, Congress passed the resolution almost unanimously, and Johnson's popularity soared. Only time would reveal the true nature of the events that brought America into the Vietnam War. National Security Agency documents released in 2005 confirmed that in fact, no second attack had occurred.*

---

[4] Tom Wicker, *J.F.K. And L.B.J.: The Influence of Personality Upon Politics* (New York: Morrow, 1968), 224-25.
[5] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 13.

Navy personnel had mistaken sonar signals caused by stormy weather and wave surges created by the destroyers themselves for evidence of hostile vessels.[6]

How can we explain this U.S. foreign policy response, in which a single North Vietnamese bullet was answered by sixty-four U.S. bombers and a presidential warrant for war? In this chapter, the events in the Gulf of Tonkin are viewed through the lens of retributive psychology, illustrating how moral intuitions shaped the events that led to America's first official use of military force in the Vietnam War. The Tonkin incident raises a number of questions that retributive psychology can help answer. First, if the administration were truly waiting for a favourable set of circumstances in which to introduce the resolution to Congress, why was the opportunity not seized after the first attack? Second, what new rationales were introduced after the second attack that justified retaliation? Finally, why was Johnson's disproportionate response met with such a strong outpouring of support, both in Congress and from the public?

The discourse in this case is analysed in two separate periods. The first period begins with the first attack on 2nd August and covers two days. The second period begins on 4th August with the second attack, which was the significant trigger event, and ends on 7th August with the signing into law of the resolution granting Johnson war powers. The second attack heralded a change in policy and rhetoric, thereby providing an opportunity to compare Johnson's communications in the two periods. This case differs from the other case studies in two respects. First, the bombing operation was authorised unilaterally by the administration before attempting to gain public (or congressional) support, so the mobilisation discourse came after the use of force and was in service of passing the resolution. The second unique

[6] Allen Pusey, "The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution Begins a War," *ABA Journal* 102, no. 8 (2016).

feature of this case is that unlike presidents Roosevelt and Bush senior, Johnson recorded his telephone calls, which offers a trove of additional information about his more private thoughts and 'behind the scenes' strategizing.

The case is theoretically valuable because it illustrates how a president can draw upon retributive concepts to inflate a minor infraction into an international crisis which led to war. Despite knowledge of U.S. provocation, the political discourse undertaken by Johnson (and his senior officials) cast the U.S. as the innocent victim of unprovoked aggression. The Tonkin episode is a paradigm case of emotional mobilisation; Johnson and his closest aides projected a discourse brimming with statements likely to resonate with justice intuitions. Finally, the upswell in Johnson's public approval ratings after the bombing represents a successful use of retributive rhetoric, underscoring how it contributes to the 'rally effect'. The chapter begins with a brief historical overview of the crisis, followed by the analysis, which discusses the situational meaning of the crisis both before and after the second attack, and analyses the empirical evidence of the discourse. This is followed by a discussion of various points illuminating the analytical purchase of the retributive lens, including the authorisation of Pierce Arrow as a substantive gesture. The chapter closes with a short conclusion.

BACKGROUND

U.S. aggression against North Vietnam had begun early in 1964, albeit covertly. On 1st February, Johnson authorised a secret programme of raids known as 'OPLAN 34-A' which was carried out by South Vietnamese forces but guided by CIA advisers.[7] Simultaneously, the *Maddox* was cruising the Gulf under the auspices of the 'Desoto' programme of

[7] Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 379.

electronic intelligence gathering, its mission to activate and monitor North Vietnamese radar.[8] On the night of 30th/31st July an OPLAN raid occurred on a North Vietnamese island. In response, Hanoi issued an official warning stating that there would be consequences in the event of further attacks.[9]

Heedless of the warning, the *Maddox* was ordered to continue patrols and twice more approached the island. On 2nd August North Vietnamese vessels chased the *Maddox* out to sea.[10] At around 4pm local time, the *Maddox* reported a missile attack by three North Vietnamese patrol torpedo (PT) boats, and returned fire. It was reported that the PTs launched three torpedoes, none of which connected with the *Maddox*, and fired 37-millimetre shells at the vessel. In response, four jets from the nearby carrier U.S.S *Ticonderoga* scrambled to assist the *Maddox*, damaging two of the boats, while a third lay damaged in the water.[11] In the aftermath of the attack, Johnson issued a protest note to Hanoi, stating that U.S. vessels would continue to operate on the high seas and "will take whatever measures are appropriate for their defence."[12] Johnson also ordered immediate reinforcements to the area in the form of a second destroyer, the U.S.S. *C. Turner Joy*, and another aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. *Constellation*.

Following the attack, the *Maddox* moved south to join the *C. Turner Joy,* after which both returned north to the Gulf. On the night of 3rd/4th August another OPLAN raid against North Vietnamese coastal installations occurred. Later the same day, reports arrived of a

[8] Moya Ann Ball, "Revisiting the Gulf of Tonkin Crisis: An Analysis of the Private Communication of President Johnson and His Advisers," *Discourse & Society* 2, no. 3 (1991): 94.
[9] Cherwitz, "Masking Inconsistency: The Tonkin Gulf Crisis," 30.
[10] Ball, "Revisiting the Gulf of Tonkin Crisis: An Analysis of the Private Communication of President Johnson and His Advisers," 94.
[11] Eugene G. Windchy, *Tonkin Gulf*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 2.
[12] "U.S. Statements on Clash," *The New York Times*, Aug. 4, 1964, https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2186/docview/115884166?accountid=13042

second North Vietnamese assault from the U.S. destroyers. Yet by the afternoon, Washington received cables from the Commander of the *Maddox* expressing uncertainty about the veracity of the second attack. Planning for the retaliatory strike continued, and after a series of high-level meetings, Johnson went before the nation shortly before midnight to announce the reprisal strikes. On 6th August, McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk gave evidence to a joint congressional hearing, repeating that the North Vietnamese attacks were unprovoked. The following day, August 7th, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution with only two dissenting votes. Johnson now had formal approval to prosecute a war in Vietnam without requiring a formal congressional declaration of war. With the resolution secure, he famously quipped to an aide that the bill was like "Grandma's nightshirt - it covers everything."[13]

RETRIBUTIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND AMERICA'S ENTRY INTO THE VIETNAM WAR, AUGUST 1964

The Situational Meaning of the Crisis

This section evaluates events from the vantage point of retributive psychology, providing a theoretical assessment of the likelihood of retributive rhetoric occurring, encompassing the conditions of whether citizens were reticent about the strategic incentives for intervening in Vietnam both before and after reports of the second attack; whether moral reasoning was likely to be operative; and its dynamics. The analysis in this step encompasses Stages I to III

[13] Robert Dallek, *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 179.

of the psychological chain of retributive motive arousal. Below is a recap of the relevant theoretical attributes.

Table 2.0 Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the Gulf of Tonkin Episode

Case	**Strategic Incentives Uncertain/Public Reticence?**	**Category of Harm**	**Presidential Desire to Intervene?**	**Retributive Rhetoric Expected?**
Vietnam pre-trigger	Yes	3	Ambivalent	No
Vietnam post-trigger	Yes	2	Yes	Yes

Perceptions After the First Attack

- **Public Perceptions of Strategic Incentives**

The strategic incentives for intervening in Vietnam would have appeared to the public as highly uncertain in early August 1964. Before the Tonkin episode brought Vietnam into the spotlight, most Americans knew and cared little about Vietnam.[14] Johnson confirmed this impression on 20th February 1964, when in a conversation with McNamara, he stated that "[n]obody really understands what it is out there and they don't know, and they're getting to where they're confused. And they're asking questions and saying why don't we do more."[15]

[14] Daniel C. Hallin, *The "Uncensored War" : The Media and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 15.
[15] Michael R. Beschloss, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes,* 1963-1964 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 248-50.

Pollster Louis Harris reflected after the resolution had been passed that public opinion "had been moving slowly" towards supporting escalation in Vietnam, but a majority was opposed due to fears of sparking war with China. Furthermore, in July, 58 percent of the public disapproved of Johnson's handling of Vietnam.[16] This being the case, it follows logically that the public would have been reticent about intervention, opening the space for moral reasoning/argumentation.

- **Case Seriousness**

Prior to August, the North Vietnamese had committed no offensive actions against the U.S. which would be perceived as morally grave by the domestic audience. The main charge against the North at that point was troop infiltration into the South along the Ho Chi Minh trail. According to the hierarchy of harms, this would fall into the third category of harms, cheating on an agreement (the Geneva Accords, which partitioned North and South Vietnam). The non-dramatic, non-aggressive, incremental nature of infiltration lacks the harm characteristics necessary to trigger retributive desire. As Stavens, Barnet and Raskins observe, "the infiltration argument, aside from its gross falsity, lacked the glamour attendant upon a surprise or shock attack."[17]

In terms of the first attack, it is unlikely that a just deserts perspective would have been activated. No U.S. deaths or casualties were sustained, and the single bullet hole to the *Maddox* caused very minor damage to the hull. Thus, although it could be argued that North Vietnamese intent to cause more serious harm could have elicited more severe moral

[16] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 77.
[17] Ralph Stavins, Richard J. Barnet, and Marcus G. Raskin, *Washington Plans an Aggressive War* (London: Davis-Poynter, 1972), 98.

judgements of the incident, the fact that the episode did not result in major harms and was not reported as a prominent news story leads to this situation being interpreted as a Category Three harm.

In fact, it seems that Johnson's own evaluation of case seriousness was mediated by what he saw as diminished intent on the part of the North Vietnamese leadership. He quickly judged the attack to be the result of local misadventure rather than an act of hostility ordered by Hanoi. At 11:30am on Sunday, 2nd August, Johnson met with Rusk and other close aides to discuss the attack. After studying reports, the group concluded that it had not been ordered by higher authorities in Hanoi and was more likely the result of the caprice of a local commander connecting the *Maddox* with the OPLAN raids two nights previously. Johnson writes in his memoir that he and his advisors "concluded that an over-eager North Vietnamese boat commander might have been at fault or that a shore station had miscalculated. So we decided against retaliation. […] We would give Hanoi the benefit of the doubt – this time – and assume the unprovoked attack had been a mistake."[18]

From a retributive perspective, the absence of perceived intentionality makes the first attack a 'non-prototypical' harm, in which mitigating factors are taken into account. Clearly, one important mitigating factor – the accidental nature of the harm – served to defuse the situation. Psychological research shows that when agents (in this case, the North Vietnamese leadership in Hanoi) lack control over behaviour, judgements of blameworthiness are lessened.[19] Additionally, Johnson was privately aware of America's role in provoking the North Vietnamese. In addition to the OPLAN raids and the DeSoto patrols, the Maddox had

[18] Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), 113.
[19] Mark Alicke, "Culpable Causation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 3 (1992).

breached North Vietnamese waters *and* had fired first. Therefore, Johnson's knowledge of U.S. provocations likely also diminished the case seriousness of the attack in his eyes.

- **Political Context: Johnson's Policy Preferences**

Did Johnson desire to intervene in Vietnam at this time? It seems his feelings were mixed. He did not wish to commit to South Vietnam and have foreign policy entanglements derail his domestic agenda or his chances of election in November; nor, however, could he let the South Vietnamese government unravel. Immediately on assuming the presidency - in fact after the eulogy at Kennedy's funeral - Johnson reportedly told Ambassador to Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. in the Rotunda of the Capitol, "I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the president who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went."[20] Illustrating the conflicting pull of his obligations, on 4th March 1964, Johnson expressed the opposing view, telling Special Assistant Jack Valenti that with respect to military intervention in Vietnam, "we haven't got any Congress that will go with us, and we haven't got any mothers that will go with us in a war. And nine months I'm just an inherited – I'm a trustee. I've got to win an election."[21]

While Johnson may have been internally conflicted about intervention, his substantive actions suggest that he was preparing for it nonetheless. The administration began drafting the resolution and planning for bombing operations in Vietnam long in advance of August 1964.[22] The idea of a resolution can be traced back to February of that year, when the issue was raised by Walt Rostow, after which it underwent a process of drafting and redrafting

[20] Quoted in James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992), 32.
[21] Beschloss, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964*, 266-67.
[22] Neil Sheehan, *The Pentagon Papers as Published by the New York Times* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 234-35.

during the first half of the year. By 23rd May, a speech referencing the resolution had been drafted for Johnson. The Pentagon Papers confirm that by June, Johnson "already felt the political conventions just around the corner and the election issues regarding Vietnam clearly drawn", which led him to abandon seeking a resolution at this time.[23] Despite Johnson's reluctance, as mentioned, he reportedly carried the draft text of the resolution around with him prior to the events in August, an act that is highly revealing as to his mixed motives. In light of the foregoing, it seems reasonable to say that Johnson was ambivalent about intervention *at this time*, preferring to defer action until after the election. This condition, along with the weakness of the moral harm, entails that it is *unlikely* that Johnson would use retributive rhetoric in this period.

Perceptions After the Second Attack

- **Public Perceptions of Strategic Incentives**

Public perceptions of the strategic reasons to intervene in Vietnam would hardly have changed with news of the attack, especially within a timeframe of two days. Therefore, the condition of public reticence about supporting intervention holds, again opening the space for moral reasoning or argumentation.

- **Case Seriousness**

[23] Neil Sheehan et al., *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Racehorse Publishing, 2017), 265.

With a second attack, perceptions of North Vietnamese intentionality would have been transformed. A repeated attack is less easily attributable to error, and therefore suggests intent. It is argued that the case seriousness would have changed from Category Three to Category Two. Thus, the second attack appeared to indicate a clear signal of North Vietnamese aggression. The public would have evaluated the crisis on the merits of the government and media reports, which stated that U.S. ships had come under fire from torpedoes. As we will see, the second attack was projected to the public as harm involving damage to property (as at no point was it reported that loss of American life had occurred), a Category Two harm in the hierarchy of harms. Therefore, in terms of case seriousness, the Gulf of Tonkin case is considered medium.

- **Political Context: Johnson's Policy Preferences**

This brings us to the final question of Johnson's preferences. Did this change between the two attacks? It is highly probable that the second attack represented a highly expedient development for Johnson to seize the moment to pursue the resolution, the act about which he had been equivocating for months. His longstanding preference to escalate, but hesitancy over timing, suggests that now he seized this opportunity to take executive control of matters in South Vietnam.

- **Expectations About the Use of Retributive Rhetoric**

The indicators for expecting retributive rhetoric do not align in the period following the first North Vietnamese attack, but they do after the second attack. Therefore, the characteristics of the case suggest that retributive rhetoric is expected only in the period after the second attack.

The Discourse

The second step of the model entails analysing the discourse. This is conducted in two phases, encompassing reactions to the first and second attacks. Because phases are so short, the analysis is not structured thematically (as is the case in the other case studies). The sections on the discourse are followed by analysis of public opinion, a discussion of Johnson's thoughts, perceptions, and appraisals of public opinion, and a section of final analysis.

The Aftermath of the First Attack: 2nd-3rd August

The attack against the *Maddox* occurred at 3:40am Washington time on Sunday 2nd August. Around 10:30am, the Pentagon issued a cursory statement, reporting an "unprovoked" attack, during which "no casualties or damage were sustained by *Maddox* or the aircraft."[24] Later that day, Pentagon press officers added little more detail, save that the *Maddox* did not pursue the attacking vessels "because the fleet was not at war".[25] On the same day the protest note was issued to Hanoi. It described the attack as "unprovoked" and warned of "grave consequences" should any further aggression be directed towards the U.S. Johnson's only comments on the Tonkin attack came in an impromptu press briefing at the White House at

[24] Windchy, Tonkin Gulf, 2-3.
[25] "Red PT Boats Fire at U.S. Destroyer on Vietnam Duty," *The New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1964, https://www.nytimes.com/1964/08/03/archives/red-pt-boats-fire-at-us-destroyer-on-vietnam-duty-maddox-and-four-a.html

11:30am. On McNamara's advice, Johnson simply informed reporters that he had instructed the navy to continue patrols in the area; had ordered a second destroyer to the region and for air combat patrols to cover both vessels, and had instructed the navy to "destroy" any further attacking forces.[26]

Public Opinion

The low-key portrayal of the incident appears to have been a successful public relations strategy. Public polling data does not appear to exist concerning the first attack. However, newspaper reports provide some insight. In the *New York Times,* the incident was not headline news, but a small, rather inconspicuous report. It stated, "[o]fficials here… said there was no ready explanation why the PT boats would in effect attack the powerful Seventh Fleet."[27] Joseph C. Goulden observes that by Monday afternoon, "the press and the public accepted the administration's handling of the affair." The *Washington Post* described the administration as having "responded with a reassuring blend of firmness and balance" and hoped that these events were not the "deliberate start of a campaign to tease the American navy or provoke a David-Goliath confrontation with the mighty Seventh Fleet."[28]

Johnson's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion

One of Johnson's first actions on Monday morning was to strategise with McNamara about how to present the events. This was a pressing matter, as Johnson had scheduled a briefing later that afternoon with members of the House and Senate Armed Services and Foreign

[26] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume I, Vietnam, 1964, eds. Edward C. Keefer and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1992), Document 265.
[27] Arnold H. Lubasch, "Reds Driven Off," *New York Times*, August 5 1964 1964.
[28] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 29.

Relations Committees. In a telephone conversation at 10:20am, Johnson told McNamara that the meeting was to brief the committee members on the events in the hope that this would avert an investigation. Johnson instructed McNamara to convey a specific narrative of events at the meeting, telling him, "You say: "They fired at us, we responded immediately, and we took out one of their boats and put the other two running and we're putting our boats right there and we're not running 'em".[29]

Some hours later, at 1:21pm, Johnson resumed his telephone discussion with McNamara about how to present the episode to the congressional leaders that afternoon. This time, the premeditated nature of the retaliatory plan was the focus of the conversation. McNamara tentatively broached the issue, saying, "I thought if it was agreeable with you, I would say to them that some months ago you asked us to be prepared for any eventuality in the Southeast Asia area and as a result of that we have prepared and just completed in great detail target analyses of the targets of North Vietnam. […] And I would describe this to leaders, simply indicating your desire that we be fully prepared for whatever may develop."[30]

Analysis

Johnson's public communications after the first attack confirm the expectations of the theory, in that he refrained from retributive rhetoric. First, he did not speak voluntarily about the incident, his comments came only in response to a reporter's question. The few comments he

[29] "Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara on 3rd August 1964," Conversation WH6408-03-4633, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Lyndon B. Johnson: Civil Rights, Vietnam, and the War on Poverty, ed. David G. Coleman, Kent B. Germany, Guian A. McKee, and Marc J. Selverstone] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014-). http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4002540

[30] "Lyndon Johnson and Robert McNamara on 3rd August 1964," Conversation WH6408-03-4639, *Presidential Recordings Digital Edition* [Lyndon B. Johnson: Civil Rights, Vietnam, and the War on Poverty, ed. David G. Coleman, Kent B. Germany, Guian A. McKee, and Marc J. Selverstone] (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014-). http://prde.upress.virginia.edu/conversations/4002541

made were factual and future-oriented. Glaringly absent in his public speech was any attempt to furnish a narrative — either justificatory or simply as context — for his actions in escalating the U.S. presence in the Gulf. There was little emphasis on moral outrage or emotive language that would be characteristic of a discourse projecting the logic of retribution. This was most likely due to his impression of the event as the result of localised misadventure, expecting this to be the end of the matter.

This flat public response provides a fascinating contrast to what was going on behind closed doors in the White House. Johnson's telephone calls with McNamara reveal that he was brimming with strategic calculations about how to construe justice intuitions and portray a specific narrative to the congressional committee members. In his first telephone call with McNamara, Johnson highlighted several factors with high salience to justice intuitions: it was a straightforward case of unprovoked aggression; the North Vietnamese were the aggressors, and the U.S. had responded defensively in "tit-for-tat" fashion. Presenting these factors in this way would have served to elevate the moral legitimacy of U.S. actions.

In contrast, just 35 minutes earlier, Johnson had given a very different retelling of events to Robert Anderson, demonstrating a clear understanding of the role of U.S. provocation. He told Anderson, "[t]here have been some covert operations in that area that we have been carrying on – blowing up some bridges and things of that kind, roads and so forth. So I imagine they wanted to put a stop to it […] what happened was we've been playing around up there and they came out, gave us a warning, and we knocked hell out of 'em".[31]

[31] Beschloss, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964*, 493-4.

It is clear from the outset that Johnson was under no illusions about the role of U.S. provocation. However, the narrative he had instructed McNamara to present to the members of Congress reversed the roles of provocation, incriminating the North Vietnamese. Responding to Johnson, McNamara said he thought it wise to acknowledge the role of U.S. provocation in the meeting, stating, "I think […] we should also at that time, Mr President, explain this OPLAN 34-A, these covert operations. There's no question that that had a bearing on it. On Friday night, as you probably know, we had four PT boats from Vietnam manned by Vietnamese or other nationals attack two islands… Following 24 hours after that, with this destroyer in that same area – undoubtedly led them to connect the two events."[32] McNamara's account provides an accurate *précis* not only of what happened, but *why* it happened, acknowledging the crucial role of U.S. provocation.

Johnson's motivation to hold the meeting with the congressional leaders to avert later scrutiny was presumably because he knew that if the covert operations against North Vietnam were exposed, they would be judged as provocative and therefore lessen the moral legitimacy of the U.S. case. In contrast, McNamara seemingly had no qualms about making this known at the meeting, preferring transparency, which is rather surprising, especially considering he would later audaciously deny U.S. involvement in the OPLAN raids.

Johnson and McNamara's lunchtime call that Monday shows McNamara striving to underplay the high degree of pre-planning for just such an eventuality as had occurred. He sensed it was a sensitive issue, and for good reason. Moral evaluations of future behaviour (i.e., planned) are harsher than behaviour committed in the past. This is because a higher degree of intentionality is ascribed to future behaviour, and as discussed, intent is an

[32] Ibid., 494-95.

important factor in determining punitive judgements. Research demonstrates that people allocate harsher punishment to premeditated transgressions.[33] This aspect of punitive psychology is of course reflected in the criminal law, whereby premeditated harms are judged as more morally blameworthy than spontaneous harms.

An understanding of punitive psychology provides helpful insight into the unarticulated but psychologically tangible concerns facing Johnson and McNamara when presenting their version of events to the congressional members. If, after having furnished the group with the details of OPLAN provocations, they followed immediately by presenting a fully worked-out plan for retaliation, they would risk giving the impression that the North Vietnamese attack was part of a premeditated plan. As explained, this would likely elicit negative moral evaluations in the eyes of the attendees.

Rusk and McNamara later that day had a private briefing with the Combined Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees. Although no record of this meeting exists, Rusk and McNamara's reports are supposedly almost identical to those given three days later by these men at the formal hearings on the Resolution. The secretaries' testimony at this later hearing recapitulated the battle details and expressed bafflement at the motives of the North Vietnamese and concluded that it must have been a mistaken, isolated event. Worth noting is that both secretaries, in full knowledge of the OPLAN raids, described the attack as "entirely unprovoked."[34]

[33] Zachary C. Burns, Eugene M. Caruso, and Daniel M. Bartels, "Predicting Premeditation: Future Behavior Is Seen as More Intentional Than Past Behavior," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 141, no. 2 (2012): 227.
[34] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 26-27.

Overall, the absence of retributive rhetoric in this phase is indicative of Johnson's preference to refrain from mobilising the public at that time. Although the empirical material in this phase is sparse, it is still theoretically important to consider this initial response because it illuminates the contrast between the Johnson's retributive restraint in his public communication, and his private machinations with McNamara to frame the incident to Congress in a way that is consistent with retributive rhetoric, minimising U.S. moral culpability. Although the focus of the theory is on Johnson's public rhetoric, this contrast highlights his understanding of retributive rhetoric, and the instrumentality of his rhetoric.

Analysis of the Discourse After the Second Attack: 4th-10th August

The administration's reaction to the second attack took a very different tone. Unlike the first attack, in which North Vietnamese intent was taken to be low-to-non-existent and U.S. provocation high, this time, intent appeared unmistakable. Reports of the attack arrived in Washington at 7:30am on Tuesday 4th.[35] At 12:03pm a navy Chief of Information and a Pentagon Chief Press Officer held a press conference in which the second attack was not mentioned. This was due to a policy of official secrecy about the second attack that was in place from 9:20am until 6pm, when the Defense Department issued another statement.[36]

At 11:37pm, Johnson broadcast his live television and radio address, the timing having been delayed to allow suitable lead-time for the bombers to make headway. Johnson's speech exemplifies the themes of retribution, reading like a rollcall of just deserts principles. He described the second attack as "renewed hostile actions", implying both intent and

[35] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume I, Vietnam, 1964, eds. Edward C. Keefer and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1992), Document 280.
[36] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 34.

aggression. Despite the Maddox having been in North Vietnamese waters when the attack began, he said it had occurred "on the high seas". Intent was again accentuated by Johnson's description of the attack as "repeated acts of violence", and linked this immediately to the need for a retributive response, stating it "must be met not only with alert defence, but with positive reply". Tellingly, Johnson described the attack as an "outrage". Finally, he emphasised proportionality, stating, "our response, for the present, will be limited and fitting… firmness will always be measured." In framing the events in terms of his "duty" and that he was undertaking "required" action,[37] Johnson framed his response as called being called forth by the moral imperatives of retribution.

Two minutes after midnight, McNamara appeared on television from the Pentagon, providing additional details about the North Vietnamese attacks and the reprisal bombing. In speaking of the new military reinforcements to the area, he too stressed the proportionality of the response, describing the reinforcements ordered to the Pacific as "appropriate to the provocation". In exchanges with reporters afterwards, McNamara continued the strategy of denying U.S. provocation. Asked if he had any idea why the North Vietnamese might have attacked, he replied categorically: "None".[38]

Later that day, Johnson made a speech at Syracuse University in which he provided a justification for Pierce Arrow. Once more, some major tenets of just deserts reasoning were recapitulated. After confirming that both attacks had occurred, he stated: "The attacks were deliberate. The attacks were unprovoked. The attacks have been answered." He also described North Vietnamese actions as "[a]ggression – deliberate, wilful, and systematic

[37] Miller Centre, "August 4, 1964: Report on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident," *Miller Centre, University of Virginia*, 2021, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-4-1964-report-gulf-tonkin-incident.
[38] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 39-40.

aggression" which had "unmasked its face to the entire world". Johnson framed the episode in terms of violating international contracts – recalling the 1952 Manila Pact in which the U.S. signed up to SEATO (entailing the commitment to protect South Vietnam), calling it "that solemn agreement". He then mentioned the 1962 Declaration of Neutrality of Laos. He told his audience, "[t]hat government of North Vietnam is now wilfully and systematically violating those agreements of 1954 and 1962" and warned, "there can be no immunity from reply. That is what we meant by the actions that we took yesterday". Interestingly, he made an analogy to the events of Munich in 1938, stating, "[t]he world remembers – the world must never forget – that aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed."[39]

On 10th August Johnson returned to the nation's television screens to sign the Resolution. From the East Room, he reminded Americans of the "deliberate and unprovoked acts of aggression" that had precipitated the Resolution, concluding that "it is everlastingly right that we should be resolute in reply to aggression… But it is everlastingly necessary that our actions should be careful and should be measured."[40]

Public Opinion

The administration's handling of the crisis garnered high levels of public support. A Harris poll showed that 85 percent of the nation approved of Pierce Arrow. Peter Grose of the *New York Times* reported that "America's retaliatory air strikes were heralded here with an enthusiasm bordering, in some quarters, on the delirious".[41] On 10th August, pollster Louis

[39] Miller Centre, "August 5, 1964: Remarks on Vietnam at Syracuse University," *Miller Centre, University of Virginia*, 2021, https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/august-5-1964-remarks-vietnam-syracuse-university
[40] Quoted in Anthony Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971), 105.
[41] Windchy, *Tonkin Gulf*, 29.

Harris wrote in the *Washington Post*, "[i]n a single stroke, Mr Johnson has, at least temporarily, turned his greatest political vulnerability in foreign policy into one of his strongest assets." In the immediate aftermath of Tonkin, Johnson enjoyed 72 percent approval. This was a remarkable turnaround, if we recall that just the previous month, 58 percent of the public was critical of Johnson's handling of Vietnam. As Goulden observes, "[n]ow, the sentiment was two to one for taking the war to the North." The crisis also boosted Johnson's election prospects. Prior to the attacks, 59 percent had felt that Johnson was more competent at handling the war than his arch-rival, Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. After the crisis, this jumped to 71 percent, compared to 29 percent favouring Goldwater."[42]

The press response was also laudatory. Edwin Moise observes that "[n]obody in the mainstream press appeared to have the slightest doubt about the competence *or the moral correctness* of any action the U.S. military had taken in the Gulf of Tonkin."[43] The *Washington Post* ran the headline "American Planes Hit North Vietnam after 2d Attack on our Destroyers; Move Taken to Halt New Aggression". An accompanying article ran the title, "Firm Stand is Warning to Hanoi".[44] The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the response was "fitting in selectivity, proper in application". Even Walter Lippman, who would later become one of the fiercest critics of the war, approved, writing on 6th August, "the more firmly the fact is established that our presence in South-east Asia is primarily as a sea and air power, the safer it will be to enter the negotiations which is the only alternative to an endless and indecisive war in the jungle". [45]

[42] Quoted in Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 77.
[43] Moïse, *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War*, (emphasis added), 479.
[44] Hallin, *The "Uncensored War" : The Media and Vietnam*, 15.
[45] Quoted in Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 77.

Johnson's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion

Johnson engaged in a series of high-level meetings throughout the 4th. A previously scheduled NSC meeting took place at 11:45am, after which Johnson took lunch with Rusk, McGeorge Bundy and McNamara. It was at this lunch meeting that the decision to launch a reprisal attack was taken. Goulden notes that "Johnson's decision on what should be done was understood; what he wanted now was guidance on the mode and severity of the *punishment*." After a run-through of alternatives, by 1:30pm Johnson had decided to use American planes and to attack sites associated with the PT boats.[46] In Johnson's defence, it is worth noting that the decision was taken before the battle report from the *Maddox* expressing doubts had been received, and Johnson had requested more information before the raids were to be launched.

Further insight into Johnson's understanding of the crisis, and the dynamics of projecting a coherent message was displayed in a telephone call between Johnson and McNamara on 8th August. Here, McNamara explicitly urges Johnson to lie about the covert OPLAN operations:

RM: I do think if you have a press conference today you're going to get questions on the claim of the North Vietnamese that their strike on the 2nd against the Maddox was retaliation for the U.S. participation in the strike of July 30th and 31st against those islands… this is a very delicate subject…

LBJ: What's the net of it?

[46] Ibid., 149 [emphasis added].

RM: The net of it is you state categorically that U.S. forces did not participate in, were not associated with any alleged incident of that kind…

LBJ: Is this an outgrowth of John's briefing? [McCone, briefing of congressional leaders.]

Mc: It's the outgrowth of a lot of conversation… in the press and I think it's one that you have to disassociate yourself from and certainly not admit that any such incident took place. But neither should you get in a position of denying it. Because the North Vietnamese have asked the ICC to come in there and examine the site and it would be very unfortunate if they developed proof that you in effect had misstated the case.

LBJ: Did the South Vietnamese launch an attack that period?

RM: On the night of the 30th and continuing into the morning of the 31st, the South Vietnamese ran one of these patrol boat raids against these two NV islands. Part of that covert operational plan.[47]

This is a remarkable conversation, illuminating a high degree of performative coherence being engineered, this time on McNamara's initiative.

Analysis

Johnson's address to the nation was full of references likely to resonate with justice intuitions. The issue of North Vietnamese intent was central to his justification. His references to the fact that the actions were a second occurrence, "renewed hostile actions"

[47] Beschloss, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964*, 509.

and “repeated acts of violence” emphasised malign intent by reference to the apparent deliberateness of the action. The first attack, which had been dismissed as misadventure, now stood as evidence of this intent – a mistake surely would not happen a second time. Johnson’s statement that events occurred “on the high seas” is relevant to provocation, as it underscores the innocence of the U.S. In so doing, the U.S. was portrayed as acting in self-defence, a more morally acceptable position than striking first.

Johnson’s speech at Syracuse University again displayed retributive themes. His three short sentences from this address, also quoted at the beginning of this chapter, read like a précis of the causal chain of retributive reasoning: “The attacks were deliberate. The attacks were unprovoked. The attacks have been answered.” These lines speak of an assessment of the enemy’s moral culpability: intent; lack of provocation; and finally, the retributive response. Interestingly, Johnson also invoked Category Three harms in citing North Vietnam’s violations of the Manila Pact and the Declaration of Neutrality of Laos. Additionally, Johnson’s analogy to Nazi appeasement was a striking move. This tactic served as shorthand, constructing the North Vietnamese as an enemy brimming with potentiality to become a foe of comparable evil to Hitler’s regime.

It is highly likely that the high public support for Johnson’s actions was aided to a high degree by his employment of a performative discourse invoking just deserts principles. Despite his reluctance to address the situation in Vietnam prior to the election, the episode actually worked in his favour, as he gained moral credibility by taking this firm stand. The Pierce Arrow bombings appeared appropriate because this ‘punishment’ accorded with citizens’ justice intuitions that Johnson had skilfully engaged. Johnson was viewed as ‘doing

justice' to an errant, hostile state which (by official accounts) had committed a prototypical harm against the U.S.

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF THE MOBILISATION DISCOURSE

The period after the first North Vietnamese attack saw Johnson essentially 'brush off' the event, refraining from making a dedicated speech about the matter and responding to a reporter's question with a factual, future-oriented reply. Retributive rhetoric was completely absent. This corresponds to the expectations of the theory, which predicts that Johnson would not use retributive rhetoric at this point because several conditions were insufficient. Although there was public reticence about the strategic incentives of intervention, Johnson's preference for intervention was ambivalent due to domestic political reasons, and the moral severity of the harm was Category Three, making it less likely that retributive rhetoric would be attempted. It would have been difficult for Johnson to inflate the provocation as an event worthy of justifying the resolution. Also, as mentioned, Johnson knew of the provocative U.S. actions in the Gulf, no doubt mitigating his private judgements of North Vietnamese moral culpability. Although the necessary condition of public uncertainty was in place, the other conditions were not.

Thus, we can see that retributive psychology provides fresh insights on the period, helping explain why the administration did not seize the opportunity to strike after the first attack. The situation's characteristics could not plausibly be made salient to justice intuitions and could not be construed as a more serious offence. The role of intent is key to understanding why. Judgments of a perpetrator's intent are the most influential factors dictating blameworthiness of an action, and in this case, Johnson judged that intent was

lacking. He concluded that the attack was committed in error, the result of a localised decision disconnected from the political leadership in Hanoi. The first attack furnished an insufficient basis for a retributive response, entailing that the resolution and Pierce Arrow were not at that time politically viable. Historian Fredrik Logevall concurs that fears of perceptions of moral illegitimacy prevented the administration from acting after the first attack (although he focuses on international opinion), writing, "the decision to delay [implementing the pre-planned intervention policy] was based not on assessments of the military situation on the ground but on concerns that critical constituencies around the world would not support such action."[48]

The period after the second attack saw Johnson embark upon a retributive discourse. In both his national address and his speech at Syracuse, he emphasised the enemy's intent, lack of provocation, and the innocence of the U.S. Notably, he invoked an analogy to Nazi appeasement. Again, this behaviour conforms to the expectations of the theory. Public reticence about the strategic incentives of intervening in Vietnam was still present, as it is reasonable to assume that this would have altered in the two days since the first, inconsequential incident in the Gulf. Now, however, the new trigger event altered the moral calculus. Whereas previously, North Vietnamese intent was judged to be absent, suddenly this seemed mistaken, and the enemy's hostile intent seemed unequivocally clear.

Additionally, the moral severity of the harm deepened to Category Two, relevant to harm to property, with reports of the vessels being attacked by torpedoes. As Stavens, Barnet and Raskin comment, "[t]he death of Americans, the sinking of a U.S. ship on the high seas,

[48] Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999), 152.

was dramatic, shocking and unique. It was the stuff of headlines." These authors conclude that the Tonkin events "could tap the romantic impulse of the American public and drum up sufficient support for a wider war. In 1964 the problem was how to widen the war in a legitimate way. Tonkin furnished the answer: it was provocation."[49] While these authors clearly understand the psychological logic at play, it was not a "romantic" impulse, but a moral-intuitive one. It is curious that these authors relay events that did not actually happen, but rather, events that could have plausibly resulted from the attack, presumably reflecting how they imagine public perceptions to have operated. As it was, the moral gravity of the situation escalated to a Category Two harm, which is exactly when we expect retributive rhetoric to be more likely, and this is what occurred.

But did Johnson's preference for intervention really change between the two attacks, and if so, why? A more accurate reflection of events might be that rather than intervention being a 'preference' of Johnson's, his hand may well have been forced due to reputational concerns. Johnson knew that his political adversaries would waste no time in dramatizing the episode to their advantage. Pressure to take a hard line on communism had been continuously exerted by his rival, Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Johnson confirmed he felt this pressure, saying in a telephone call with McNamara after the first attack that, "[t]he people … want to be damned sure I don't pull 'em out and run … that's what all the country wants because Goldwater is raising so much hell about how he's gonna blow 'em off the moon."[50] References to his Republican critics' potential criticisms for not taking firm action on Vietnam permeated Johnson's telephone calls throughout the first half of 1964.

[49] Stavins, Barnet, and Raskin, *Washington Plans an Aggressive War*, 98.
[50] Beschloss, *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964*, 495; ibid.

Against this background, As Michael Beschloss notes, "while McNamara was assessing ambiguous evidence about whether the North Vietnamese had attacked an American ship, a press leak spurred LBJ to bomb North Vietnam in order to avoid election year charges that he was being too soft."[51] With knowledge of the second attack in the public domain, retributive psychology suggests that this would have been interpreted and implicitly understood by the public and Johnson's political rivals in a predictable way: as an indicator of enemy intent. Pressure from Goldwater formed an imperative for Johnson to respond so as not to deliver his rival ammunition to be used against him in the presidential campaign. Long before the August incidents, Johnson had been concerned about inaction in Vietnam reflecting negatively on perceptions of his personal competency. In a telephone call with Senator Richard Russell in May 1964, he expressed his belief that the American public desired a firm stand in Vietnam, saying, "they'd impeach a president they thought would run out, wouldn't they?" In reply, Russell confirmed how lay intuitions of justice shape political action, saying, "[i]t would be consistent with the attitude of the American people and their general reactions to go in, because they could understand that better."[52]

While Johnson's hand may have been forced to act, the second attack undoubtedly represented an expedient opportunity for Johnson to pursue the Resolution at that point. Resigned to the inevitability of military intervention, and hearing of the worsening fortunes of the South Vietnam government on an almost daily basis, Johnson may have simply decided to seize the moment. McNamara suggests as much in his autobiography, writing, "[t]he president may also have been influenced by what he saw as an opportunity to tie the Resolution to a hostile action by Hanoi."[53] Once again, this underscores the psychological

[51] Ibid., 37.
[52] Ibid., 370.
[53] McNamara and VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 326.

importance of provocations. The second attack was the pivotal point at which a shift to retributive rhetoric occurred, prompted by the sudden and dramatic elevation of case seriousness. Now, the events contained raw material that could be constructed in a manner salient to justice intuitions.

McNamara writes that "[w]hile we had not accepted Max Taylor's view that the August 2nd [attack] required retaliation, a second, and in our minds, unprovoked attack against U.S. vessels operating in international waters surely did."[54] McNamara does not explain why he expects the reader to understand this, demonstrating the implicitness of retributive sentiment.

The case provides an interesting contrast between Johnson's public communications and his private political calculations and strategizing, revealed primarily through his telephone conversations. This contrast is especially stark in the first period, in which his public communication was sparse and restrained, yet 'behind the scenes' he was strategizing with McNamara about how to performatively frame the situation to members of Congress in a manner favourable to judgements of moral culpability. Overall, Johnson appears to have successfully led public opinion throughout the crisis. His adept performance of the idiom of retribution paid off handsomely; in the aftermath of the bombings, and with the resolution in hand, he had never been so popular.

Overall, the case demonstrates the importance of justice intuitions about provocations, and how they justify military intervention. This is perhaps best illustrated by posing a counterfactual: absent the Tonkin attack(s), would Johnson have gained support for the resolution? McNamara answers exactly this question in his autobiography. He answers:

[54] Ibid., 310.

"Almost certainly a resolution would have been submitted if the action in the Tonkin Gulf had not occurred." Asked whether it would have passed without the Tonkin incident he replied: "very likely it would have passed. But the resolution would have faced far more extensive debate, and there would have been attempts to limit the president's authority."[55]

A Paradigm Case of Emotional Mobilisation

This case is a paradigm example of retributive rhetoric; "official emotion" was projected by Johnson (and his officials) in a purposeful manner to mobilise support for a pre-planned policy. The events of Tonkin provided the administration with an opportunity to construct the events into an international crisis in which retributive logic was used strategically. The administration's task was to persuade audiences that the resolution should be granted and bombing was an appropriate response. To accomplish this, Johnson needed grounds which would appear morally legitimate. To this end, aspects of the case salient to retributive psychology were accentuated strategically.

The official discourse justifying Pierce Arrow consisted of a narrative in which intent and provocation played key roles. The proportionality of the U.S. response was also emphasised. Johnson's discourse focused solely on the North Vietnamese acts – portraying the U.S. as an innocent party and the North Vietnamese as aggressors, constructions entirely consistent with the logic of just deserts. Included in the discourse were at least three blatant untruths: that the U.S. had played no role in provoking North Vietnam through the OPLAN attacks; that the *Maddox* was on routine patrols in the Gulf; and that the second attack was verified. The official version of events became an obfuscatory narrative which, because of shared intuitions of justice, made sense to the domestic audience and provided a legitimate

[55] Ibid., 302.

justification for Pierce Arrow and future military action under the resolution. Unlike genuine retributive motives, which are an 'end unto themselves' Johnson's strategic projection of retributive principles was purposive and instrumental. Michael Delli Carpini writes that Johnson's securing of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was "perhaps the best example of how presidential news management can shape public policy".[56]

How Performative was the Discourse?

It is useful to investigate the extent of the performativity. This helps provide context to the president's actions by illuminating the level of deception and instrumentality of the discourse. In addition to its historical significance, the answer to this question is important for the theory of retributive rhetoric. With the benefit of hindsight, we now understand the crucial role that the second purported attack played in bringing America into this most devastating of wars. Some commentators have made the strong allegation that the case made in August 1964 reposed upon a foundation of lies.[57] Given the profound consequences of these events, it is helpful to understand which officials were aware of the full extent of U.S. provocation occurring with the OPLAN raids, who knew of the spuriousness of the second attack, and whether North Vietnam was deliberately provoked.

- **Who Knew of the Second, Provocative OPLAN Raid?**

[56] Michael X. Delli Carpini, "Vietnam and the Press," in *The Legacy: The Vietnam War in the American Imagination*, ed. D. Michael Shafer (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 136.
[57] For example, see Eric Alterman, *When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and Its Consequences* (New York and London: Viking, 2004); Hannah Arendt, *Crises of the Republic* (San Diego and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1972); David Wise, *The Politics of Lying: Government Deception, Secrecy, and Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

The evidence suggests that key civilian elites were unaware of the second OPLAN raid on the night of 3rd/ 4th August. According to Joseph Goulden, news of this operation did not arrive in Washington until sometime after Thursday 6th August.[58] This means that Johnson's decision to launch Pierce Arrow on Tuesday 4th was taken under the impression that the U.S. had *not* engaged in any further provocation subsequent to the OPLAN raid on the night of 30th/31st July. As Goulden explains, Johnson's decision to bomb the North on the basis of its hostile actions was taken "without knowledge that an event which had earlier stirred the wrath of the North Vietnamese had been repeated. Further, the [North Vietnamese] attacks came within a day of Washington's stern warning of the consequences Hanoi would suffer if anything further were done to American warships".[59]

McNamara testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1968 on the Tonkin episode. If he can be believed, he too did not know. When recalling these events, he stated, "at the time of the specific incidents of August 4th, I did not know of the attack of August 3rd by the South Vietnamese, but we knew of the operations, and some senior commanders above the level of commanders of the task force did know the specific dates of the operation".[60] Taking him at his word, in his in-depth study of the episode, historian Anthony Austin takes a charitable view, writing, "[i]f McNamara did not know, it follows that the White House did not know either [...] A McNamara or Bundy would not be able to keep track of all the dates of all the covert missions underway during any particular time period."[61] This evidence can be triangulated with the telephone call quoted previously between Johnson and McNamara, in which Johnson asks McNamara if the U.S. had been

[58] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 139.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*, 310.

provoking North Vietnam. This call took place on 8th August, four days after Pierce Arrow and one day after the passing of the resolution. McNamara spoke only of the first OPLAN raid, suggesting that he truly may not have been aware of the second raid.

- **Who Knew that the Second North Vietnamese Attack was Spurious?**

Some sources allege that Johnson only became aware of the falsity of the second attack approximately three days after the Resolution was passed,[62] which is when, according to George Ball, he admitted, "hell, those sailors were shooting at flying fish."[63] Austin supports the position, writing that the administration "did not decide to retaliate knowing there was no attack […] they believed there probably was an attack, though they could not have been positive, and if there was deception of Congress and the public as to the certainty of an attack as there was, it began with their deception of themselves."[64] Similarly, Logevall concludes that "there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the whole affair, from beginning to end, was staged for the purpose of justifying an American retaliation. But there is compelling circumstantial evidence that, at the very least, government officials entered the month of August desperately hoping for a pretext that would allow a show of U.S. strength and determination."[65] Yet Logevall's analysis overlooks a strong argument indicating that the administration did *not* contrive the entire episode, which is that the timing really did not suit Johnson's political agenda. He had previously deferred pursuing the Resolution and his

[62] Eric Alterman, "Republic Opinion," *Nation* 269, no. 5 (1999), https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2713/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nih&AN=2101474&site=ehost-live. Also see Galeotti, *Political Self-Deception*, 168.
[63] George W. Ball, *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs* (New York and London: Norton, 1982), 379.
[64] Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*, 309.
[65] Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, 202-03.

overall priority was to refrain from controversial foreign policy actions until after the November election.

This matter can be illuminated to a degree by tracing how the information incoming from the *Maddox* was received, and by whom. At 1:27pm the first of several cables from Commander of the *Maddox*, Captain John Herrick arrived. Alerting Washington to doubts about the veracity of the second attack, he stated, "[r]eview of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects on radar and overeager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No actual visual sightings by *Maddox*. Suggest complete evaluation before any further action taken." A second message from Herrick arrived half an hour later, reporting, "[e]ntire action leaves many doubts except for apparent attempted ambush at beginning. Suggest thorough reconnaissance in daylight by aircraft." He cabled twice more, at 3pm and 6pm, both messages reiterating a confusing story seemingly confirming that the "original ambush" had occurred, but seemingly all else hung in doubt.[66]

Herrick's first cable was taken to McNamara, who called Commander in Chief of Pacific Command, Admiral Grant Sharp Jr, saying, "[w]e obviously don't want to carry out the retaliatory strike unless we are damned sure what happened." He went on to caution against action until "any doubts as to what went on are eliminated, at least to the point of justifying retaliation". At 2:45pm, Sharp reported to McNamara that Herrick and Commander of the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific, Admiral Johnson, were now convinced of the reality of the attack.[67] At 4:47pm, McNamara, Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance, and

[66] Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* (New York and London: Penguin, 2003), 9-10.
[67] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 153.

the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) met to evaluate the evidence of the attack. Despite Herrick's reports, they concluded it had occurred, largely based on observational reports and Sharp's "determination that there was indeed an attack".[68]

Later that evening, the decision to bomb North Vietnam was confirmed at a second NSC meeting around 6pm. Two hours later, another cable arrived from Herrick. This time, his statement was more definitive: "*Maddox* scored no hits and never positively identified a boat… All subsequent *Maddox* torpedo reports were doubtful in that it is supposed that sonarman was hearing ship's own propeller beat."[69] Thus, with the president's national address scheduled in approximately three and a half hours, this message made no difference to the administration's plans.

Goulden identifies the military personnel who could have known about the doubtful nature of the second attack as Admiral Sharp, Admiral Moorer (CINCPAC of the Pacific Fleet), and Admiral Johnson.[70] In his autobiographical account of Tonkin, President Johnson places Sharp's confirmation as central to the affair, writing that when reports doubting the veracity of the attack started arriving in Washington, he instructed McNamara to investigate. McNamara "immediately got in touch with Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, Jr., […] Admiral Sharp called McNamara to report that after checking all the reports and evidence, he had no doubt whatsoever that an attack had taken place."[71] If Admiral Sharp had known, then his unfounded confirmation to McNamara incriminates him as a key figure in promulgating the

[68] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume I, Vietnam, 1964, eds. Edward C. Keefer and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1992), Document 276.
[69] Quoted in Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 156.
[70] Ibid., 140.
[71] Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency*, 1963-1969, 115.

misinformation that culminated in Pierce Arrow. Indeed, Austin believes that Sharp's confirmation of the attack to McNamara "clinched the decision to retaliate."[72]

Was Hanoi Deliberately Provoked?

A related but separate question to the issue of who knew about the extent of U.S. provocation is the question of whether Johnson and his advisors deliberately engineered the Tonkin incident in order to use it as a pretext for passing the Resolution, or simply made strategic use of it when it arose. It is an intriguing question because, as with the issue of whether officials knew about the subsequent OPLAN raid, the answer reveals much about the extent of deception undertaken by administration spokespersons. What *can* be said with certainty is that obtaining a congressional resolution was a clear objective from early 1964 onwards, which itself was a step towards the ultimate objective of widening U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. The fact that the raids were taking place while this planning for wider involvement was ongoing arouses suspicions that the two activities were connected.

Further reason to suspect deliberate planning of the Tonkin conflict is provided by the premeditated nature of the bombing. As former *New York Times* journalist Neil Sheehan writes, "[a]lthough a firm decision to begin sustained bombing of North Vietnam was not made until months later, the administration was able to order retaliatory air strikes on less than six hours' notice during the Tonkin incident only because planning had progressed so far that a list of targets was available for immediate choice."[73] Indeed, a draft Presidential

[72] Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*, 342.
[73] Sheehan, *The Pentagon Papers as Published by the New York Times*, 235.

Memorandum was prepared on 23rd May, provisioning for a thirty-day schedule of military operations for which it was proposed that Congress would be asked to pass a resolution.[74]

What can also be said with certainty is that the U.S. was acting as a provocateur in the Gulf.[75] The OPLAN raids and the presence of the destroyers in the area entailed a high likelihood of provoking countermeasures by the North Vietnamese. As Stanley Karnow observes, "[t]he two destroyers would stage direct daylight runs to within eight miles of North Vietnam's coast and four miles off its islands, as if defying the Communists to "play chicken.". […] the *Maddox* and the *Turner Joy* were effectively being used to bait the Communists."[76] This combination of pre-planning and provocation provides compelling grounds on which to suspect that the U.S. was covertly trying to provoke Hanoi. This interpretation of events was lent credibility by the words of former Undersecretary of State George Ball, who in a 1977 BBC Radio interview stated, "Many of the people who were associated with the war … were looking for any excuse to initiate bombing … The Desoto patrol was primarily for provocation … There was a feeling that if the destroyer got into some trouble, that would provide the provocation we needed.[77]

A final piece of evidence suggesting a plan of sustained provocation comes from an incident which occurred the following month. Just two days prior to the election, Vietcong mortars were fired on a South Vietnamese air base, destroying six B-27 bombers and killing five Americans. This time, real damage and casualties were incurred, an event far more serious than the skirmish(es) in the Gulf of Tonkin. Yet Johnson chose not to respond. The

[74] Galeotti, *Political Self-Deception*, 164.
[75] For example, Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*; Stavins, Barnet, and Raskin, *Washington Plans an Aggressive War*; Windchy, *Tonkin Gulf*.
[76] Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, 384.
[77] Quoted in McNamara and VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 327.

disparity between the two responses is highly suggestive that the Tonkin attacks were used strategically, and not a genuinely outraged foreign policy response.

On the other hand, we must also consider evidence suggesting that the U.S. was not engaged in a strategy of provocation. As discussed, Johnson's political prerogatives were to 'play things safe' before the election by avoiding "dramatic new measures at home or abroad."[78] When the Tonkin episode came under scrutiny in the 1968 Senate hearings, McNamara continued to deny that the *Maddox* was engaged in espionage, stating that radio eavesdropping on North Vietnam was the only monitoring undertaken, and this was a routine reconnaissance activity to be able to react to potential attacks. In his autobiography, he answers the question of whether there was deliberate provocation of the North Vietnamese with a categorical "[n]one at all."[79] In the same radio programme that had hosted Ball, foreign affairs advisor William Bundy said that the clash with Hanoi "didn't fit in with our plans at all… We didn't think the situation had deteriorated to a point where we had to consider stronger action on the way things lay in South Vietnam."[80]

Now, contrast Bundy's words above with the following report from a White House meeting which took place on Wednesday 5th August. Bundy and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and newly Ambassador to South Vietnam, Maxwell Taylor, debated the issue of North Vietnamese intention and U.S. provocation:

> Bundy began by saying that it is difficult to understand the DRV motives in attacking U.S. warships. He said there obviously was some relation between the

[78] Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, 194.
[79] McNamara and VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 301.
[80] Ibid., 327.

> recent covert attacks on DRV maritime bases, but how much was not clear. Further, he recognised the DRV might have feared stepped-up U.S. actions against them and decided to act. Later in the meeting I came back to the point of DRV intentions by asking what steps we were taking to find out what Hanoi was thinking. […] For his own part, *he welcomed the recent events as justification for a resolution the administration had wanted for some time*.[81]

Clearly, almost sixty years on, the evidence paints a conflicting picture and the possibility of finding a definitive answer is frustratingly difficult. If a plan of provocation were in place, then this was perhaps indicative of a mobilisation strategy for wider escalation. Reflecting on the evidence, it seems that this may have been the case, even though Johnson and McNamara may not have planned for events to escalate when they did, and also may not have known the full details of U.S. provocation in precipitating the crisis.

The evidence suggesting that these primary figures did not appear to be aware of the second U.S. raid on the North Vietnamese island, or that the second North Vietnamese attack on U.S. vessels on 4th suggests that Johnson and his aides were engaged in a "surface" level of emotional diplomacy. It seems they were not intentionally deceiving the public about these issues. Even so, they *did* know that the programme of aggressive and provocative raids had been in operation in the Gulf of Tonkin since February, *and* that the *Maddox* was engaged in espionage. Knowledge of these covert operations would certainly have mitigated their private judgements of North Vietnamese moral culpability. This need not imply genuine guilty consciences, although they may well have experienced something like it. Either way, fear of

[81] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1964-1968, Volume I, Vietnam, 1964, eds. Edward C. Keefer and Charles S. Sampson (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1992), Document 290 [emphasis added].

the political consequences should these deceptions be later exposed would have had a similar restraining effect.

Yet Johnson and McNamara made sure to frame events to conceal these aspects of U.S. behaviour. Whether events were contrived or not, an official discourse rich in language likely to activate intuitions of justice was utilised to justify the need for bombing North Vietnam and for Congress to grant Johnson broad, unilateral powers to escalate. The success of the resolution and the surge in his popularity are evidence of how justice intuitions structured presidential behaviour and mass attitudes.

The Substantive Behaviour: Operation Pierce Arrow

Traditional approaches in International Relations might interpret Pierce Arrow as an attempt to coerce Hanoi by manipulating the costs and benefits of continuing the campaign to overthrow the South Vietnamese government.[82] Through the lens of coercion, the rationale for airstrikes against the North would presumably rest on deterrence.[83] Yet the idea that striking the North could benefit the situation in the South has several challenges. The North, although aiding the Vietcong, was not in fact assisting their cause significantly; the movement was mainly peopled by Southerners who were hostile to both Premier Diem and the U.S."[84] The flaws in the strategic rationale for bombing the North were pointed out by Senator Wayne Morse on the second day of the Senate debate. Morse stated, "[a]fter the second attack, we should have immediately laid our case before the Security Council. Bombing those sites was not necessary for self-defence at that point. The United States was

[82] Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, 4.
[83] Galeotti, *Political Self-Deception*, 159.
[84] Ibid., 158-59.

guilty of an act of aggression.[85] In short, as a strategic action, both in terms of Vietnam's dubious strategic value to the U.S. and the specific strategic logic of the Pierce Arrow attack, the bombing appears a somewhat incongruous action when viewed through a rational, strategic lens.

Yet viewed through the lens of retributive psychology, the rationale for the operation makes more sense. Having framed the second attack in a way that activated justice intuitions, it is plausible that the bombing was ordered - in addition to any practical deterrent effects - to satisfy the retributive impulse stoked by the administration's retributive rhetoric. While the raid underscored and announced an increased commitment to South Vietnam,[86] its objectives may have been psychologically deeper. Evidence for the communicative, expressive dimension of the bombing is found in the fact that Johnson desired the raids take place before sundown so there could be no mistaking, on the part of the North Vietnamese, that bombing was a reprisal for the second North Vietnamese attack.[87] McNamara cemented this, saying "the strikes must be accomplished promptly for a fast response is part of the lesson to be driven home."[88]

Further evidence of the symbolic, rather than practical, nature of Pierce Arrow is found in the target selection. The choice to strike the PT boat bases had a highly expressive element to it, further connecting the 'punishment' to the 'crime'. Targeting areas in which the supposed culprits were based underscored the rationale for the bombing as retaliation. In the Senate hearing on Thursday 6th August, Senator Stuart Symington asked McNamara why "you didn't

[85] Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*, 96-97.
[86] Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, 205.
[87] Goulden, *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality*, 149.
[88] In Ball, "Revisiting the Gulf of Tonkin Crisis: An Analysis of the Private Communication of President Johnson and His Advisers," 288.

go for more of their petroleum?" McNamara replied, "[t]heir other petroleum depots weren't associated with the patrol boats and therefore weren't relevant targets."[89]

This communicative aspect of the timing and target selection corresponds to Gollwitzer and colleagues' "understanding hypothesis" of punishment, in which a victim's comprehension of why they are being punished is found to be integral in making punishment satisfying to the punisher. Likewise, the operation conforms to the philosophical theory of expressive punishment. As the Pentagon Papers record, "[t]he net effect of the swift U.S. reprisals and the congressional resolution was to dramatically demonstrate, publicly state and formally record the commitments to South Vietnam and within Southeast Asia that had been made internal US policy." […] They were also conceived and intended as a clear communication to Hanoi of what it could expect if it continued to pursue its current course of action. They were portents of the future designed to demonstrate the firmness of US resolve and the direction its policy was tending."[90]

Another manifestation of retributive justice intuitions structuring this foreign policy response is the proportionality of the response. Pierce Arrow was a one-off reprisal, reflecting the limited nature of the North Vietnamese attacks. Thus, the response matched the severity of the offence and the moral blameworthiness of the offender. As we recall, Johnson stated in his national address, the bombing was "limited and fitting".

The media reportage largely parroting the government's rendition of the second North Vietnamese attack helped legitimise the events. As Michael Delli Carpini notes, "real or not,

[89] Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*, 77.
[90] "The Senator Gravel Edition: The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam [Volume Iii]," (1971).

when heavily reported in the media, it became the public rationale for retaliation and increased U.S. involvement in Vietnam – a policy change decided upon before the Gulf of Tonkin incident."[91] With this positive media coverage, it is hardly surprising that, as the Pentagon Papers record, Pierce Arrow "was accomplished with virtually no domestic criticism… The precedent for strikes against the North was thus established and at very little apparent cost."[92]

The positive public reception of the Pierce Arrow bombing is also illuminated by the retributive lens. It is reasonable to assume that mass attitudes reflected the punitive "tit-for-tat" heuristic response expressed by Captain Herrick: "We were happy to see 'em get spanked. It was sort of like the old days. When someone hits you, you hit them right back."[93] Johnson constructed the episode using the idiom of retribution into a simple situation of an offence requiring a retributive response. When this was delivered, the public applauded. Thus, the bombing served the dual purposes of securing his power to escalate U.S. involvement in Vietnam at a time of his choosing (i.e., after the election), while simultaneously appearing 'tough' against communism, thus silencing his domestic critics. Yet despite the positive rally effect in the short term, the bombing did little to bolster morale in South Vietnam or strengthen the government.[94]

[91] Delli Carpini, "Vietnam and the Press," 137.
[92] "The Senator Gravel Edition: The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam [Volume Iii]."
[93] Quoted in Austin, *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam*, 317.
[94] Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*, 213.

Years later, in his autobiography, McNamara remained opaque about the justification for Pierce Arrow. He was asked the question: "Was the strike justified?" His reply? "Probably."[95]

CONCLUSION

The Tonkin episode demonstrates how presidents can construct international crises by making retributive concepts salient in the minds of audiences. In this case, Johnson expertly engaged in a highly performative discourse of retributive rhetoric to achieve a pre-existing political objective. Skilful use of the retributive idiom enabled the administration to deepen its commitment to Vietnam without arousing moral or political opposition. Support was mobilised by activating justice intuitions, particularly the themes of just deserts: moral outrage, the emphasis on intent and the unprovoked nature of the North Vietnamese attacks. The result was an almost unanimous congressional vote passing the Resolution, broad media endorsement of the administration's handling of the affair, a surge in public support for Johnson, and a bombing operation. The case highlights the powerful capacity of retributive discourse to mobilise not only support for a president's decisions, but in generating the temporary rally effect of national unity. Intuitions of justice structured the interpretation and dramatization of events and shed light on aspects of the case that other theories cannot provide.

The Pierce Arrow bombing operation functioned primarily as an expressive tool. First, it signalled to Hanoi that America's support of the southern regime now extended to the use of force. Second, it allowed Johnson to appear to his critics as though he were taking a tough

[95] McNamara and VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 301.

stand against communism, thus quelling his critics. Despite the short-term domestic success of Johnson's actions, the bombing did little to achieve its stated objectives of bolstering morale in South Vietnam or strengthening Khanh's government. Furthermore, perceptions of his deceptive behaviour damaged public trust in the nation's democratic institutions, giving rise to the so-called 'credibility gap'.

An important insight gleaned from this case is that presidents who are skilled in retributive rhetoric can construct events to their advantage through the use of retributive concepts. Johnson did this by capitalising on an unexpected opportunity to pass the Gulf of Tonkin resolution in Congress. The importance of the resolution as the basis for expanding American involvement in Vietnam only became apparent over time, however, in August 1964, the events in the Gulf provided its justification. Themes in the discourse pertinent to just deserts reasoning enabled the administration to deepen its commitment to Vietnam without arousing high levels of moral or political opposition. This was accomplished successfully, with almost unanimous congressional support for the resolution, media endorsement of the administration's handling of the affair, and a surge of public support for Johnson.

In American domestic politics, the consequences of the Tonkin episode continue to reverberate as the "birthplace of the 'credibility gap' – that great chasm of distrust which still separates the American people from their political leaders."[96] Indeed, the spectre of Tonkin appeared in the mobilisation discourse of the next case study, the 1991 Persian Gulf War. As President George H. W. Bush prepared to send the first 150,000 troops to Saudi Arabia, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Democrat Dante B.Fascell, cautioned

[96] Windchy, *Tonkin Gulf*, xxii.

against repeating the Tonkin episode. “If there is a provocation, it’s got to be a real one,” said Fascell. “If there’s an additional provocation, it can’t be two whales passing in the night. It has to be something that can stand the scrutiny of the media, and of the public, and of history.”[97] As we shall see, the provocations lying at the heart of the next case for intervention merited increased scrutiny indeed.

[97] Lloyd Gardner, "The Ministry of Fear: Selling the Gulf Wars," in *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, ed. Alan Frank Kenneth Osgood, and David Halberstam (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010), 231.

CHAPTER 3

The Prelude to The Persian Gulf War

August 1990 - January 1991

I worry, worry, worry, about eroded support.

- President George H. W. Bush

  14th September, 1990[1]

I don't think this country would have gone to war, really – sitting there at that point, if it hadn't been for this [incubator] story, because this was such a powerful story and kept being repeated over and over again.

- Arthur Rouse

  Former Washington Post reporter.[2]

10th October 1990, Capitol Hill

Two months after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a fifteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl sat weeping in the hearing room of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus on Capitol Hill. In a trembling voice, 'Nurse Nayirah' told the hushed audience about the traumatic events she had witnessed in her hospital during the invasion. Wiping tears from her eyes, she described how

[1] George H. W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 371-72.
[2] Democracy Now!, "A Debate on One of the Most Frequently Cited Justifications for the 1991 Persian Gulf War," (Democracynow.org2003).

armed soldiers had torn babies from incubators before leaving the infants "on the cold floor to die."[3] Mass media outlets relayed Nayirah's testimony across America and abroad, resulting in a wave of moral outrage at the brutality of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. Hussein, who until 1988 had been assisted by the United States in his country's war against Iran, was now branded by President George H. W. Bush as "a tyrant worse than Hitler."

From October 1990, shocking tales of Iraqi atrocities became a recurring motif in Bush's speeches as he sought to persuade the nation to support war in the Persian Gulf. However, at the outset of the crisis, Bush had emphasised a very different set of reasons for American intervention - namely, oil, and upholding the principles of international law. Yet by autumn, as the public wavered over supporting this military venture, Bush began downplaying the idea that oil motivated his interest in the region, on occasion denying its importance entirely. Instead, he repeatedly emphasised the human rights abuses, weaving them into a narrative that became a staple of his speeches as he toured the country that autumn.

By January 1991, division in Congress about the proposed war culminated in debates in both Houses. During the debates, Bush and pro-war Senators from both parties cited the incubator story to muster support for the war and to neutralise opposition. While the House vote passed by a clear majority, the Senate vote was more closely run, passing by a margin of just five votes. Given this tight margin (the narrowest in U.S. history[4]), some commentators believe that the incubator story may have been critical in clinching the necessary votes.[5]

---

[3] Quoted in John R. MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993), 58.
[4] Danny Sjursen, "The Last Great Debate: Congressional Veterans and the First Persian Gulf War," *World Affairs* 180, no. 1 (2017): 16.
[5] John C. Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You!* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2004), 86.

Despite unquestioned acceptance of Nayirah's story at the time, it later emerged that her identity and claims were false. Nayirah was in fact the daughter of Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States and Canada and had been coached on her testimony by executives from one of America's largest public relations firms, Hill and Knowlton. Within days of the Iraqi invasion, the Kuwaiti government had paid US$11 million to the firm to generate popular support for U.S. military intervention. Among the firm's activities was a market research operation probing the themes that would stir the emotions of Americans. America's initiation of this war in which an estimated 100,000–200,000 civilians were killed[6] turned on an apocryphal story manufactured by a public relations firm, a story which was propagated by the president as the centrepiece in his mobilisation discourse using retributive rhetoric.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait represented a major strategic concern for Bush in respect of the security of America's oil supply. Perhaps immediately, he realised that military force would likely be necessary to neutralise the ongoing threat Iraq posed to the stability of the Middle East. Yet selling war to the American people would not be easy. A sense of collective trauma lingered after the 'quagmire' war in Vietnam, leaving little appetite for another distant military entanglement. Adding to Bush's difficulties were some inconvenient attributes of Kuwait, a nation embodying many anti-democratic characteristics and barely known to most Americans. For example, in 1986, the royal al-Sabah family dissolved the National Assembly and consolidated power in the Emir.[7] The super-rich regime has been described as an "oppressive monarchy" on account of human rights violations, press censorship, and other anti-democratic actions.[8] Just weeks before the Iraqi invasion, Amnesty International had

[6] Forces.net, "Remembering the Gulf War: Key Facts and Figures About the Conflict," Forces.net, https://www.forces.net/news/remembering-gulf-war-key-facts-figures.
[7] MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War*, 43.
[8] Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf," 30.

accused the Kuwaiti government of jailing and torturing dozens of dissidents without trial.[9] In all, Bush and his officials would have to rehabilitate or perhaps gloss over the anti-democratic actions of the Kuwaiti regime and reverse Hussein's image from friend to foe.

With America's supply of cheap oil at stake, Bush's rhetorical task of persuading the public to support military action should have been relatively easy – *if* the nation shared his sense of rational self-interest, that is. However, even though Bush made clear that a disruption in the supply of oil would impact the everyday lives of Americans, majorities remained unmoved. The five-and-a-half-month prelude to the war offers a fascinating case study of a president who appears initially to have thought that oil would be a self-evidently convincing rationale for intervention, and when this was not the case, adjusted his rhetoric to appeal primarily to morality.

The remainder of the chapter is structed as follows. First, there is a brief historical overview of the Gulf crisis. Following this, the situational meaning of the crisis for the public is discussed, as well as the context of Bush's policy preferences. This is followed by analysis of Bush's mobilisation discourse, which is apportioned into three distinct phases based on fluctuations in his rationales for war. Each phase is further subdivided into thematic segments, which are followed by a discussion of public opinion, and Bush's private thoughts and perceptions, appraisals of public opinion, and finally, a section of overall analysis of each phase. Following this, the analysis considers aspects of the case from the perspective of retributive psychology, discussing the novel analytical insights it offers. This is followed by a brief conclusion.

[9] Tom Regan, "When Contemplating War, Beware of Babies in Incubators," *Christian Science Monitor*, https://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0906/p25s02-cogn.html.

BACKGROUND

The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) burdened Iraq with massive debt, much of it owed to Kuwait. Given that Iran's defeat had been to their mutual benefit, after the war Hussein considered that Kuwait should waive the loans. Kuwait, however, insisted on repayment, and engaged in what some observers consider to be economic warfare by overproducing oil to depress prices, and allegedly extracting Iraqi oil by 'side drilling' into its oil wells on the border. These activities prompted Hussein to demand a payment of $2.4 billion.[10] A combination of economic pressures placed upon Iraq by Kuwait are thought to have played a significant role in motivating the invasion.[11]

In the early summer of 1990, Hussein escalated tensions by moving troops close to the Kuwaiti border,[12] and on 25th July, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie met with Hussein to discuss the situation. While it later transpired that she had received instructions to warn Hussein that the U.S. would not tolerate Iraqi aggression towards its neighbour, it appears that she failed to convey the message adequately, leaving Hussein apparently reassured that the U.S. would not interfere in a regional conflict. On 2nd August, 100,000 Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait,[13] seizing control of Kuwait City in only two days and apparently killing fewer than two hundred Kuwaitis.[14]

---

[10] Stanley A. Renshon, "Good Judgment, and the Lack Thereof During the Gulf War: A Preliminary Psychological Model with Some Applications," in *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War: Leaders, Publics, and the Process of Conflict*, ed. Stanley A. Renshon (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 79.
[11] L. Freedman and E. Karsh, "How Kuwait Was Won," *International Security* 16, no. 2 (1991): 10.
[12] John E. Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War, American Politics and Political Economy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 17.
[13] Renshon, "Good Judgment, and the Lack Thereof During the Gulf War: A Preliminary Psychological Model with Some Applications," 79.
[14] Mitchel Cohen, "How Bush Senior Sold the Gulf War," *Counterpunch.org*, https://www.counterpunch.org/2002/12/28/how-bush-sr-sold-the-gulf-war/.

The United Nations Security Council responded overnight, approving Resolution 660, ceasing trade with Iraq. Bush immediately denounced the invasion and sent additional warships to the Gulf. On 6th August, Bush and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher met in Aspen, Colorado, and discussed the crisis.[15] From this date, Hussein began holding western citizens hostage in Iraq, arousing international concern and condemnation. Bush sent representatives to Saudi Arabia to convince that nation's leaders that it too was in danger from attack, and to persuade them to allow foreign troops to be stationed there. Accordingly, on 7th August, Saudi Arabia 'requested' help from the U.S., and Bush answered the following day by announcing that he was sending troops and aircraft to the country, an ostensibly defensive measure named Operation Desert Shield.

Early in November, Bush doubled the number of U.S. troops deployed to Desert Shield, expanding the total U.S. personnel commitment to around 430,000 troops. With no diplomatic solution appearing likely, on 29th November, U.N. Resolution 678 authorised U.N. members to use "all necessary means" to enforce Iraqi compliance with previous resolutions by midnight on 15th January 1991. Shortly afterwards, on 6th December, Hussein released the hostages and called for talks. On 3rd and 9th January 1991, Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz met in Geneva but failed to broker a diplomatic solution. Three days later, Congress authorised a resolution granting Bush permission to use force as per the U.N. resolution. The following day, last-ditch talks between U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and Hussein also failed.[16]

[15] Scot Macdonald, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 13, no. 4 (2002): 35.
[16] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 18-32.

At 3am local time on the night of 16th/17th January, the U.S. led U.N. coalition forces in the military offensive, which began with an air operation called 'Operation Instant Thunder'. After weeks of air bombardment and the failure of diplomatic meetings brokered by the Soviets, on 22nd February Bush issued an ultimatum to Hussein: withdraw unconditionally or face a ground invasion. Hussein ignored the deadline, and on 23rd February the ground war began. Within less than forty-eight hours, Hussein capitulated and announced that Iraqi troops were withdrawing. Two days later, he agreed to comply with all U.N. resolutions. Bush terminated the war in the one-hundredth hour of the land offensive.[17]

The Situational Meaning of the Crisis

This section evaluates the trigger event from the perspective of retributive psychology. It provides a theoretical assessment of how ordinary citizens are likely to have judged the strategic and moral attributes of the Iraqi invasion. Below is a summary of the attributes of this case showing the expectations about the likelihood of retributive rhetoric occurring.

Table 3.0 Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in the Persian Gulf Crisis

Case	Strategic Incentives Uncertain/Public Reticence?	Category of Harm	Presidential Desire to Intervene?	Retributive Rhetoric Expected?
Gulf War	Yes	2	Yes	Yes

[17] Freedman and Karsh, "How Kuwait Was Won," 34.

Perceptions After the Iraqi Invasion

- **Public Perceptions of Strategic Incentives**

Recalling the theory, it is only when the material, strategic incentives for intervention appear ambiguous that individuals become more susceptible to moral suasion, with a corresponding increase in the likelihood of retributive rhetoric. The trigger event has many of the characteristics in which it is expected that Americans would be reticent about intervention. Indeed, Peter Liberman writes that the strategic incentives for U.S. intervention in Kuwait were perceived as "ambiguous" for both political elites and ordinary citizens, noting that "[a]s political elites were extremely divided over the wisdom of intervention, the strategic pros and cons were probably even less compelling to average citizens."[18]

Uncertainty about the strategic merits of intervention would have been exacerbated by the public's confusion over many crucial elements of the situation. Barbara Spellman and Keith Holyoak summarise the somewhat bewildering circumstances nicely, writing that, "[t]he average American had previously been only dimly aware that Kuwait existed, was now told that Kuwait was not a democracy but had oil that America needed, knew little about Saddam Hussein, might have heard that Saddam Hussein had been supported by the U.S. in his previous war with Iran, was now told that Saddam Hussein threatened Saudi Arabia, and so on." They note that "Such unsystematic beliefs either did not support any clear policy decision or provide support for conflicting policies."[19]

[18] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers," 696-97.
[19] Spellman and Holyoak, "If Saddam Is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush? Analogical Mapping between Systems of Social Roles," 925.

Evidence suggesting that the public was confused and ambivalent about intervention is found in two polls presented by John Mueller in his definitive, comparative study of opinion polling data relating to the Gulf War. The first, taken on 3rd-4th August, asked respondents whether they approved or disapproved of the way Bush was handling the Gulf situation. The largest proportion by far, 52 percent, responded that they approved. However, following this, a sizeable 32 percent responded that they were uncertain. The second poll, conducted on 7th-8th August, asked the same question, but this time, respondents were given more finely grained options to "approve strongly," "disapprove strongly," "approve somewhat," "disapprove somewhat," or "don't know." Interestingly, no respondents felt "strongly" either for or against, with the majority choosing "approve somewhat" (64 percent), 18 percent choosing "disapprove somewhat," and 18 percent saying that they did not know. Mueller concludes that these data "suggest a certain wariness and confusion on the part of the public immediately after the August 2 invasion."[20]

- **Case Seriousness**

With reasons to suspect widespread ambiguity about the merits of intervention and reticence about intervention, the public would be more likely to think about the situation in moral terms. Recalling the causal chain of retributive motive arousal, the first component in the moral assessment of harms is a cognitive appraisal of a harm's severity. Within the hierarchy of harms, it is proposed that a ground invasion seizing another state's territory is likely to chime with moral violations relating to property, the second category of moral seriousness. The next step in the causal chain of evaluation concerns the offender's moral culpability, especially the degree of intention. The obvious intentionality of the invasion in this case is

[20] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 193-94; 30.

clear, making the invasion a prototypical crime and decreasing the influence of any mitigating factors that might have softened evaluations of blameworthiness.

Potentially, Iraq's precarious economic straits and Kuwait's antagonistic actions might have been perceived as reasons and provocations for Hussein's offence, thus weakening judgements of moral culpability. However, even if these factors had been widely known and understood by the public (which, given the general lack of knowledge of foreign affairs, is doubtful), Hussein's actions would still likely have been viewed as violating intuitions concerning proportionality. Other mitigating factors such as the foreseeability of the consequences of the invasion and remorse were also rendered moot by the deliberate and brazen nature of the invasion.

Compounding this, identity factors are likely to have mediated justice intuitions concerning both the Iraqis and the Kuwaitis. Hussein's past record would have provided fertile ground for generating retributive sentiment. Although Hussein was an erstwhile ally, his relationship with the U.S. was an uneasy one. During the Iran-Iraq war it is estimated that Hussein was responsible for the deaths of between 150,000–260,000 Iranians, as well as 13,000 Iraqi citizens, some of which had been caused by chemical weapons.[21] These human rights abuses and his dictatorial regime type may have ensured that post-invasion, it was an easy psychological transition for Americans to categorise Hussein and his regime as an "outgroup", thereby increasing punitiveness.

At the same time, the negative attributes of the victim, Kuwait, would likely have functioned to decrease the overall sense of moral outrage experienced over the invasion. The

[21] MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War*, 37.

tiny state's obscurity in the minds of ordinary Americans and, for those who were familiar with it, its unattractive characteristics, combined with its geographic distance and minimal ties to America would have mitigated against strong feelings to enact third party punishment on behalf of Kuwait. In summary, the initial 'facts on the ground' suggest that the public was reticent to intervene in Kuwait, and that the Iraqi regime would have been perceived by Americans as fully morally culpable of committing a Category Two moral harm. These are the conditions that are favourable to retributive rhetoric - if a president desires intervention.

- **Political Context: Bush's Policy Preferences**

So, did Bush desire intervention in the Gulf? Evidence supporting the position that he did is found in reports of the discussion that took place at an early National Security Council meeting on Thursday 2nd August. Although the minutes of this meeting remain classified, memoirs of some participants reveal insights into the conversation. A significant report is found in the memoir of Bush and his Assistant for National Security Affairs, Brent Scowcroft. Responding to Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady's suggestion that the U.S. could adjust to increased oil prices, Bush responded, "[w]e are not here to talk about adapting. We are not going to plan how to live with this."[22] Not adapting has strong implicit undertones of military intervention, and countenancing this prospect (and presaging the subject of this thesis), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, asked, "the only question is how do you lay it out to the public?"[23] Again, at another White House meeting in the early stages of the crisis, the preference for war was clearly understood. Powell is said to

[22] Quoted in David Mervin, *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 35.
[23] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 314-18.

have queried "if it was worth going to war to liberate Kuwait". Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney reprimanded Powell, telling him to "stick to military matters".[24]

Other evidence suggesting that war was a foregone conclusion is advanced by scholars alleging that Bush and Thatcher agreed upon this course when they met at Aspen, just days after the Iraqi invasion,[25] and that sanctions and diplomacy were merely window dressing. Furthermore, covert plans to destabilise and overthrow Hussein's regime were authorised immediately after the invasion. At the Friday 3rd NSC meeting, Scowcroft urged Bush to sanction a CIA plan to put this into operation, a request to which he acquiesced.[26]

- **Expectations About the Use of Retributive Rhetoric**

Overall, at the time of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, each of the elements necessary for retributive rhetoric was in place. The theory predicts that Bush would employ this type of discourse should he perceive public reticence about intervention, or low public support. The next section investigates this by analysing his mobilisation discourse.

The Discourse

As mentioned, Bush's communications during the prelude to war are analysed in three distinct phases. The first phase spans the beginning of the crisis from the invasion on 2nd August to the juncture at which Bush's rhetoric switched to a more moral tone, in early-October. This first phase was dominated by rationales referencing national and security

[24] Gardner, "The Ministry of Fear: Selling the Gulf Wars," 228.
[25] Macdonald, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait."; Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*; Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 1991).
[26] *The Commanders*, 218.

interests. The second phase spans from mid-October to early December and saw Bush emphasise human rights abuses. The final phase, from mid-December until the outbreak of war on 16th January, contained a bricolage of rationales, although preponderant themes emerged concerning Hussein's character and the threat of Iraqi nuclear weapons. Naturally, the arguments were not exclusive to each phase; rather, in each phase certain rationales tended to dominate. The following analysis considers each phase chronologically, sub-divided by theme.

Phase I

2nd August–Early-October: National and Security Interests

- **Oil**

News of the invasion reached Bush at around 9pm on Wednesday, 1st August. On that day, the White House issued a brief statement condemning the invasion, calling for withdrawal, and stating that an emergency session of the U.N Security Council had already convened.[27] Shortly after 8am the following day, Bush conducted a briefing with reporters in the Cabinet Room of the White House. He informed them that the Security Council had met and had voted for a resolution calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Bush spoke of defending America's "longstanding, vital interests in the Gulf" and indicated that he would be meeting with his senior advisors later that morning to discuss options. When pressed again on the issue of oil, Bush stated that America was dependent on the Middle East

[27] Statement by Deputy Press Secretary Popadiuk on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 1, 1990. President United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," ed. National Archives and Records Service Federal Register Division (District of Columbia1990), 1082.

for almost half its oil supply, and this was "one of the reasons I felt we have to not let our guard down around the world."[28]

By the afternoon of Thursday, 2nd August, Bush was in Aspen, Colorado, for a prescheduled meeting with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In a press briefing the following day, Bush spoke of the twin themes of oil and the invasion's affront to international law, the force of which he felt should have been self-evident, stating, "[a]ll you have to do is look at the energy requirements of the world plus the direct violation of international law by Saddam Hussein to understand why I feel so strongly about it." […] "The economic aspects of this are well-known to the American people. And fortunately, right now there's a bit of an overhang of surplus crude, but that's short-run. And long-run economic effects on the free world could be devastating, and that's one of the reasons I'm as concerned as I am." Bush linked the invasion of Kuwait to American defence, adding, "[a]nd that's one of the reasons, incidentally, I've been talking about having a strong defence in this country. And it's time some of our congressmen wake up to the need to have strong defense."[29]

Bush's next significant national address concerning the Gulf came on 8th August when he announced the initial troop deployment to Saudi Arabia. He outlined the case for war, which he said rested on achieving four "simple principles": the withdrawal of Iraqi troops; restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty; security and stability in the Persian Gulf, and protecting American citizens abroad. Despite presenting these U.S. goals, Bush then proceeded to expand on the importance of oil, stating that "our country now imports nearly half the oil it consumes and could face a major threat to its economic independence. Much of

[28] Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 2, 1990. Ibid., 1083-85.
[29] Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 3, 1990. Ibid., 1098-99.

the world is even more dependent upon imported oil and is even more vulnerable to Iraqi threats." On 15th August, Bush made a speech to Defense Department employees. After recapitulating a medley of objectives for action in the Gulf including the four principles mentioned on 8th August, he again reverted to the oil rationale, this time linking it to the daily lives of ordinary Americans. He stated that "[o]ur jobs, our way of life, our own freedom, and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of that one man, Saddam Hussein."

- **National Security**

Another rationale Bush used during this phase was the security threat posed by Iraq, particularly its potential for developing and using chemical and nuclear weapons. After the 2nd August meeting with Thatcher, Bush spoke to the press and painted a grim picture of global threat, extrapolating from events to confirm his "central thesis" that despite the receding Soviet menace, "the world remains a dangerous place with serious threats to important U.S. interests wholly unrelated to the earlier patterns of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. These threats, as we've seen just in the past 24 hours, can arise suddenly, unpredictably, and from unexpected quarters". The crisis underscored "the vital need for a defence structure which not only preserves our security but provides the resources for supporting the legitimate self-defence needs of our friends and of our allies." In this uncertain world in which America seemed suddenly vulnerable, Bush went a step further by linking events to increases in the possession of chemical and nuclear weapons globally, stating that "more nations – more, not less – are acquiring weapons of mass destruction and the means to

deliver them. […] In the future, even conflicts we once thought of as limited or local may carry far-reaching consequences."[30]

Bush also employed threat to justify the troop deployment in his 8th August national address. Citing the "enormous war machine" of Iraqi forces newly stationed near Iraq's border with Saudi Arabia, he warned that "[t]o assume Iraq will not attack again would be unwise and unrealistic." Bush framed U.S. actions in an altruistic light, prompted by the Saudi government's request for assistance. The deployment would not "initiate hostilities" but would be "wholly defensive". Speaking to Congress on 28th August, Bush stated that he had halted the export of furnaces which might be used to develop Iraq's nuclear capability.[31] On 11th September, in a televised appeal to Congress asking for support for his policies in the Gulf, Bush reprised the nuclear weapons theme again, stressing the dangerousness of the world and America's vulnerability. He reminded Congress that this was "no time to risk America's capacity to protect her vital interests."[32]

- **Morality**

When speaking with the press at Aspen on 2nd August, Bush was asked if Hussein was likely to be "a constant source of problems". He responded by emphasising the international community's collective moral outrage over the Iraqi leader's actions, stating that "reaction from around the world is unanimous in being condemnatory. So, that speaks for itself". This language was repeated later that day in an official White House statement describing the

[30] Remarks at the Aspen Institute Symposium, Aspen, Colorado, 2 August 1990. Ibid., 1092.
[31] Remarks at a White House Briefing for Members of Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis, August 28, 1990. Ibid., 1172-74.
[32] Addres Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990. Ibid., 1221.

invasion as an "outrageous act of aggression" which "the entire international community condemns."[33] On 3rd August, Bush admitted to Congress that the economic sanctions placed on Iraq served a morally symbolic, as well as practical, purpose, in "expressing our outrage at Iraq's actions".[34] In a White House press briefing on 5th August, Bush stated that he was pursuing diplomacy and sanctions, and branded the Iraqi regime as "international outlaws", and said he hoped that Arab countries would join "in condemning this outrage". He ended the briefing with his first utterance of what would become a familiar refrain throughout the mobilisation discourse, that Iraqi aggression "will not stand".[35]

Bush's national address announcing the troop deployment on 8th August also included moral argumentation. He stressed how the attack was unprovoked, playing on justice intuitions concerning moral culpability. Again, the tell-tale word "outrageous" was employed, as Bush exhorted, "there is no justification whatsoever for this outrageous and brutal act of aggression". He appealed for public support in "a decision I've made to stand up for what's right and condemn what's wrong". In contrast to Bush's earlier justifications in this speech concerning oil, he closed by stating that "standing up for principle" motivated U.S. action, which was an "American tradition".[36]

On 10th August Bush made some interesting comments in an exchange with reporters aboard Air Force One *vis-à-vis* retributive psychology. Here, he stressed a deontological rationale behind his concerns, denying that his actions were motivated by cost-benefit calculations, and just as he stated in his troop deployment speech, said that he was acting on

[33] Statement by Deputy Press Secretary Popadiuk on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 2, 1990. Ibid., 1083.
[34] Message to the Congress on the Declaration of a National Emergency With Respect to Iraq, August 3, 1990. Ibid., 1096.
[35] Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait, August 5, 1990. Ibid., 1102.
[36] Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, August 8, 1990. Ibid., 1107-09.

principle. Describing the crisis as "so fundamental to the security of the United States and to the free world", he told reporters that "when I went to do this I didn't say, listen, please give me a cost estimate to do it". Rather, the President felt that "[t]his is what we have to do. […] This is something that is in the national interest, and it is essential that we do it."[37] Here, we see Bush claiming that the imperative to act on behalf of the national interest is *not* governed by rational calculation but functioned more like a moral imperative itself.

In a news conference on 21st September, Bush again provided a strong moral rationale for action, stating, "there are certain principles here – right and wrong – moral principles".[38] At the same time, he made an admission demonstrating a degree of self-awareness regarding his political communication, telling reporters that "I'm not heightening the rhetorical output. And I'm just kind of saying this is the way it is, and not try to elevate it."[39]

Towards the end of this phase, on 28th September and again on 6th October, Bush made his first references to Iraqi atrocities against Kuwaitis. However, these early references employed abstract language, with Bush stating that Iraqi forces had "ransacked and pillaged a once peaceful and secure country, its population assaulted, incarcerated, intimidated, and even murdered."[40] As we will see, these references were inklings of the major theme he would develop in the following phase of his discourse.

- **The World War II Analogy**

[37] Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One on the Persian Gulf Crisis, August 10, 1990. Ibid., 1122.
[38] The President's News Conference, September 21, 1990. Ibid., 1265.
[39] Ibid., 1267.
[40] Remarks Following Discussions With Amir Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir Al Sabah of Kuwait, September 28, 1990. Ibid., 1317.

A staple of Bush's rhetoric was an analogy between the Iraqi invasion and the early territorial seizures and subsequent appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s. He first used this publicly in the troop deployment address, stating baldly that "[a]ppeasement does not work. As was the case in the 1930s, we see in Saddam an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbours". Bush had an interesting tendency to introduce the analogy immediately after speaking about oil. He did this in his 15th August speech to Defense Department officials, stating that "[w]e're not about to make that same mistake twice."[41] Over the following week Bush repeatedly invoked the Nazi analogy and framed the assault as transgressing international law and ideals. He also began using the word "evil" more frequently to describe Iraq, no doubt bolstering connections in the minds of the public between Hussein and Hitler.[42]

- **International Law, Multilateralism, and Hostages**

This period saw Bush take pains to frame the emerging crisis as a violation of international law. At the press exchange in Aspen on 2nd August, he stated that the situation "had gone beyond simply a regional dispute because of the naked aggression that violates the United Nations Charter". In a similar vein, he was careful to describe the crisis as a problem not just for the U.S., but for the whole international community. In his 8th August national address, he described the crisis explicitly as "the world's problem". This idea of shared responsibility may have been connected to Bush's conception of a "new world order", which he outlined on 11th September. According to Bush, the crisis in the Gulf presented an opportunity to introduce a new phase of international cooperation, a "world in which nations recognise the

[41] Remarks to Department of Defense Employees, August 15, 1990. Ibid., 1138-39.
[42] For example, Remarks at a Republican Party Fundraising Luncheon in North Kingsdown, Rhode Island, August 20, 1990. Ibid., 1154.

shared responsibility for freedom and justice. A world where the strong respect the rights of the weak".[43]

A final issue worth noting in this initial stage of the discourse is Bush's rhetorical treatment of the foreign hostages held in Kuwait and Iraq. Hussein began holding western citizens stranded in Iraq in or close to military sites, apparently to function as 'human shields' to deter U.S. attacks. Bush appeared to downplay the issue, stating on 14th August that the situation consisted of "inconvenienced people who want to get out… I hope that it doesn't become more than that. I have no reason to think at this juncture that it will".[44] On 23rd August, this issue was made all the more salient for Americans when Hussein appeared on television with a group of noticeably nervous captives.[45]

- **Public Opinion**

Public support for Bush's policies followed a classic rally effect, with support for intervention high in August and September, but declining by October (by about ten percentage points). This high support was replicated in Congress across both parties, including support for the troop deployment.[46] As mentioned in the previous section on the situational meaning of the crisis, a very early poll on 3rd-4th August showed that 52 percent approved of Bush's handling of the crisis, while 32 percent responded that they were uncertain. By 9th and 10th August, Bush's ratings had surged, with a Gallup poll revealing 77 percent approval for Bush's handling of the crisis, compared to 13 percent who disapproved. Of course, in the period between these two polls, Bush had announced the deployment of

[43] Ibid., 1219.
[44] The President's News Conference, August 14, 1990. Ibid., 1134.
[45] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 15.
[46] Ibid., 22-24.

troops to Saudi Arabia, which was perhaps instrumental in the rally effect, displacing initial wariness. High support levels continued into early-mid September, with a poll on 10th-11th September giving Bush another approval rating of 77 percent for his handling of the situation, compared to 16 percent disapproval. A few days later, a Gallup poll for 14th-16th September gave him 75 per cent approval and again, only 16 per cent disapproval.[47]

Despite high support, Americans were divided about the reasons why the U.S. should become involved in the Gulf. By the end of August, one poll revealed that most people thought troops had been sent to the Middle East for oil, but a comparable amount thought it was to halt Iraqi aggression.[48] Also in August, polls probing why people thought U.S. forces *should* be in the Gulf revealed that the most popular reason for intervening was a humanitarian one - to rescue the hostages.[49] Two polls taken in late August show that 92 percent of Americans felt that hostages should be *one* of the main reasons for intervention, whereas 52 percent thought it should be the primary reason.[50]

Interestingly, a poll taken between 21st – 26th September asking what the primary objective of the U.S. *should* be, and what people believed Bush's *actual* primary objective was, revealed that the most popular reason for why the U.S. *should* be there was to remove Hussein, yet most people responded that they thought Bush's actual objective was to protect oil supplies. This poll is also significant because it offers a glimpse of whether retributive sentiment had been activated in the populace at this time. One rationale for intervention offered to respondents was "punishing Iraq for invading Kuwait", which received a measly one percent support on both the normative "should" question and perceptions of Bush's

[47] Ibid., 193.
[48] Ibid., 242.
[49] Ibid., 246.
[50] Ibid., 244-46.

actual objectives.[51] This provides a strong indication that by late September, the public neither desired to punish Iraq, nor did they consider that Bush harboured this desire. Additionally, this poll shows that Bush's justifications invoking oil had 'landed' with the domestic audience.

Overall, oil was not viewed as a popular reason for intervention. A poll taken on 29th August asked whether American lives should be risked so that gas prices would remain low, to which ninety-two percent of respondents answered no, a stance echoed in a poll of 4th-5th September giving seventy-one percent opposition.[52] Towards the end of September, another poll revealed that the issue respondents thought most important was peace in the Middle East, followed by halting aggression, and then oil.[53]

- **Bush's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

By mid-September, Bush was privately beginning to harbour concerns about public support for intervention. Three days after his 14th September address to Congress, he wrote in his diary:

> How long will the Senate stay supportive, or the House? As long as the people are with us, I've got a good chance. But once there starts to be erosion, they're going to do what Lyndon Johnson said: they painted their asses white and ran with the antelopes. … Sunday night, the 14th … New polls are out: 57% support and 23%

[51] Ibid., 248.
[52] Ibid., 258.
[53] Ibid., 247.

against – something like this. It used to be 7% opposed, and I worry, worry, worry about eroded support."[54]

It is not clear what data Bush was referencing, but polls at this time were generally favourable. As mentioned, on 10-11th September, one poll revealed 77 percent approval and 16 percent disapproval of his handling of the situation. Despite this, his thoughts here are valuable in illustrating his concern with public support. By 6th October, Bush was beginning to feel the strain of mobilising support for war against Iraq. He wrote in his diary, "I think this week has been the most unpleasant, or tension-filled of the presidency."[55]

- **Analysis**

As we have seen, Bush provided a variety of justifications for intervention during the initial period of the mobilisation effort. In addition to the oil rationale, he argued that intervention was necessary on the grounds of halting Iraqi aggression and restoring Kuwaiti sovereignty, defending Saudi Arabia, protecting the hostages, upholding international law, and standing up for principles. As was characteristic of the discourse throughout the mobilisation period, the various rationales were invoked in a haphazard fashion. Despite this diversity, however, Bush tended to provide more impassioned and expansive justifications concerning oil and national security. Interestingly, Bush showed little reticence initially about admitting that oil was driving his concern, citing American dependence on this resource in a matter-of-fact manner.

[54] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed,* 371-72.
[55] George H. W. Bush, *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings (*New York: Scribner, 1999), 480.

Additionally, Bush framed the invasion as a security threat to the U.S. by linking the crisis to the separate issue of the growing number of states with chemical and nuclear weapons capabilities, perhaps attempting make the issue more salient to compensate for Americans' lack of knowledge about and interest in Kuwait. His emphasis on the idea that the invasion was a shared problem entailed that a response should also be shared internationally. From the beginning, then, Bush was keen that any potential military action would be a multilateral effort. This was no doubt partly motivated by a desire to distance this new crisis from memories of Vietnam.

The national address announcing the troop deployment followed a pattern he would use repeatedly over the entire mobilisation discourse, that of using the Nazi analogy immediately after explaining a point he considered important. Bush did this on several occasions during this phase, particularly in relation to oil. This may have been an attempt to fasten moral and emotional meaning onto less-emotive issues. Also, in comparing the situation to the Nazi threat of the 1930s and Hussein to Hitler, the analogy served to underscore the importance of halting Hussein in his tracks lest he increase his regional power and repeat the depredations witnessed in the previous World War. Additionally, such a freighted comparison would generate in the minds of his audience an instantaneous enemy image requiring little further elaboration beyond its suggestion.

Bush used very little retributive rhetoric during this phase, but his discourse did contain recognisable elements. His use of the word "outrage" and its derivatives is a noteworthy attempt to convey moral outrage. He sought to underline the moral censure that Iraq's actions had generated internationally, appealing for other nations to "condemn" Iraq. Additionally, he repeatedly described the invasion as "naked aggression", seeking to make clear that there was

no ambiguity in the regime's intentions and underscoring the moral culpability of the regime. Bush's statement that the aggression "will not stand" was met with surprise by his inner circle and outside observers and alike, as it implied a stronger stance than simply defending Saudi Arabia.[56]

Further elements of retributive rhetoric were evident in Bush's deontological rationale of simply standing up for "what's right". Additionally, his emphasis on the unprovoked nature of the invasion served to underline the unadulterated intention of the Iraqis, intensifying perceptions of moral blameworthiness and increasing moral outrage. While Bush made his first mention of atrocities, his use of general terms describing harms to non-specified individuals was unlikely to successfully activate justice intuitions. It is, however, significant that Bush was beginning to develop this theme, which became far more pronounced from mid-October onwards.

Drawing this together, how does Bush's discourse align with the theoretical priors? Although all the conditions were in place for Bush to engage in retributive rhetoric from the outset, the evidence suggests that public perceptions of weak strategic incentives do not rule out high support. Although the public was divided and confused about the strategic incentives, support for Bush was high, especially with the rally after his 8th August announcement of the troop deployment. It was only later, in mid-September, that he became concerned with flagging public support, as evidenced by his 14th September diary entry. Around three weeks later, on 6th October, he made his first reference to atrocities. It therefore seems that even if the public is unpersuaded of the strategic merits of intervention, a president

[56] Steven A. Yetiv, *Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making and the Persian Gulf War* (Baltimore Md. and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 116-17.

may still receive high levels of public support for their handling of the situation. Therefore, Liberman's identification of weak strategic incentives do not automatically translate into low support. A more nuanced explanation is that this condition often leads to low support, but not necessarily. The evidence in this phase suggests that it was perceptions of low public support that triggered Bush's imminent change of tack to retributive rhetoric.

It seems that Bush expected the strategic incentives concerning oil to be as overwhelmingly obvious and persuasive to the public as they appeared to him. Yet Americans appeared to care most about freeing the hostages, while oil and restoring Kuwaiti sovereignty did not represent compelling reasons for intervention. His failure to convince the public of the importance of intervening to protect oil supplies suggests that Bush's mobilisation efforts in this initial phase were generally unsuccessful, despite his high approval ratings in August and September.

Phase II

Mid-October to Early December 1990: "It's not about oil"

- **Morality**

During this phase, Bush furnished many graphic descriptions of human rights abuses in Kuwait. Beginning on 9th October, he told reporters that the Emir of Kuwait had personally relayed stories to him, which included "people on a dialysis machine cut off, the machine sent to Baghdad; babies in incubators heaved out of the incubators and the incubators themselves sent to Baghdad." However, Bush was careful to add the caveat: "Now, I don't know how many of these tales can be authenticated, but I do know that when the Emir was

here, he was speaking from the heart. And after that came Amnesty International, who were debriefing many of the people at the border. And it's sickening."[57]

The following day saw the Human Rights Caucus hearings take place and that evening, Nayirah's moving testimony was broadcast across the nation. At this time, Bush was on the campaign trail, affording him multiple opportunities to make his case for a coming war. The day after the Caucus hearings, Bush addressed veterans' organisations, and in addition to justifications concerning Iraq's violation of international law, he began explicitly framing Iraq and Hussein as an out-group, describing them as "outlaw nations and outlaw leaders".[58] In Dallas on 15th October, Bush repeated this framing, describing the invasion as an "outlaw act". He then recounted a horrific list of atrocities, including "summary executions", "routine torture", people being put to death for possessing the Kuwaiti flag or a photograph of the Emir, new-born babies thrown out of incubators, dialysis patients "ripped from their machines" and the tale of "two young children executed before their parents' eyes". In his tell-tale manner, he capped off the list with a succinct comment: the situation was "Hitler revisited."[59] Confounding analytical attempts to trace consistency in Bush's rhetoric, however, the same day, at another fundraiser in Nebraska, Bush refrained from providing graphic details of the atrocities. This time he framed Iraqi aggression as an affront to international law, and stated, "I'll spare you the details of the brutality."[60]

[57] The President's News Conference. October 9, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1381-82.
[58] Remarks at a White House Briefing for Representatives of Veterans Organizations, October 11, 1990. Ibid., 1400.
[59] Remarks at a Fundraising Luncheon for Gubernatorial Candidate Clayton Williams in Dallas, Texas, October 15, 1990. Ibid., 1410-11.
[60] Remarks at a Republican Fundraising Reception in Omaha, Nebraska, October 15, 1990. Ibid., 1413-14.

Remarkably, during this phase of the mobilisation period, Bush performed a *volte face* on the oil rationale, denying its importance or reframing U.S. intervention in the Gulf as an altruistic act on behalf of less well-off nations. At the Dallas fundraiser, he stated, "what is ultimately at stake is far more than a matter of economics or oil. What is at stake is whether the nations of the world can take a common stand against aggression or whether Iraq's aggression will go unanswered." Around this time, anti-war feeling was mounting and being expressed to Bush directly. This happened at a fundraiser in Des Moines, Iowa on 16th October, when protestors interrupted his speech with shouts of "no blood for oil".[61] Bush's immediate response was to again deny the oil motive altogether, retorting, "the fight isn't about oil; the fight is about naked aggression that will not stand." After moving on to discuss unrelated topics, he later cycled back to the Gulf crisis, reframing it with a new priority: "We've got to stand up for civilised values."

Having been confronted so directly and publicly with criticism of the oil rationale, Bush then began relating graphic details of the atrocities, recounting the brutal acts, but this time with greater personalisation. Stating that he did not wish to be "overly shocking", he told how "Iraqi soldiers unplugged the oxygen to incubators supporting twenty-two premature babies. They all died. And then they got the hospital employees. At another hospital, troops reportedly cut off oxygen supporting the seventy-five-year-old mother of a Kuwaiti cabinet Minister. Iraqi aggression. Iraqi naked aggression – taking dialysis machines, kicking the patients off them, shipping the machines to Baghdad."[62] Bush spoke at two more campaign rallies later that day and was interrupted by anti-war protestors at both. At the earlier event in Chicago, Bush's response omitted the atrocities narrative and focused solely

[61] Steven Hurst, "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush During the Persian Gulf Crisis 1990–91: How to Help Lose a War You Won," *Political Studies* 52, no. 2 (2004): 379.
[62] Remarks at a Republican Fundraising Breakfast in Des Moines, Iowa, October 16, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1415-18.

on international law and order, replying, "What we are for is peace in the Middle East. What we are also for is principle… No big nation can bully a small one, and that is the principle that I stand for."[63] In the later speech in Grand Rapids, he again denied the oil rationale explicitly, stating "We are not in the Middle East to protect oil; we are there to stand up against aggression."[64]

By this time, Bush's rhetoric was rich in language likely to resonate with justice intuitions. At another fundraising event in Burlington, Vermont, on 23rd October, he denied the oil rationale once more, stating, "our concern, far beyond the price of oil, is the fate of sovereign nations and peoples. There's a moral underpinning, a strong moral underpinning, to what's happened in the United Nations as we've stood up unanimously against Saddam Hussein's aggression." Addressing protestors' signs of "no war for oil", he responded with another litany of Iraqi abuses, which he called "crimes against humanity". Again, he repeated the tactic of underlining the atrocity stories with the Nazi analogy. Next came another reference to atrocities – the teenagers executed in front of their parents; the dialysis patients; and babies and incubators, before concluding that "it isn't oil that we're concerned about. It is aggression."[65] Later that day in Manchester, New Hampshire, Bush reiterated that what was at stake was not a matter of material interest, but of morality: "[t]here is a fundamental moral principle involved here, and of course, that principle is: One country won't take over another."[66]

[63] Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Jim Edgar in Chicago, Illinois, October 16, 1990. Ibid., 1420.
[64] Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate John Engler in Grand Rapis, Michigan, October 16, 1990. Ibid., 1422.
[65] Remarks at a Republican Fundraising Breakfast in Burlington, Vermont, October 23, 1990. Ibid., 1445.
[66] Remarks at a Republican Campaign Rally in Manchester, New Hampshire, October 23, 1990. Ibid., 1449.

Later that day in a rally speech in Connecticut, Bush engaged in what was perhaps his strongest instance of retributive rhetoric throughout the entire mobilisation discourse. He explicitly called for a retributive approach to Iraq, stating, "[w]hat is at stake is whether aggression pays or aggression is punished." […] "When this ordeal is over, and when Kuwait is once again a sovereign and free member of the family of nations, Saddam Hussein must pay for the pain and the hardship that he has caused. The world will hold him accountable, just as it held Adolf Hitler accountable in the wake of the destruction of World War II."[67] Not only was Bush articulating a deontological rationale in that Hussein must pay for past wrongs, but again he underscored those wrongs with the Nazi allusion.

At another rally three days later in Los Angeles, Bush again explicitly denied the oil motive, stating "it isn't oil, it is aggression – naked, brutal aggression."[68] On 28th October, Bush spoke at Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu. Again, the speech was overtly moral in tone. Bush stated, "today, in the Persian Gulf, what we are looking at is good and evil, right and wrong". Next came the atrocity stories, followed by comments with further relevance to justice intuitions, stating that "[t]he invasion of Kuwait was without provocation. The invasion of Kuwait was without excuse. And the invasion of Kuwait will not stand." He followed by describing Iraq's actions as "outrageous".[69]

On 1st November, Bush continued with the atrocities theme, and remarkably, dispensed with metaphor altogether, telling an audience at a fundraiser that Iraq had "*literally* raped, pillaged and plundered" Kuwait, followed by the Nazi analogy. The atrocities were

[67] Remarks at a Fundraising Dinner for Gubernatorial Candidate John Rowland in Stamford, Connecticut, October 23, 1990. Ibid., 1452-56.
[68] Remarks at a Campaign Rally for Gubernatorial Candidate Pete Wilson in Los Angeles, California, October 26, 1990. Ibid., 1468.
[69] Remarks to Officers and Troops at Hickam Air Force Base, Honolulu, Hawaii, October 28, 1990. Ibid., 1482.

personalised, as the audience was told of a "fifteen-year-old boy gunned down, his family forced to watch." The combination of these factors caused the U.S. and the rest of the world to be "united in anger and outrage".[70] On the same day at another rally, the atrocities narrative and Nazi analogy were paired once again. After recounting the atrocities and claiming that the Iraqis "tried to silence Kuwaiti dissent and courage with firing squads, much as Hitler did when he invaded Poland", he described their actions as "outrageous acts of barbarism". Bush recalled Nayirah's incubator story, adding the emotionally laden observation that "all those little ones died". According to Bush, the world was "united in anger and outrage".

Later, he mentioned the hostages, claiming that three hundred Americans were being used as a human shield. Now, Hussein's depravity *outstripped* that of Hitler's, as Bush reported, "I don't believe Adolf Hitler ever participated in anything of that nature".[71] At a news conference in Florida that same day, a reporter asked Bush if he was exaggerating by comparing Hussein with Hitler. While clarifying that he was not invoking comparisons to the Holocaust, Bush justified the analogy, explaining that he saw "many similarities by the way the Iraqi forces behaved in Kuwait and the Death's Head regiments behaved in Poland."[72] At various campaign rallies anti-war protestors continued to interrupt Bush's speeches. When this happened at an event on 3rd November, Bush responded with the Nazi analogy once more, saying, "[t]hey've got it wrong. We're not talking about oil. We are talking about standing up against aggression. […] We do not need another Hitler in this time of our

[70] Remarks at a Republican Party Fundraising Breakfast in Burlington, Massachusetts, November 1, 1990. Ibid., 1509.
[71] Remarks at a Republican Campaign Rally in Mashpee, Massachusetts, November 1, 1990. Ibid., 1512-13.
[72] The President's News Conference in Orlando, Florida, November 1, 1990. Ibid., 1514-21.

century."[73] This was the sixth time Bush had denied the oil motive since he first articulated it on 16th October.

- **Justifying the Second Troop Deployment**

Clearly, throughout October, Bush's rhetoric was replete with potent language resonating with justice intuitions. This may have been preparing the way for his most controversial action of the pre-war period, his announcement on 8th November that he was doubling the U.S. troop commitment in Saudi Arabia by sending an additional 150,000 troops, increasing U.S. forces to around 430,000 personnel.[74] In his announcement speech, he again downplayed the oil and economic motives, instead stating that "[w]e are talking about brutal, naked aggression".[75] In response to a reporter's question afterwards, he admitted that oil was a motive, but once again took care to untether it from American self-interest and reframed it in terms of its importance to developing and Eastern European countries. An astute reporter pressed Bush on this rather perplexing turnaround, asking:

> Going back to the speech you gave at the Pentagon back in August, when you talked about oil, protecting Middle East oil reserves, and you talked about American jobs, in fact the American way of life being endangered. Yet when you went out on the campaign trail, you seemed to shy away from oil. You said demonstrators don't seem to understand that we're not going to war for oil. But that was one of the things you talked about. And in fact, isn't oil part of the American national interest? Isn't that a main reason we're there?

[73] Remarks at a Republican Campaign Rally in Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 3, 1990. Ibid., 1541.
[74] Ibid., 1581.
[75] Remarks at a Republican Reception at Cincinatti, Ohio, November 2, 1990. Ibid., 1527.

Placed firmly on the spot, Bush admitted that oil was one of the reasons motivating action, but "not the main reason – or I'd say, a main reason. The main reason we're there is to set back aggression, to see that aggression is unrewarded […] The point is: It is the aggression against Kuwait that has caused this coalition to come together as it has."[76]

On 17th November, Bush made a speech in Prague marking the end of communist rule, in which he praised Czechoslovakia for being "one of the first nations to condemn the outrage in the Persian Gulf". In language strikingly similar to that of just deserts reasoning, he lauded the country for being "one of the first to measure *the magnitude of the wrong* committed in the name of territorial ambition." Again, the Nazi analogy followed in quick succession, along with framing the crisis in terms of right and wrong; and good and evil.[77] Two days later, in a joint press conference with Margaret Thatcher, Bush spoke of "the rationale – the moral underpinning" of the need to reprehend Hussein.[78]

Bush's next cluster of foreign policy speeches were given to American troops in Saudi Arabia on a morale-boosting trip. Here, he set out the "key reasons" explaining why his audience currently found themselves in the desert. These were "defence of peace and freedom", and "to protect the future" and "innocent lives", while he added somewhat ironically, that that these objectives had "never varied".[79] During another speech the same day, he again touched on the oil motive, but framed it in terms of its importance to developing countries, stating, "[y]ou know, in Eastern Europe, the economic shockwave in

[76] The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis, November 8, 1990. Ibid., 1582.
[77] Remarks in Prague, Czechoslovakia, at a Ceremony Commemorating the end of Communist Rule, November 17, 1990. Ibid., 1629.
[78] Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters Following Discussions With Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom in Paris, France, November 19, 1990. Ibid., 1640.
[79] Remarks to the Military Airlift Command in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, November 22, 1990. Ibid., 1666-67.

the Gulf threatens to disrupt the already difficult process of creating both new and democratic governments and free market economies."[80] In yet another speech to troops, Bush did acknowledge the importance of oil to the U.S., but again linked it to other nations, stating, "[t]he march of freedom must not be threatened by the man whose invasion of Kuwait is causing great economic hardship in the countries which can afford it least." He then went on to remind the assembled military personnel of Iraqi atrocities "that would make the strongest among us weep". He called his adversary "Saddam, the invader", a man who had "unleashed a horror on the people of Kuwait".[81] He also invoked the threat of Iraqi nuclear weapons, stating, "[e]very day that passes brings Saddam Hussein one step closer to realising his goal of a nuclear weapons arsenal. And that's another reason, frankly, why, more and more, our mission is marked by a real sense of urgency."[82]

- **Comparisons with Vietnam and Hostages**

In late November, Bush began denying that a war in the Gulf would resemble America's last major war, Vietnam. This was also something he stressed to Congress. On 30th November, Bush met with congressional leaders in the White House and when faced with strong reservations about the proposed use of force, he strenuously denied comparisons to the Vietnam War, stating, "[n]o hands are going to be tied behind backs. This is not a Vietnam. […] It will not be a long, drawn-out mess."[83] Bush also gave a press conference on this day, promising that the war would not be "another Vietnam."

[80] Remarks to United States Army Troops Near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, November 22, 1990. Ibid., 1669.
[81] Remarks to Allied Armed Forces Near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, November 22, 1990. Ibid., 1672-73.
[82] Remarks to the Military Airlift Command in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, November 22, 1990. Ibid., 1667.
[83] Quoted in Steven J. Wayne, "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance," in *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War: Leaders, Publics, and the Process of Conflict*, ed. Stanley A. Renshon (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 42.

The issue of hostages was emphasised from 23rd October into early November.[84] Between 23rd October and 3rd November, Bush mentioned the hostages eleven times, all unprompted. However, this issue was nullified on 6th December, when Hussein followed through on his promise and released the foreign captives, allowing the American detainees to be airlifted out of Kuwait. Hussein accompanied this gesture with an invitation to Bush to embark upon renewed negotiations, specifically relating to the Arab-Israeli question.[85]

- **Public Opinion**

Public support for war reached its nadir in mid-October, after which it "bottomed out" and would not decline any further for the rest of the pre-war period. Mueller finds that public opinion was largely stable between 8th November and the start of the conflict on 16th January.[86] However, it must be borne in mind that other political issues were distracting attention from the Gulf at this time, as the crisis became somewhat eclipsed by a contentious debate about the budget, in which Bush lost face over backtracking on his promise: "Read my lips: no new taxes."[87] October also saw Bush's approval rating plunge to 53 percent. However, comparatively, public approval over his handling of the Gulf situation did not decline to the same precipitous degree as it did over the economy. By early November, Bush's approval rate had recovered to its pre-crisis, July level, but dipped again in mid-November after the announcement of the second troop deployment, and recovered again in early December.[88]

[84] Hurst, "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush During the Persian Gulf Crisis 1990–91: How to Help Lose a War You Won," 380.
[85] Gardner, "The Ministry of Fear: Selling the Gulf Wars," 233.
[86] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 8.
[87] Ibid., 19.
[88] Ibid., 26.

A mid-November poll asked what kinds of issues would justify a "major war", or a "limited military involvement". The most popular reasons chosen were protecting the hostages, removing Hussein, and destroying Iraq's weapons capability, whereas oil and restoring the Kuwaiti government scored the lowest as justifications for a major war. These results were replicated in December.[89] On 12th November, one poll asking which goal was most important saw the hostages dominate, with 50 percent choosing this reason, compared to just 9 percent rating oil as the most important.[90] The public was also still confused about Bush's reasons for intervention. By mid-November, 51 percent of people thought that Bush had not explained his reasons sufficiently (compared to mid-August, when only 34 percent said this).[91]

Bush's 8th November announcement of the second troop deployment divided congressional opinion. Prior to this point, Bush had enjoyed support from the congressional leadership of both parties,[92] yet the second troop deployment fracturing this bipartisan support. The Democratic leadership began to speak out, with figures such as Senator Sam Nunn publicly arguing that Bush did not have the authority to wage war unilaterally.[93] On 20th November, Representative Ronald Dellums, joined by forty-four other members of Congress, filed a District Court lawsuit, *Dellums v. Bush*, to insist that Bush consult with and receive authorisation from Congress before taking any offensive action in the Gulf.[94] Administration officials claimed that Bush did not require congressional permission to

[89] Ibid., 251-55.
[90] Ibid., 246.
[91] Ibid., 200.
[92] Ibid., 20.
[93] Lewis and Rose, "The President, the Press, and the War-Making Power: An Analysis of Media Coverage Prior to the Persian Gulf War."
[94] Eileen Burgin, "Rethinking the Role of the War Powers Resolution: Congress and the Persian Gulf War," *Journal of Legislation* 21, no. 1 (1995): 31.

implement the Security Council's Resolution 678 authorising member states to use "all necessary force" to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait by 15th January 1991.

Despite Bush's disavowals of the oil rationale, his public relations effort was dealt a blow by Secretary of State James Baker's comments on 14th November, when in an exchange with reporters, he stated the primary reason motivating U.S. interest in the Gulf was American jobs. Baker told reporters that "[t]o bring it [intervention] down to the level of the average American citizen, let me say that means jobs. If you want to sum it up in one word, it's jobs."[95] Baker later blamed his comment on his own confusion amid the diverse rationales being given by the administration, as he had been:

> frustrated by the administration's collective inability to articulate a single, coherent, consistent rationale for the President's policy. Our public pronouncements had ranged from the principled to the esoteric. At times we talked of standing up to aggression and creating a new world order. At others we called Saddam the new Hitler and cited the threat to global stability from rising oil prices… We were beginning to pay a political price at home as a result of our rhetorical confusion.[96]

In terms of emotional diplomacy, Baker departed from the official message that Bush was trying to so hard to convey in his public communications at this time. The incident also illustrates just how extensive was the confusion over why the U.S. should intervene. It hardly

[95] Thomas L. Friedman, "Mideast Tensions Us Jobs at Stake in Gulf Baker Says," *New York Times*, November 14th 1990.
[96] James Addison Baker and Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 336.

bears mention that if the Secretary of State was confused, then surely ordinary people were even more so.

In December, the administration, in conjunction with Bush's media consultant Roger Ailes (who exerted a strong influence on Bush[97]) initiated a further study of public opinion known as the "Pilot Study". This study surveyed eleven focus groups in New York, San Francisco, Dallas, and Kansas City, and the results revealed that a clearer justification for the intervention was still needed. Although the participants were willing to support a "pragmatic and ethical" war in principle, the most important reason respondents gave for intervention concerned Hussein personally. He was described as clever and aggressive, a "terrorist", a "real dictator", and a "madman".

The participants were more divided over oil, with disagreement over whether American interests were truly at stake, and "[a]ll participants rejected some of the secondary justifications for war, such as protecting Israel, restoring the Kuwaiti government, retribution for hostage-taking, and the United States' responsibility as a "world policeman." The summary introduces a new fear and threat, with many respondents were "terrified at the prospect of engaging in a war with Hussein and an "Islamic army." The Iraqi population was perceived as "culturally different" and deemed capable of fighting with a "ferocity and cruelty that most Americans find disturbingly alien."

The authors of the study concluded that the public viewed Iraqi soldiers as similar to the North Vietnamese regulars of the Vietnam War.[98] In line with retributive theory, the role

[97] Anthony Michael Crews, *"'The Art of Ruling the Minds of Men': George H. W. Bush and the Justifications for Intervention in the Gulf War"* (Ohio University, 2010), 148.
[98] Quoted in ibid., 140-41.

of provocation played an important role in the focus group's opinions. It was found that the respondents "respond positively when reminded: Saddam started it, of all the steps taken by the president to resolve this peacefully, we are showing restraint and the U.S. is not the aggressor."[99] Also at this time, polls indicated that almost half of people thought that the march to war was escalating too quickly.[100]

- **Bush's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

By October, Bush's concerns about public support had deepened. By this time, he had concluded that sanctions were not working – at least not fast enough for his liking – and worried that the longer the situation continued, the more public support would unravel, perhaps undoing the support of the international coalition.[101] Around this time, it was becoming clear to senior administration staff that Bush's speeches were failing to mobilise the public.[102] Robert Teeter, Bush's chief pollster, told Bush on several occasions in October that he was using too many rationales, advising him to narrow them down to two: halting aggression and protecting the hostages. Investigative journalist Bob Woodward documents that Baker, too, agreed that the hostages rationale would be the most resonant with the American people, as Baker noted that "the plight of the Emir of Kuwait, his people, aggression and oil, were not selling to the American people."[103]

[99] Quoted in Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"," 150.
[100] Richard Sobel, *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy since Vietnam: Constraining the Colossus* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 162.
[101] Elaine Sciolino, *The Outlaw State: Saddam Hussein's Quest for Power and the Gulf Crisis* (New York and Chichester: Wiley, 1991), 233.
[102] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 399-400.
[103] Woodward, *The Commanders*, 600-02.

During this period in which with hindsight we now know was the low water mark of public support, the White House appears to have responded accordingly, undertaking intensive efforts to gauge public opinion and conduct public relations operations. A working group was created, which on 29th November published a "Gulf Policy Communications Plan" intended to clarify the objectives of Operation Desert Shield and secure popular support. The plan included co-opting "surrogates" to spread the administration's message, including congressional leaders, policy experts, business and media figures and veterans. A related document outlined the communications strategy for Operation Desert Shield. For November, it included a plan for the debate around the U.N. vote on Resolution 678. The strategy was to make former presidents and their cabinets available for interviews towing the policy line, plus using the media as a platform to spread the message.

The strategy for December included publishing press opinion pieces and sending "favourable material and clippings" on a weekly basis to influential media outlets. Pearl Harbor Day (7th December) and Human Rights Day (10th December) were to be associated with the war, and an ABC *Nightline* special on Kuwait was to be aired on the former, and a statement about Kuwait to be released on the latter date.[104] The White House Communications Plan for January instructed government officials to speak of specific themes, namely Hussein's immoral character, his use of chemical weapons, his desire to develop nuclear weapons, and his territorial and oil ambitions. Importantly, one of the themes was a purely just deserts rationale, that "the United States was morally obliged to punish the heinous crimes of Saddam Hussein's regime".[105] Clearly, during this period the

[104] Crews, *"'The Art of Ruling the Minds of Men": George H. W. Bush and the Justifications for Intervention in the Gulf War*," 113-15.
[105] Quoted in ibid., 134-35.

administration took a proactive approach to assessing public opinion and adjusting its public communications accordingly.

Throughout this period, the issue of provocation featured heavily in Bush's thinking. He made a candid diary entry on 17th October recording a conversation with Brent Scowcroft which illuminates how provocation was central to Bush's calculations about legitimising retaliation:

> A day of churning. Brent Scowcroft, my trusted friend, comes for dinner. We talk about how we get things moving, and what we do about the [question of] provocation. The news is saying some members of Congress feel I might use a minor incident to go to war, and they may be right. We must get this over with. The longer it goes, the longer the erosion. I think we can draw the line in the sand – draw it in the sand in American life.[106]

This is a fascinating admission in terms of showing Bush's innate understanding that force would be viewed as illegitimate unless an Iraqi provocation first occurred. Although he realises that a more severe provocation would hold greater legitimacy, he is prepared to act on the basis of a more minor provocation, regardless. In this instance, attacking Iraq in the absence of a further precipitating factor (beyond the initial transgression of the invasion, that is), might leave the administration open to charges of unwarranted aggression. As discussed, violent behaviour without a trigger event is viewed as more straightforwardly offensive, whereas responding to an act that could be perceived as a provocation changes this dynamic, and Bush could conceivably reinforce further actions as defensive. It is also interesting that

[106] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 382.

Bush and Scowcroft consider that even a minor incident will serve this legitimising purpose; the point is to be perceived as *responding to* rather than *initiating* violence.

One potential provocation that hung in the background at this time was the foreign hostages. On 29th October, Bush was asked by reporters whether he considered their detainment and apparent maltreatment to be a "provocation". Bush refused to be drawn, stating that he would be guided by United Nations' decisions.[107] Bush held a two-hour meeting at the White House that day, during which it was decided that a second mass troop deployment would proceed.[108] Bush clearly had decided to go ahead in the absence of a further provocation, it seems provisionally using the hostage situation for this purpose.

The following day in an exchange with reporters, Bush said that the U.S. did not require a "pretext" for action, because "you just do what's right."[109] This was clearly contrary to Bush's conversation with Scowcroft on 17th October in which he discussed the need for an Iraqi provocation to legitimise the use of force. It is possible that his recent emphasis on the moral imperative to act was a way of paving the way for military action in the absence of provocation, as he was now suggesting.

Bush received a detailed picture of public attitudes in December, when Ailes wrote to him telling him the results of the Pilot Study. Ailes told Bush that pollsters believed that public support for war "does not currently exist", and that many "have not embraced the

[107] Exchange With Reporters in San Francisco, California, October 29, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1485.
[108] Wayne, "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance," 38.
[109] Exchange with Reporters in Alexandria, Virginia, October 31, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1498.

cause". Ailes reported that the "most dramatic and pervasive theme" identified in their respondents was the "necessity of avoiding another Vietnam".[110]

- **Analysis**

Bush's rhetoric during this time is marked by the striking swing beginning in early October away from the oil rationale and to emphasise the moral aspects of the situation. He alternately de-emphasised or denied entirely this motive, marking a sharp contrast to his earlier communications in which he showed little reluctance about stating the importance of the national interest at stake. Remarkably, now, the oil rationale was demoted to less than "a main reason" for intervention. Bush's concern about the Gulf was reframed as being rooted primarily in moral imperatives: the "fight" was not about oil, but "civilised values" and "principles". Bush appears to have projected the idea that the egregious harms now coming to light in the atrocity tales had supplanted the earlier material interests which had driven U.S. concerns over the invasion. As the reporter who quizzed Bush about these inconsistencies on 8th November seemed to imply, understanding this new position required a degree of mental gymnastics.

Once again, the sequencing of the Nazi analogy is interesting. Whereas in Phase I of the discourse Bush's propensity was to insert this directly after the oil rationale, he now inserted it after the morally freighted atrocity tales. His new emphasis on human rights abuses was powerfully reinforced by Nayirah's testimony in Washington. Here was a weeping Kuwaiti girl reliving her trauma, a figure to whom Americans could relate personally and

[110] Quoted in Rottinghaus, "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"," 148.

direct their empathy towards. Likewise, from 16th October, Bush tended to inject descriptions of specific persons harmed by the Iraqis – in one case a Kuwaiti official's mother. Whether intentional or not, narratives concerning identifiable victims are far more likely to elicit moral outrage and retribution than unidentified ones.

Phase III

Mid-December 1990 to Mid-January 1991: Morality and Vietnam

- **Morality**

During this final month of the mobilisation discourse, Bush continued with his moral framing of the situation. This was especially evident in a 16th December interview with British journalist David Frost. Bush again set out the case in explicitly moral terms, stating "[w]hen you have such a clear sense of good and – good versus evil. We have such a clear moral case. […] It's that big. It's that important. Nothing like this since World War II. Nothing of this moral importance since World War II." Bush also gave an emotional and graphic description of the atrocities, stating,

> "Oh David, it was so terrible, it's hard to describe. […] The torturing of a handicapped child. The shooting of young boys in front of their parents. The rape of women dragged out of their homes and repeatedly raped and then brought into the hospital as kind of basket cases. The tying of those that are being tortured to ceiling fans so they turn and turn. The killing of a – of a Kuwaiti and leaving him hanging – this is a picture of this one – leaving him hanging from a crane and so others will see him. Electric shots to the private – shocks to the private parts of

men and women. Broken glass inserted in – jabbed into people. I mean, it – it is primeval. And I – I'm afraid I'd get very emotional if I described more of it.[111]

At a news conference with regional reporters on 18th December, a reporter asked a piercing question about the "moral consistency of the U.S. policy on Iraq". The reporter did not spare Bush in raising the contradictions inherent in the administration's case for war, and his précis of the mobilisation discourse is worth quoting:

> During the 1980s, Iraq waged a war of brutal aggression against a different neighbour, Iran. It also used chemical weapons against Iranians and against its own Kurdish population. It also worked on its nuclear programme. But rather than go to war against Iraq in that case, the United States took Iraq's side. In the case of the chemical weapons, the Reagan and then the Bush administrations opposed all efforts to impose sanctions in protest against the use of chemical weapons. And in the nuclear area, the United States condemned Israel for setting back Iraq's nuclear programme. So, my question is: Is it hypocritical now to threaten war over conduct by the same regime when the similar conduct was condoned or even supported against different adversaries in the recent past?

Bush rebutted the charges, stating, "[n]o, I don't think it's hypocritical whatsoever". Stressing the multilateral nature of the intervention, Bush admitted that "it is true that our administration and others previously tried to work with Iraq. But this brutal aggression – what they did here is such a clear violation of international law and the entire world was united in opposition to it. So, if there was a mistake made in trying to move them along a

[111] Quoted in Wayne, "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance," 40-41.

more civilised path by having contacts as we did, fine. But this kind of revisionistic [sic] view that that makes what's happening today wrong – I'm sorry, I don't agree with that at all. I think the whole world is united against this."[112]

On 9th January, as Tariq Aziz and Baker met in Geneva for last-ditch diplomatic talks, Bush kept up the public relations momentum, writing an open letter to university newspapers. Framing the issue in moral terms from the start, the situation was a case of "right vs. wrong", and Hussein's actions violated "every principle of human decency". He cited Amnesty International's report verifying the Iraqi atrocities, listing the entire catalogue of offences. The incubator story and harms committed against children served to illustrate that "there's no horror that could make this a more obvious conflict between good versus evil." He then moved to threat and oil towards the end of the letter, but again, the concern with oil was framed as an altruistic one. He implored his readers to "think about the economic devastation that Saddam Hussein would continue to wreak on the world's emerging democracies if he were in control of one-fifth of the world's oil reserves – and to reflect on the terrible threat that a Saddam Hussein armed with weapons of mass destruction already poses to human life and to the future of all nations."[113]

Bush's final opportunity to lay out the case for war came once the decision had been made, on 16th January. The military operation, he said, would "chart the future of the world for the next hundred years." He again referenced the incubators story, and told the nation that "Saddam Hussein systematically raped, pillaged, and plundered a tiny nation, no threat to his

[112] The President's News Conference With Regional Reporters, December 18, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1806.
[113] Open Letter to College Students on the Persian Gulf Crisis, January 9, 1991. "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," ed. National Archives and Records Service Federal Register Division (District of Columbia1991), 25-26.

own. He subjected the people of Kuwait to unspeakable atrocities – and among those maimed and murdered, innocent children." He followed this statement with one referencing threat: "While the world waited, Saddam sought to add to the chemical weapons arsenal he now possesses, an infinitely more dangerous weapon of mass destruction – a nuclear weapon."[114]

- **Not Another Vietnam**

Bush's protestations that a Gulf war would not repeat the mistakes of Vietnam continued through December and January. In an interview with *US News and World Report*, he was careful to emphasise the lessons learned: "[n]ever fight with a hand tied behind your back. Never send a kid into a battle unless you're going to give him total support. Don't send a mission in undermanned. Don't send them in where you tell commanding officers what they can't do."[115] At the 18th December press conference, Bush was asked how he would maintain public support if the war escalated. Bush responded by denying that this war would resemble Vietnam, and admitted, "I don't think that support would last if it were a long, drawn-out conflagration. I think support would erode".[116]

On 3rd January Bush met with congressional leaders at the White House to discuss the crisis. His persuasive efforts at this meeting included a bald denial that war with Iraq would resemble Vietnam, stating, "[t]here is no Vietnam parallel".[117] Bush's final mobilisation address to the nation was a radio address on 5th January. Again, Bush reassured his audience

[114] Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf, January 16, 1991. Ibid., 42-45.
[115] Wayne, "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance," 42.
[116] The President's News Conference with Regional Reporters, December 18, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1805.
[117] Wayne, "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance," 42.

that this war would not resemble Vietnam, declaring within the first few sentences that "there will be no more Vietnams".[118]

- **Public Opinion**

Mueller observes that public opinion was particularly stable in the two months preceding Desert Storm, even though the debate about war was at its height.[119] Certainly, the Gulf situation was looming large in the public mind. Several days before the war commenced, polls showed that 22 percent of respondents said they thought about the situation every few minutes, 27 percent at least once an hour,[120] while almost 80 percent reported "staying up late" to watch the news.[121] By the close of 1990, the confusion about why intervention was necessary seems to have largely subsided, with polls revealing that three-quarters of respondents felt they had a clear idea of why troops were in Saudi Arabia.[122] Interestingly, Bush's rhetoric appears to have successfully shifted attention from oil. A poll conducted on 11-13th January revealed a majority, 42 percent, thought that the main reason U.S. forces were in the Gulf was to halt aggression, whereas only 29 percent cited oil.[123]

It is instructive to look at which motives for intervention the public favoured most by the outbreak of war in January 1991. The highest proportion of respondents - eighty one percent - thought that intervention was justified to halt atrocities, to prevent "Iraqi troops from continuing to kill or mistreat the Kuwaiti people". Interestingly, by this time, support

[118] Radio Address to the Nation on the Persian Gulf Crisis, January 5, 1991. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 10.
[119] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, xv.
[120] Ibid., 28.
[121] Iyengar and Simon, "News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing," 366.
[122] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 27-29.
[123] Ibid., 245.

for intervening to protect oil supplies was resurgent, as it was the second most popular reason to intervene, with 74 percent in favour. This is curious, considering that Bush had been downplaying oil since the initial phase, and perhaps suggests the influence of other channels influencing public attitudes, such as the media or Hill and Knowlton's campaigns. The next rationale in terms of popular support was preventing Iraq from obtaining nuclear weapons, with 69 percent favouring this motive.[124]

In the first week of January, approval ratings of Bush's performance were at 58 percent.[125] Once Instant Thunder commenced, public opinion again surged in another rally effect.[126] By 17th January, 78 percent thought the U.S. had done the "right thing" in using force against Iraq. This same group of people had, on 5th-7th January, given only 47 percent approval for military action.[127]

- **Bush's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

On December 14th, Bush noted in his diary that he was heartened by the trend of public opinion, writing that "recent polls show the American people much more supportive than I thought they would've been. I cannot say that I have made the determination to pull the trigger, but I can tell you… that if they aren't on board by In January15th, I'm going to have to make that decision real fast."[128] On 4th January 1991, Bush wrote in his diary that public opinion was now firmly on the side of intervention. Having consulted an ABC-Washington Post poll, Bush was buoyed to see that "80 percent think that we ought to use force sooner

[124] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers," 698.
[125] B. Norrander and C. Wilcox, "Rallying around the Flag and Partisan Change - the Case of the Persian Gulf War," *Political Research Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1993): 759.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Quoted in Freedman and Karsh, "How Kuwait Was Won," 17.
[128] Bush and Scowcroft, A World Transformed, 427.

rather than later; well over two to one think the president's policy is correct; and on and on."[129]

- **Analysis**

By the end of the mobilisation period, the reason the public most favoured for war was to halt the atrocities. As Liberman observes, by January, "the public seemed to prefer punitive and moral justifications for war to geopolitical ones."[130] However, if we consider that oil was the next most favoured rationale, this does not exactly mean that geopolitical reasons were unimportant. Does this mean that Bush's use of retributive rhetoric was successful? As mentioned, this thesis cannot posit causal connections between presidential communications and swings in public opinion. The wide-ranging and simultaneous public relations activities of Hill and Knowlton were no doubt also heavily instrumental in manipulating public opinion. If inferences can be drawn at all, citing oil as second in importance does not appear to be consistent with the president's messaging, suggesting a degree of independence in public attitudes from elite cues.

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF THE MOBILISATION DISCOURSE

Over the entire period spanning 2nd August 1990 to 16th January 1991, Bush supplied multiple justifications for intervening in the Gulf. While almost all of these were invoked continually over the period, some were emphasised more in various phases of the discourse as Bush adjusted his rhetoric in line with his perceptions of public opinion. In the first phase,

[129] Ibid., 439.
[130] Liberman, "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers," 698.

seven main rationales for intervention were identified, but it is telling that he candidly admitted that oil supplies motivated his concern over the events in the Gulf. At this early stage, presumably before he had been able to gauge public reactions to the prospect of American involvement, he assumed the case for intervention was self-evident and saw no need to disguise the oil rationale. This was especially explicit in his 8th August national address announcing the troop deployment.

However, by mid-October it was becoming apparent that the oil rationale was proving not just unpersuasive, but unpopular. Bush experienced the intensity of anti-war feeling first-hand when confronted by anti-war protestors at campaign rally events. It was precisely at this time that he began denying and downplaying this motive and simultaneously emphasising narratives detailing human rights abuses. Prior to mid-October, Bush made one early reference to human rights abuses on 15th August, when, unprompted, he referred to "reports out of Kuwait [that] tell a sordid tale of brutality". From that point onwards, his references to Iraqi brutality were brief and usually in response to questions.[131] Then, from 9th October onwards, references to atrocities were offered unprompted, and they became graphic narratives often involving specific victims. Bush invoked the full panoply of justice intuitions relating to moral blameworthiness. Interestingly, Bush's attitude towards hostages was ambivalent. He downplayed this issue until late October but began emphasising the matter in early November. Overall, this alteration in Bush's rhetoric in which he employed retributive rhetoric to a far greater degree appears to have been a recalibration in response to his perceptions of public reticence about war and falling levels of public support. The final phase

[131] Hurst, "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush During the Persian Gulf Crisis 1990–91: How to Help Lose a War You Won," 381.

of the discourse saw Bush continue to use retributive rhetoric and to take pains to deny that a conflict in the Gulf would resemble the Vietnam war.

The two main analogies used by Bush – one positive, comparing Hussein to Hitler in World War II, and one negative, denying that a Gulf war would resemble Vietnam – are judged to have been consequential, with several scholars arguing that the World War II analogy ultimately determined the decision for war.[132] One can perhaps understand why the World War II analogy appealed to Bush. It provided low attention citizens with a pre-packaged set of character roles for the main actors, casting Hussein as the evil villain, Iraq as Germany, and America as the Allies.[133] The implications of this were also advantageous: it undermined the prudence of diplomatic solutions with the ill-fated attempts at Nazi appeasement in the 1930s and thus implicitly justified the use of force.

Likewise, the Vietnam analogy, which become more prominent from late November, was used to allay reservations about a prospective drawn-out war.[134] Bush clearly realised that an intervention would have to be quick and decisive, as it was obvious that public opinion would not support another "quagmire" war. The analogy to Vietnam is thought to have directly shaped the policy preferences of Bush and his civilian advisers in fuelling their desire for a rapid response.[135] Interestingly, the legacy of Vietnam shaped Colin Powell's strategy in the opposite direction, as he wanted to delay action until larger forces were assembled so that an offensive would be decisive.[136] Accordingly, General Norman

[132] Macdonald, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait."; Tim Rohrer, "The Metaphorical Logic of (Political) Rape: The New Wor(L)D Order," *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 10, no. 2 (1995); Spellman and Holyoak, "If Saddam Is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush? Analogical Mapping between Systems of Social Roles."
[133] "If Saddam Is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush? Analogical Mapping between Systems of Social Roles."
[134] Crews, "'The Art of Ruling the Minds of Men": George H. W. Bush and the Justifications for Intervention in the Gulf War," 20.
[135] Freedman and Karsh, "How Kuwait Was Won," 15-16.
[136] Macdonald, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," 33.

Schwarzkopf's first battle plan, presented in October, was based on a year-long build-up of forces in the Gulf. Yet Bush rejected the plan on the basis that a year was politically unacceptable."[137] This illustrates how different actors can draw differing lessons from the same analogy.

Bush's extensive use of metaphor during the mobilisation discourse has been described by George Lakoff as a "panorama of metaphor".[138] Bush used metaphor to liken the invasion of Kuwait to violations of the body, calling the invasion the "rape" of Kuwait. Visceral descriptions such as this are likely to have been effective in helping citizens to view the (Category Two) situation in more serious Category One terms, elevating the moral importance of the situation and eliciting a stronger emotional response. This may have simplified the matter in the minds of low information citizens who otherwise may have struggled to understand the underlying political complexities of the situation.

A Paradigm Case of Emotional Mobilisation

Bush's mobilisation discourse conforms well to the expectations of the theory. Public uncertainty about strategic incentives and reticence to intervene which became apparent in early October, combined with the Category Two case seriousness, and Bush's policy preference for intervention entail that retributive rhetoric would be expected. Indeed, Bush's mobilisation discourse was an almost textbook performance of the idiom of retribution. From mid-October, his communications were laden with language relevant to justice intuitions.

[137] Ibid.
[138] Lakoff, "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf."

In addition to the atrocity tales which formed the centrepiece of his retributive rhetoric, he stressed his own and the international community's sense of moral outrage over the invasion, and constructed an 'othering' of Hussein, which quickly evolved into outright demonisation. Retributive sentiment is intensified when directed towards an identified perpetrator, and Colin Powell inadvertently illuminated this intuitive tactic of the discourse when he admitted, "you demonize an enemy such as the president tended to do with Saddam Hussein and others did – and frankly I did it from time to time *because it was useful putting a face on this crisis*."[139]

Bush emphasised the indicators of Iraqi moral culpability, stressing Hussein's intent and lack of provocation. The atrocity stories would likely have possessed the most persuasive power of all, as they consisted of vivid Category One harms likely to spark emotion. As John MacArthur notes, when Bush began using the incubator story, he "began spinning political gold out of dead babies."[140] Not once did he mention the underlying economic reasons spurring Hussein's actions (which might have helped some observers understand Hussein's behaviour).

How Instrumental Was the Discourse?

As is the case with all the empirical studies of this thesis, the actual motives for U.S. intervention are, strictly speaking, peripheral to the main analytic task of investigating retributive rhetoric and its effects. However, it is enlightening to address the issue, as the degree of consonance between official communication and the genuine motives of the

[139] Quoted in Gardner, "The Ministry of Fear: Selling the Gulf Wars," 235. (Emphasis added).
[140] MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War*, 65.

president illustrates the level of performative labour undertaken by Bush. In respect of Bush's private thoughts, ideally, evidence would be drawn from transcripts of his telephone calls and minutes of his meetings with senior aides. Unfortunately, such resources are unavailable. His diaries, withstanding the caveat that they will undoubtedly have been written with an eye to posterity, offer one available window on his private thoughts, and suggest that moral concerns did at least partly inform his motives for action.

As previously discussed, Bush's desire to intervene for strategic reasons appears to have been strong at the outset of the crisis. The crux of the strategic problem lay in the fact that Iraq represented a longer-term national and security threat to the West. Left unchecked, Hussein may next have annexed the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, doubling his control of oil and with it the ability to control global prices.[141] Additionally, the regime was known to possess chemical weapons and it was feared that the country would soon possess nuclear arms. It is highly probable that Bush, with these strategic and geopolitical exigencies pressing upon him, deemed that military action was unavoidable. Protecting Kuwaiti sovereignty was the immediate objective and served as a pretext for the longer-term, strategic goal of neutralising Iraq's potential threat to stability in the Middle East and beyond.

However, Bush's genuine moral commitment to intervention appears to have emerged as the situation developed. In the early days of the crisis, he admits he considered the situation "exclusively as a dangerous strategic threat and an injustice". However, after the Emir of Kuwait visited him on 28th September and related atrocity tales, he began to view reversing the invasion as a "moral crusade", which was an adjustment he "came to gradually

[141] Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, 214.

through August and September."[142] Those close to Bush at the time have reported that he indeed appeared "emotionally absorbed, even obsessed, by the crisis" and "seemed to yearn to have a war."[143]

If his view of the situation had indeed shifted to a more moral perspective, this would have infused his determination to intervene militarily against Hussein as a natural result of retributive reasoning. By Christmas Day 1990, he expressed this in his diary, "I think of the evil of this man. He has to not only be checked, but punished, and then we worry about how we handle our relations with the Arab countries."[144] Lending further credence to the idea that Bush was personally committed to a moral view of the crisis, he reportedly told senior White House staff, "[i]f I have to go, it's not going to matter to me if there isn't one congressman who supports this, or what happens to public opinion. If it's right. It's gotta be done."[145] Similar evidence comes from a letter Bush wrote to his children expressing his belief in the World War II analogy and his moral view of the situation. At that time, he was reading a book on the Second World War, which may account for his reliance on the analogy.[146] In the letter, he wondered, "[h]ow many lives might have been saved if appeasement had given way to force earlier on in the late '30s or early '40s? How many Jews might have been spared the gas chambers, or how many Polish patriots might be alive today? I look at today's crisis as "good" vs. "evil." Yes, it is that clear."[147] Bush also was disdainful of presidential "crafted talk,"[148] and often dispensed with a speech text and scripted his own rhetoric,[149] lending

[142] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 374.
[143] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 20.
[144] Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 434.
[145] Quoted in Wayne, "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance," 32.
[146] Remarks at a Republican Campaign Rally in Manchester, New Hampshire, October 23, 1990. United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States," 1449.
[147] Quoted in Macdonald, "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," 31.
[148] Wynton C. Hall, ""Reflections of Yesterday": George H. W. Bush's Instrumental Use of Public Opinion Research in Presidential Discourse," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2002): 547.
[149] Mark J. Rozzell, "In Reagan's Shadow: Bush's Antirhetorical Presidency," ibid.28, no. 1 (1998).

further support to the idea that his motives and rhetoric were not purely performative but rooted in genuine moral imperatives.

On the other hand, the fact that Bush adjusted his rhetoric so strikingly to deny the importance of oil when he realised it was not persuasive, suggests that his mobilisation discourse was, to a high degree, instrumental. This lends credibility to viewing Bush's mobilisation discourse as an excellent example of performative retributive rhetoric. Of course, genuinely felt emotion and its instrumental use are not mutually exclusive; it is likely that Bush did feel genuinely moved over the issue, but the objective of securing public approval for intervention entailed that he tailored his discourse to fit the demands of political expediency.

Was Retributive Rhetoric Effective?

Despite Bush's efforts, public opinion in the pre-war period did not fluctuate dramatically. Mueller writes that "in general, there were few clear, unambiguous changes in public opinion over the course of the pre-war period from August 1990 to the middle of January. People did not become consistently more hawkish or dovish, more war-eager or war-averse, or more, or less, supportive of Bush or his policies. And their perceptions of the reasons behind involvement and the reasons for going to war apparently did not change very much either."[150] This contradicts other reports, for example one writer claims that the national debate caused by Nayirah's tale of the incubators turned "those who had previously wavered on the issue" into "warriors".[151] Yet Mueller's study charting the overall stability of public opinion over

[150] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 43.
[151] Regan, "When Contemplating War, Beware of Babies in Incubators".

the duration of the mobilisation period indicates that Bush's retributive rhetoric did not have dramatic effects. Steven Hurst writes that as well as failing to increase support, Bush's change of rationales in the autumn of 1990 did not even halt the decline in support, arguing, "the possibility that the new rationales may at least have halted a decline in support is undermined by the fact that they were no more appealing to the American public than the initial ones."[152]

In his survey of polling data during the pre-war period, Mueller concludes that Bush's success in gaining authorisation for war had little to do with his ability to persuade, but was due to a constellation of factors, which he lists as his position as foreign policy leader and the concomitant degree of public trust invested in the office; Hussein's cooperation in playing the villain; and beliefs that the war would be strategically useful, quick, and low in casualties. He asserts that the greatest force helping Bush's cause was "growing fatalism about war", inducing a feeling of: "Let's get it over with."[153]

Bush was not particularly successful in leading congressional opinion, either. Faced with Democratic majorities in both Houses, he blatantly disregarded his obligations under the 1973 War Powers Resolution to consult with Congress in the decision-making leading to war. Although he met with congressmen over twenty times during the prelude to war,[154] he failed to consult with Congress on all the major decisions: the August and November troop deployments, and the decision to seek a UN Security Council Resolution.[155] Instead, he focused on gaining international authorisation and building a coalition through the U.N.

[152] Hurst, "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush During the Persian Gulf Crisis 1990–91: How to Help Lose a War You Won," 387-88.
[153] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, xv.
[154] Gary R. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 196.
[155] Burgin, "Rethinking the Role of the War Powers Resolution: Congress and the Persian Gulf War."

After the U.N. Resolution was passed on 29th November, Bush justified his lack of consultation with Congress on the matter by stating "I cannot consult with 535 strong-willed individuals. I can't do it, nor does my responsibility under the Constitution compel me to do that."[156] Bush was eventually forced to consult with these strong-willed individuals *via* the January debates. The three-day Senate debates saw the atrocity stories recirculated, indicating that Bush had either convinced Senators of its importance, or that they too were engaging in emotional diplomacy by repeating the official line. Research demonstrates that when opinion leaders speak in the same terms as the president, it indicates that they have been well-persuaded by the president.[157]

While Bush's overall *policy* preference and planning for war did not seem to have been altered by public opinion, he consistently adjusted his rhetoric in response to it. The rationales for intervention altered in direct relationship to his perceptions of public opinion, as he adopted arguments deemed to be the most expedient. However, the fact that on the eve of war's outbreak, the most popular rationale was to halt maltreatment of the Kuwaiti people suggests that retributive rhetoric may indeed have been persuasive, even if its effects were marginal. Juxtaposed against this is the unexpected result that the public at this time found oil to be the second most important justification for intervention. The public arrived at this almost independently of Bush's rhetoric, as he had attempted to dissociate himself from the oil rationale since the first phase of mobilisation. This suggests that the importance of self-interested, substantive matters increased over time, independent of presidential rhetoric.

[156] Ibid., 30.
[157] Reiner Grundmann, Dennis Smith, and Sue Wright, "National Elites and Transnational Discourses in the Balkan War: A Comparison between the French, German and British Establishment Press," *European Journal of Communication* 15, no. 3 (2000).

Overall, these mixed priorities, combined with the stability of public opinion over the final two months of the mobilisation period, serves to illustrate the inherent difficulty of mobilising public support for war. As Liberman observes, all the conditions were in place for retribution to influence mass attitudes: "a fiendish enemy, political good-versus-evil framing, extensive media coverage, and uncertainty about the net benefits of war."[158] And yet, even in this case, retributive rhetoric appears to have made little difference to public opinion. Granted, Bush is considered to have been an "inept rhetorician",[159] and apparently considered presidential rhetoric "a minor part of the job".[160] Certainly, his mobilisation discourse reflects this, for if it has one defining attribute, it is its failure to transmit a cohesive message. Another aspect to keep in mind is that the Gulf war was not "overwhelmingly important" to the public. It did not grip public attention to the same degree that past issues had – for example drugs, nuclear war, unemployment, and inflation.[161]

Bush's rhetorical maladroitness and domestic distractions notwithstanding, in one sense, his eventual success in leading the country to war could be interpreted as a successful example of a presidential persuasion. However, the narrow margins by which he marshalled public support show that his victory was a close-run matter. This case demonstrates the limitations of retributive rhetoric; in the case of a Category Two harm with third country victims, the persuasiveness of this discourse is not a given. Even with Bush's extensive emotive appeals, the invasion of Kuwait was not perceived as morally severe enough to generate spontaneous and sustained support for war. The most likely reason for this is that due to the above circumstances, Kuwait's plight held a tenuous claim on the sympathies of

[158] Liberman, "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War," 28.
[159] Hall, ""Reflections of Yesterday": George H. W. Bush's Instrumental Use of Public Opinion Research in Presidential Discourse," 533.
[160] Rozzell, "In Reagan's Shadow: Bush's Antirhetorical Presidency," 129.
[161] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 53.

ordinary Americans. The case illustrates the difficulties for presidents to rally the public in these circumstances.

Why Was the Oil Rationale Unpersuasive?

The American public did not find oil a sufficiently persuasive reason to back a war when Bush was pressing this rationale. However, by January, opinion had cycled back around to finding this the second most important reason for intervention. This is rather surprising from a rationalist perspective. If ordinary people do indeed support war based on its perceived costs and benefits (as most of the scholarship on this topic assumes), then surely, the importance of oil to the American economy should have aligned opinion with Bush's cause from the beginning. This should have been even more persuasive to those Americans who were aware of Bush's explications linking oil to the everyday living conditions of Americans. So why was oil not persuasive, initially? And why did the public come to view it as important by January?

Here is another example of where the lens of retributive psychology can help illuminate public opinion. As a Category Two harm, the Iraqi invasion elicited ambivalent feelings about military intervention, which became most evident in the autumn when support dipped to its lowest levels. In situations of psychological uncertainty, "system one" heuristic mental processing would have held more persuasive power, which relies primarily on emotional processing. Yet for many Americans, the arguments concerning oil did not command their emotional attention. Even though they were told that disruption to oil supplies could affect their daily lives, the threat was abstract, diffuse, and lacked vividness.

Why the public came to view it as important by January is hard to explain. Mueller offers an interesting perspective from polling data showing that the oil rationale generated divergent levels of support depending on whether Iraqi aggression was framed in more, or less, emotive terms. For example, when asked whether oil justified the loss of U.S. soldiers' lives, large majorities (61, 65 and 91 percent) responded that oil did not justify this. However, when the question was framed in a way that did not invoke Category One harms, simply asking about resource security, these questions regularly produced support of over 70 percent.[162]

It could be that by January, the public had become reassured that intervening to protect oil would not jeopardise human lives in the way the prospective war threatened to do upon first contemplating a prospective war, when the spectre of Vietnam would no doubt have been colouring reactions. Of course, in the final phase of the discourse, Bush had begun to emphasise that a war in the Gulf would not repeat the mistakes of Vietnam. This reassurance could have successfully allayed the public's fears of incurring serious Category One harms, and once this concern had faded, allowed citizens to come to see the importance of oil in a more rational manner. This explanation is speculatory, however, because as previously stated in Chapter 1, caution must be exercised over the confidence with which we draw firm conclusions about the influence of retributive rhetoric on public opinion from the evidence available.

A further reason why the oil rationale was not initially persuasive may be illuminated by the retributive lens. One poll repeatedly asked the same set of questions about the kinds of provocations that would present the most legitimate grounds for intervention. The poll, which

[162] Ibid., 250.

ran from 9th August – 16th November, found that the most legitimate reason for intervention would be if Iraqi forces attacked U.S. forces, a response which consistently scored in the 90 percent range. Following this, the next serious provocation selected was the scenario in which Iraqis killed American civilians.[163] Clearly, both hypothetical scenarios involve Category One harms. This demonstrates the salience of moral harms and emotional reasoning in public attitudes about provocations. The hierarchy of harms is thus instructive in helping explain the oil rationale's lack of persuasiveness; it did not confront citizens with vivid images of personal bodily harm. Instead, it concerned the more abstract and distant matter of resource supply, a far less emotionally moving imperative.

The Substantive Action Accompanying the Diplomacy of Retribution:

Operation Instant Thunder

One final aspect of this case is to consider whether there were any substantive actions accompanying Bush's retributive rhetoric. Unlike the other two case studies in which expressive, token air strikes accompanied the discourse, the coalition air campaign that constituted the first use of force against Iraq, Instant Thunder, did not serve a primarily expressive purpose. The air strikes were instrumental and strategic, the opening act of a general war plan designed to eject Iraq from Kuwait. Officially, the strategic objectives of Instant Thunder were to "conduct powerful and focused attacks on strategic centres of gravity in Iraq over a short period of time (days not weeks)",[164] and hopefully obviate the need for a ground invasion. The strikes were not entirely lacking in symbolism, however. The name

[163] Ibid., 249.
[164] Quoted in James R. Cody, "Awpd-42 to Instant Thunder: Consistent, Evolutionary Thought or Revolutionary Change?," Report, *Air University Press (*1996), https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA424862.

‘Instant Thunder’ was chosen to underscore the difference between the swiftness of this operation and the protracted Vietnam operation ‘Rolling Thunder’.

CONCLUSION

Bush’s attempts to mobilise public support for the Persian Gulf War began with an authentic rationale based on self-interested incentives. As expected by the theory, when Bush became aware that these justifications were proving unpersuasive to the public, he reoriented the discourse to emphasise the moral dimensions of the crisis. Whether deliberate or not, Bush employed emotive language characteristic of the idiom of retribution and ideas to advance his political agenda. Although Bush eventually achieved a mandate for war, it was by a slim margin, demonstrating that even when a president employs potent retributive rhetoric evoking justice intuitions of extreme moral culpability and graphic and vivid imagery of human suffering, the effects will not always be powerful, and its persuasiveness cannot be guaranteed.

CHAPTER 4

America's Entry into World War II

> The recent uninvited visit of U.S. bombers to our country seems to be President Roosevelt's method of flattering the ignoramus within the United States.
>
> - Osaka Mainichi Newspaper
>
> 29th April, 1942[1]

U.S. Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

Sunday 7th December 1941

Shortly before 8am on a quiet Sunday morning at Pearl Harbor, the skies unexpectedly darkened with 366 approaching Japanese bomber, fighter, and torpedo planes. The rain of destruction visited upon the U.S. Pacific fleet anchored there yielded a terrible toll: 2,403 Americans were killed, 19 ships were destroyed or damaged, and 188 aircraft were destroyed on the airfields.[2] As the news broke back home, a wave of shock, outrage, and anger engulfed the nation. Army recruiting offices became overwhelmed by men eager to enlist and defence bonds sold out. In Washington, shocked, silent crowds gathered in front of government buildings. By the end of the day, journalist Max Lerner had composed a song encapsulating the national mood, titled "The sun will soon be setting on the land of the rising sun".[3] The

[1] Quoted in James Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015), 852.
[2] Martin Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, vol. II* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 407.
[3] John Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath* (London: Methuen, 1982), 16-17.

following day, President Franklin D. Roosevelt went before Congress and the nation, branding 7th December "a date that will live in infamy". Within an hour, the United States was at war with Japan.

The attack on Pearl Harbor achieved an instantaneous national consensus over entering the war - a step Americans had been reluctant to take since the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. While the attack resolved the issue of direct American participation, for Roosevelt and his closest aides, the Pacific attacks created a new problem. Roosevelt had apparently become convinced of the inevitability of America's participation in the war long before December 1941 and had decided that American resources would be directed towards aiding Britain to defeat Germany.[4] However, after Pearl Harbor, the public was set on wreaking vengeance on Japan.

In the months following Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt said very little to stoke the flames of retribution towards Japan, and even withheld the details of the extent of the destruction. His actions, however, revealed a strategic retributive logic. On a foggy San Francisco morning in April 1942, the aircraft carrier USS Hornet set sail on a top-secret mission. On board were sixteen B25 bombers, sixteen tonnes of bombs, and a volunteer aircrew of eighty men under the command of Army Lieutenant-Colonel James H. Doolittle. On the long voyage across the Pacific, the airmen held a ceremony in which they tied Japanese war medals to ordnance that would shortly be dropped on Japanese cities. As the men went about this task, they vowed to return the medals "with interest".[5]

---

[4] Mark A. Stoler, "Selling Different Kinds of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Public Opinion During World War Ii," in *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, ed. Alan Frank Kenneth Osgood, and David Halberstam (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2010), 76.
[5] Clayton K. S. Chun and Howard Gerrard, *The Doolittle Raid 1942: America's First Strike Back at Japan, Campaign* (Osprey Publishing) (Oxford and New York: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 38.

On 18th April, the bombers launched successfully from the Hornet and after flying five hundred miles across the Pacific, bombed oil and naval installations in the cities of Kobe, Yokohama, Nagoya, with the main bomb loads falling on Tokyo. In practical terms, the raids did little to impede Japan's war production, but provided a huge morale boost to the American people. The news was a cause for national celebration and Doolittle himself was lauded as a hero. Roosevelt awarded him the Medal of Honor and promoted him to Brigadier General, and a Missouri town even took his name.[6] Sales of war bonds (some of which now bore his face) increased.[7] This token act appears to have satiated the popular desire to exact retribution upon Japan, and in so doing, smoothed the way for the public's acceptance of Roosevelt's preferred "Germany first" policy.

The pivotal, transformative event of Pearl Harbor divides this case into two analytically separate periods of presidential rhetoric. Prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt faced a resolutely isolationist public. Although attitudes became increasingly supportive of the Allies as the conflict progressed, Americans consistently preferred offering material assistance over participating in the fighting directly. With this mood dominating domestic opinion, the question of whether Roosevelt was in fact attempting to mobilise the public to join the fray remains an open question. While it is largely accepted that he had become convinced of the inevitability of American participation by May 1941, historians for over sixty years have debated whether he "led, manipulated, or merely followed public opinion" during this time.[8] Contributing to researchers' difficulties in discerning Roosevelt's private sensitivity towards public opinion and how this informed his governance is that he left no private diaries or a

[6] Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor*, 10.
[7] Chun and Gerrard, *The Doolittle Raid 1942: America's First Strike Back at Japan*, 9.
[8] Stoler, "Selling Different Kinds of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Public Opinion During World War Ii," 68.

memoir. As historian Waldo Heinrichs notes rather exasperatedly, "[s]o little record exists of the thoughts of this most elusive and dissembling of presidents that we must rely on inference and try for better sleuthing".[9] The lens of retributive psychology offers a new tool in the researchers' armoury to aid in this endeavour of "better sleuthing". Whether or not Roosevelt used retributive rhetoric in his public messages in the prelude to war may help shed some light on the puzzle of whether he was truly trying to mobilise Americans for direct participation. If the theoretical expectations about when presidents use retributive rhetoric is correct, we would expect to see Roosevelt use language likely to engage the justice intuitions of citizens.

After Pearl Harbor, of course, this was no longer an issue. However, now Roosevelt faced a fresh problem of directing public support towards the Germany-first policy while the public gaze was fixated on Japan. The theory predicts that after Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt would *not* have used retributive rhetoric directed towards Japan. Given that retributive sentiment was already extremely high in the populace, he did not need to generate it for the purpose of joining the war, but he may have needed to redirect this sentiment towards Germany. An interesting analytical objective is therefore to see whether Roosevelt engaged in retributive restraint or reverse retributive rhetoric against Japan. Furthermore, the theory suggests that Roosevelt may have engaged in retributive rhetoric towards Germany to divert and canalise retributive sentiment in this new direction.

An additional reason this case is analytically valuable is because, unlike the Vietnam and Persian Gulf War case studies, this case involves a Category One harm in which

[9] Waldo H. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), vii.

American territory was attacked directly. As such, the events at Pearl Harbor function in the manner of a natural experiment, allowing a test of the prediction that Category One harms are more likely to be met by presidents with retributive restraint. Finally, the case provides an interesting example of the connection between popular retributive attitudes and aerial bombing.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. First, there is a brief historical overview of the events precipitating Japan's attacks through to America's first use of offensive force in the Doolittle raids. After this, Part I analyses the situational meaning of the crisis, both before and after Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt's mobilisation discourse is then examined, tracking three phases prior to Pearl Harbor and one phase afterwards. Part II analyses the case from the perspective of retributive psychology, discussing the analytical insights provided by this lens.

BACKGROUND

Popular sentiment in America from the mid- to late-1930s was deeply coloured by isolationism.[10] From 1937 to 1939, a strong isolationist movement influenced the passing of neutrality legislation prohibiting the sale of arms and munitions to foreign belligerents. With the war underway, Japan became more aggressive, and in mid-1940 occupied ports in French Indo-China. Roosevelt's response was to prohibit the sale to Japan of aircraft parts and other materials that could be used for war production, including aviation fuel, lubricants, iron and steel. Sensing the increased threat, on 19th July 1940, Roosevelt authorised an additional 200

[10] Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

warships to be built.[11] In the autumn of that year, the U.S. increased its unofficial participation in the war with its naval forces participating in undeclared activities against Germany in the Atlantic.[12]

In July 1941 tensions with Japan increased once again after the nation expanded its occupying forces in Indo-China. In response, Roosevelt seized all Japanese assets in the U.S., a move followed by the British and Dutch governments. This was a devastating blow to Japan as imports from the U.S., the British Empire and the Dutch East Indies constituted approximately 90 percent of the country's oil imports.[13] While diplomatic solutions were attempted, the Japanese began to look for alternative local resources to meet its burgeoning energy needs. Anticipating that any attack against British territories in Southeast Asia would bring America into the war, the Japanese decided to attack Pearl Harbor pre-emptively to immobilise U.S. power in the region.

The attack was temporarily successful in achieving this goal; approximately half the Pacific fleet was damaged or destroyed.[14] The same day, the Japanese attacked a U.S. military base in the Philippines, destroying 86 of 160 aircraft stationed there, and occupying Bataan.[15] The Japanese rampage continued apace, bombing the U.S. territories of Guam, and Midway and Wake Islands, and the British-held territories of Singapore and Hong Kong. After the U.S. declaration of war the following day, Japanese troops invaded Malaya and the American outposts in Shanghai and Tientsin.[16] With this sudden and unexpected onslaught in

[11] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 331.
[12] Watt Donald Cameron et al., "World War Ii (1939–45)," *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195071986.001.0001/acref-9780195071986-e-1018.
[13] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 389.
[14] Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor*, 21.
[15] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*.
[16] Ibid., 408.

the East, Hitler, in what has been described as "arguably his single greatest mistake of the war", on 9th December, authorised his navy to attack American ships in the Atlantic. Two days later, convinced that Japan would be victorious, Germany declared war against the U.S.[17]

Two weeks after Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt asked the Joint Chiefs to plan a retaliatory raid against Japan. This was logistically difficult, as no aircraft at that time could fly the distance from U.S. territories. A famous aviator and aeronautical engineer, navy Captain and Lt Colonel James 'Jimmy' Doolittle, devised a way to enable aircraft to launch, for the first time, from an aircraft carrier.[18] On 18th April, the bombers raided the Japanese islands, striking military and industrial installations. Most of the raiders crash landed in China and were helped to safety by Chinese villagers and soldiers. In response, Japanese troops swarmed inland searching a twenty-thousand square mile swath of land for the raiders, marking the beginning of a three-month campaign of retaliatory slaughter. Men, women, and children were killed, and in one instance an entire city was razed. In total, approximately 250,000 Chinese were killed.[19]

The Situational Meaning of the Crisis

This section evaluates public perceptions of the crisis and theoretical expectations about the likelihood that retributive rhetoric would occur, both before and after Pearl Harbor. In this case, the true trigger event was Pearl Harbor, but because this event obviated the need for Roosevelt to mobilise the public for war, the case study also considers perceptions about the

[17] Ibid., 409.
[18] Robert B. Kane, "The Doolittle Raid - 75 Years Later," *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 1 (2017).
[19] General James H. Doolittle, with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York: Bantam Books, 2001), 677-78.

period from the outbreak of war in Europe to Pearl Harbor. To recap, the expectations of retributive rhetoric in this case are summarised below.

Table 4.0 Expectations of Retributive Rhetoric in America's Entry into World War II

Case	Public Perceptions of Strategic Incentives Uncertain?	Category of Harm	Presidential Desire to Intervene?	Retributive Rhetoric Expected?
Japan pre-trigger	Yes	2	No, evolving to yes	No, evolving to yes
Japan post-trigger	No	1	Yes	No (towards Japan)

Perceptions Before Pearl Harbor

- **Public Perceptions of Strategic Incentives**

Prior to Pearl Harbor, the public was highly uncertain and conflicted about the strategic merits of intervention, which was a natural outgrowth of a deeply rooted commitment to isolationism, combined with a focus on domestic affairs, and complacency. A stark illustration of these attitudes comes from a poll taken one month after the conflict in Europe had commenced, which revealed that a majority was opposed to direct troop involvement *even if this meant Britain and France would be defeated*.[20] Isolationism was caused by a

[20] Quoted in Michael Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 42-43.

constellation of factors, including perceptions of the apparent futility of World War I, dissatisfaction with the peace treaty, and perceptions that trade with belligerents had brought America into that war. Domestic affairs naturally dominated the political agenda as the nation struggled throughout the 1930s with the economic devastation wrought by the Great Depression.

Complacency was rooted in widespread beliefs that the Axis powers represented little threat to the U.S and the idea that the Allies would vanquish the Nazi menace singlehandedly.[21] A Gallup poll taken in September 1939 showed that the number of people believing the Allies would prevail unassisted was a very high 82 percent.[22] Isolationist groups were active and enjoyed widespread support, and although support for isolationism declined throughout the two-year period prior to Pearl Harbor, these groups remained a vocal influence in the public debate on war. Throughout June 1940 to February 1941, Gallup polls showing the number of respondents desiring to remain out of the conflict fell within the extremely high range of 82-88 percent.[23] Together, these attitudes resulted in a persistent public reluctance to commit American forces to the fray.[24]

Yet simultaneously the public sympathised deeply with the Allies and wanted them to triumph. There was also widespread public animosity towards the Nazis. By mid-1941, the strategic incentives for war were becoming more salient to the public. A poll taken in May 1941 showed that 70 percent of the public thought Hitler planned to conquer the U.S., and 70 percent of respondents now said that it was more important to help the Allies than to keep out

[21] Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 6-7.
[22] September 1939, quoted in Earnest Brandenburg, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's International Speeches, 1939-1941," *Speech Monographs* 16, no. 1 (1949): 24.
[23] Poll results quoted in ibid., 25.
[24] Frank Costigliola, "Freedom from Fear," in *The Four Freedoms: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Evolution of an American Idea*, ed. Jeffrey A. Engel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 171.

of the war,[25] which represented a significant change in attitudes from October 1939 when a majority opposed direct involvement even at the cost of Allied defeat. Despite this evolution, isolationism remained the dominant force. In August 1941, a bill authorising an expansion of the military passed Congress by a single vote. Overall, no more than one-third of the population favoured a formal declaration of war at any one time during this period. As John Schuessler writes, prior to Pearl Harbor, this was "an ambivalent public".[26] These conflicting sympathies and obligations make it reasonable to infer that public perceptions of the strategic incentives for intervention were perhaps not entirely uncertain, but this was not powerful enough to dispel deeply rooted public reticence about committing to the war.

- **Case Seriousness**

With public reticence about intervening in place, the space for moral reasoning opens. Americans would likely have viewed the situation as a Category Two moral harm. Although the moral gravity of the offences being committed by the Nazi regime was severe (in the first month of the war casualties in Poland were high – 60,000 Polish soldiers had been killed, and the aerial bombing of Warsaw had killed 25,000 civilians as well as 14,000 German soldiers),[27] the harms were committed against third nations. For most ordinary Americans, the war seemed remote,[28] lessening the moral gravity of the situation. The events of the war would not likely have been perceived as Category One harms because at this point the deaths, injuries and territorial seizures were occurring to third parties. Nor would they likely have

[25] Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, Oxford University Press (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 267.
[26] John M. Schuessler, "The Deception Dividend: Fdr's Undeclared War," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010).
[27] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 277.
[28] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 30.

been perceived as Category Three harms, which would be too weak a category for the types of harms being perpetrated. Category Two harms, relating to harms against property and grievous harms against third countries, is the most relevant Category. As discussed, this is when we expect presidents to attempt retributive rhetoric, if they wish to intervene.

- **Political Context: Roosevelt's Policy Preferences**

It is reasonable to assume that such was the strength of public isolationism in the early part of the war that Roosevelt did not wish to go against the tide of public opinion by trying to mobilise for direct participation. However, whether desired or not, by May 1941, Roosevelt appears to have accepted that it was America's ineluctable fate to join the war directly. At this time, he expressed an attitude of reluctant inevitability, telling Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, that he was "waiting to be pushed into the situation".[29] One of Roosevelt's most trusted speech writers, Samuel Rosenman, wrote after the war that Roosevelt was, by May, convinced that American participation was unavoidable.[30] Historian Steven Casey writes that by the autumn of 1941, Roosevelt "had no fundamental aversion either to war or to U.S. troops fighting in it. In this context, it seems likely that he now deemed it desirable for the U.S. to become fully and formally engaged in the conflict."[31]

However, throughout 1941, Roosevelt remained acutely sensitive to the public's resistance to committing American troops abroad,[32] which constrained his latitude for action.

[29] Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947*.
[30] Radio Address Announcing the Proclamation of an Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941. Note. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Samuel I. Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (London: Macmillan, 1941), 444-45.
[31] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 15.
[32] Ibid., 44.

Britain's ambassador to the U.S., Lord Halifax, reported sometime around September 1941 that Roosevelt had expressed his bind thus: "his [Roosevelt's] perpetual problem was to steer a course between … (1) the wish of 70 percent of Americans to keep out of the war; (2) the wish of 70 percent of Americans to do everything to break Hitler, even if it means war. He said that if he asked for a declaration of war he wouldn't get it, and opinion would swing against him. He therefore intended to go on doing whatever he best could to help us, and declarations of war were out of fashion".[33] Therefore, on the basis of the evidence available of Roosevelt's private thoughts and intentions, it is reasonable to infer that (at least) from May 1941, it was Roosevelt's (probably reluctant) preference to join the war directly, but public opinion constrained him from pushing this policy.

Perceptions After Pearl Harbor

- **Public Perceptions of Strategic Incentives**

Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, public reticence about intervention evaporated instantaneously. With a direct and grievous attack committed against the U.S., the strategic incentives for intervening did not require spelling out to Americans. Whereas the war had previously been perceived as a real, but distant, threat, it had now forcefully shown itself to represent an acute danger to Americans. Joining the war was clearly now a strategic priority for self-defence.

- **Case Seriousness**

[33] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*.

In terms of case seriousness, the deaths of more than 2,400 American military personnel, the destruction of naval vessels, aircraft, and land bases, combined with the surprise nature of the attack, would have rendered the attack a paradigm example of a Category One harm. This is expected to generate strong moral outrage spontaneously. Indeed, after the attacks the public became inflamed with the desire to participate directly. As journalist and advisor to Roosevelt Alan Barth observed, Pearl Harbor "wrought suddenly the miracle which no amount of logic or persuasion had previously been able to achieve."[34] Such was the tidal wave of support for war that it effectively demolished the isolationist movement within days. One of the most prominent groups, the 'America First' organisation, disbanded just four days of the attack.[35]

- **Political Context: Roosevelt's Policy Preferences**

As discussed above, by mid-May 1941, Roosevelt had admitted he was "waiting to be pushed into" intervening, and by the autumn, Casey argues that it was probable that "he now deemed it desirable for the U.S. to become fully and formally engaged in the conflict." Therefore, we can assume that when Pearl Harbor was attacked and the shackles of public opinion were removed, Roosevelt seized the opportunity to enter the war officially. However, Roosevelt's policy preference was to embark on offensive actions aiding Britain and to maintain a defensive stance in the Pacific. The theoretical implications of this are discussed below.

- **Expectations About the Use of Retributive Rhetoric**

[34] Quoted in Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 47.
[35] Ibid.

The above analysis reveals that in the period from the outbreak of war until the eve of Pearl Harbor, the public was reticent about intervention, and the conflict taking place far from America's shores would likely have been perceived as a Category Two moral harm. The question of whether Roosevelt wished to intervene is less straightforward. It seems he did not wish to intervene in the early part of the war, but from May 1941 he appeared to favour this policy (but was constrained by public opinion). Therefore, the expectations of the theory are that Roosevelt would not use retributive rhetoric in the early phases but would employ this mobilisation tool from May 1941 onwards. After Pearl Harbor, the theory expects a president to engage in retributive restraint, as mobilisation efforts are redundant. If Roosevelt did engage in a retributive discourse at this time, it is expected to be minimal. As we know, Roosevelt's dilemma after Pearl Harbor was to redirect support for pursuing a Germany-first policy. The theory thus expects him to employ reverse retributive rhetoric against Japan, and if necessary, retributive rhetoric against Germany.

Surveying both the pre- and post- Pearl Harbor periods, then, prior to Pearl Harbor, retributive rhetoric is expected only from around May 1941, after Roosevelt's preference had evolved towards favouring intervention. After Pearl Harbor, positive retributive rhetoric is not expected towards Japan, and it is likely that he might engage in reverse retributive rhetoric. He might also employ retributive rhetoric towards Germany in order to muster support for the Germany-first policy.

The Discourse

The second step of the model analysing the discourse is structured around three distinct phases identified by Ernest Brandenburg in Roosevelt's foreign policy prior to Pearl Harbor.

These are: *neutrality,* spanning from 3rd September 1939 to May 1940; *nonbelligerency* from June 1940 to May 1941; and *active defence* from June to December 1941.[36] Following this, the post-Pearl Harbor discourse is analysed from Roosevelt's first speech on 8th December to his first mention of the Doolittle Raids in April 1942. Each phase is structured in the same way, with a discussion of the main themes, followed by an analysis of public opinion, then Roosevelt's thoughts and perceptions, and appraisals of public opinion. Unlike the other presidents studied, Roosevelt left little trace of his private thoughts. This section is therefore necessarily briefer than wished. Each phase closes with a section of analysis.

Prior to Pearl Harbor

Neutrality: 3rd September 1939 – May 1940

During this period, Roosevelt took pains to reassure Americans that his priority was to keep America out of the war, and that repealing the embargo provisions of the Neutrality Acts was essential to this objective. He also stressed the threat posed by Germany. There was very little language resonant of justice intuitions or emphasis on the moral dimensions of the situation.

- **Neutrality and Repealing the Embargo Clauses of the Neutrality Acts**

When Britain and France declared war on Germany on 3rd September 1939, Roosevelt devoted his fireside chat on that date to these grave developments. His central theme was one of reassurance, confirming that the events in Europe did not threaten American security. He told Americans, "I hope the United States will keep out of this war. I believe that it will. And I give you assurance and reassurance that every effort of your government will be directed

[36] Brandenburg, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's International Speeches, 1939-1941," (Dates are inclusive).

toward that end". To bolster this claim, he informed his audience that an official proclamation declaring American neutrality was being drawn up, so that "in the days to come our neutrality can be made a true neutrality." In this speech, Roosevelt outlined the essential logic upon which he would rely throughout the pre-war period - that American security was dependent upon helping the Allies. At this point, aiding the Allies entailed repealing the clauses of the Neutrality Laws forbidding giving material aid to belligerents, so that U.S. materiel could be supplied. Roosevelt laid out this logic, stating "[w]e seek to keep war from our own firesides by keeping war from coming to the Americas."[37]

Perhaps anticipating that this avowed commitment to neutrality could be interpreted as lacking in compassion for the Europeans currently subjugated under Nazi rule, he chose to eschew Woodrow Wilson's advice to Americans during World War I, which was to remain neutral "in thought and deed". Instead, Roosevelt told his audience that "I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well. […] Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or his conscience". Thus, his conception of neutrality was limited to the practical matter of non-participation in the conflict and did not make claims on Americans' consciences.

Later that month, Roosevelt spoke to Congress in an extraordinary session called to debate repealing these provisions. Anticipating that this move could be interpreted as the first step in an incremental move to war, he assured Americans that it was his "deep and unalterable conviction" that "by the repeal of the embargo the United States will more probably remain at peace than if the law remains as it stands today." Addressing charges from

[37] Fireside Chat on the War in Europe. Washington, D.C. September 3, 1939.Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 462-63, v. 1939.

"those who say that this program would involve a step toward war on our part," he argued that repealing the embargo "offers far greater safeguards than we now possess or have ever possessed, to protect American lives and property from danger. […] There lies the road to peace!"[38]

- **Threat**

Roosevelt's rhetoric in this period was laced with references to the threat posed by the Nazis to Americans. In his first fireside chat on 3rd September, in addition to emphasising American neutrality he warned how events portended for the U.S., stating, "[w]hen peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries everywhere is in danger."[39] At the turn of the year, he took the opportunity to develop this theme of interconnectedness in his Annual Address to Congress. Here, he cautioned against adopting an "ostrich" mentality towards events beyond the national border.[40] During May 1940, Roosevelt brought out the theme of threat in three notable speeches. In an address to the Eighth Pan American Scientific Congress in Washington on 10th May, he deployed a rhetorical device that he used frequently in this period, stressing that the geographic distance from Europe would not protect Americans. Roosevelt labelled this a "false teaching of geography", and his habit was to pair locations and list the short flying times between them.[41]

The next speech came six days later when Roosevelt addressed Congress to request additional defence funding of $896 million. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, the entirety of this

[38] The President Urges the Extraordinary Session to Repeal the Embargo Provisions of the Neutrality Law. September 21, 1939. Ibid., 520-21, v. 1939.
[39] Fireside Chat on the War in Europe. Washington, D.C. September 3rd 1939. Ibid., 460-64.
[40] Annual Message to the Congress, January 3, 1940. Ibid., 1-10, v. 1940.
[41] Radio Address Before the Eighth Pan American Scientific Congress. May 10, 1940. Ibid., 186, v. 1940.

speech was freighted with warnings of the threat posed by the Nazis. His opening line set the scene, as he declared: "These are ominous days – days whose swift and shocking developments force every neutral nation to look to its defences in the light of new factors." He stressed how "the new technique of modern war" could devastate the U.S., especially by air power. Roosevelt again repeated the list of flying times and closed by reassuring his audience that his objective was "still peace – peace at home and peace abroad."[42] The final May address was a fireside chat near the end of the month. By this time, Germany now occupied Norway and Denmark, and had launched its *blitzkrieg* across Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Roosevelt reflected that these events had caused "the shattering of many illusions", including the idea that "we are remote and isolated and, therefore, secure against the dangers from which no other land is free."[43]

- **Morality**

When Roosevelt invoked morality in this early phase it was usually within the context of Christianity. In his first fireside chat on the outbreak of war he observed that most Americans "believe in the spirit of the New Testament – a great teaching which opposes itself to the use of force."[44] In a speech to the Pan American Governing Board broadcast on radio, he stated that the Nazi threat represented a challenge to the "moral values" of Americans", and that Americans "must actively and practically reassert our faith." He told listeners that he believed the world was currently "struggling to find the basis of its life in the centuries that lie ahead. I affirm that that life must be based on positive and permanent values."[45]

[42] Message to the Congress Asking Additional Appropriations for National Defense. May 16, 1940. Ibid., 198-204, *v. 1940*.
[43] Fireside Chat on National Defense. May 26, 1940. Ibid., 230-40, v. 1940.
[44] Ibid., 460-64, v. 1940.
[45] Radio Address Before the Pan American Governing Board. April 15, 1940. Ibid., 162, *v. 1940*.

- **Public Opinion**

As previously discussed, polls during this time reflected the prevailing opinion that America must be kept out of the war, as well as support for the Allies. Roosevelt's fireside chat of 3rd September was met with high levels of press editorial support, mainly endorsing his articulation of neutrality. Likewise, his address to Congress on 21st September proposing changes to the neutrality laws was supported by the press aligned with both political parties.[46] One survey showed that 83% of newspapers were favourable to his position and only 17% unfavourable.[47] However, Americans appeared pessimistic about America's ability to remain out of the conflict. A poll in September 1939 asking, "will America be drawn into a European war?" found that 76 percent thought it would. As previously mentioned, in October, one poll revealed a majority opposed direct troop involvement even if this meant Britain and France would be defeated.

Public attention was very much focused on the war at this time. Congressional mail surged to over half a million letters per day, and the October congressional debates on the neutrality acts saw the galleries overflow with crowds. However, this interest proved to be fleeting. Just one week later, those same galleries were empty. Historian Geoffrey Perret writes that the failure of Britain and France to repulse German gains, combined with the fall of Poland, turned the popular mood from excitement into "confusion and impatience".[48] Yet despite this disillusionment with the course of the war, in November Americans were still

[46] Waldo W. Braden and Earnest Brandenburg, "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats," *Speech Monographs* 22, no. 5 (1955): 297-98.
[47] Polls quoted in Brandenburg, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's International Speeches, 1939-1941," 24.
[48] Geoffrey Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973), 17-18.

supportive of Roosevelt's handling of the 'European situation'. A *Fortune* poll revealed 69.2 percent approval, as opposed to 5.8 percent disapproval.[49]

By January 1940, reports of the Nazi murder of civilians were beginning to make their way into the public domain.[50] At the end of the month, these offences reached a wider audience when Pope Pius XII addressed the matter in a Vatican broadcast, stating, "[t]he horror and inexcusable excesses committed on a helpless and a homeless people have been established by the unimpeachable testimony of eye-witnesses."[51] Yet these morally salient harms failed to dent American isolationism. By March, Gallup polls again showed very high levels of opposition to direct involvement in the war, at eighty-four to ninety percent.[52] Isolationist sentiment appears to have found expression through aiding the Allies, which was now seen as vital to the cause of U.S. self-defence. Roosevelt's appeal to Congress in May for the additional defence funding was met with cheers, the loudest of all coming when he stated his aim to produce 50,000 planes in 1940.[53] Martin Gilbert writes that this announcement had an energising effect on Americans, as it demonstrated "the seriousness of the threat to U.S. security" while "motivating Americans to accomplish such a difficult goal."[54]

- **Roosevelt's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

Little is known of Roosevelt's private thoughts on events or public opinion during this particular phase. However, he appears to have been very much in step with, or willing to

[49] "Gallup and Fortune Polls," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1940): 298.
[50] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 291.
[51] Quoted in ibid., 292.
[52] "Gallup and Fortune Polls," 111.
[53] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 26.
[54] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 306.

support, the public mood of isolationism. This is of course reflected in his public communications, but additionally, he rebuffed Churchill's pleas for help at this time. Churchill recalled in his memoir that in January 1940, "no ally had espoused our cause. The United States was cooler than in any other period. I persevered in my correspondence with the President, but with little response."[55]

Roosevelt paid close attention to public opinion, and regarded himself as having an accurate picture of mass attitudes.[56] As well as consulting opinion polls (he favoured Hadley Cantril's polls to Republican-sympathiser George Gallup), Roosevelt read the daily newspapers and media surveys, and the White House mail.[57] Just five days after the outbreak of the European war, Roosevelt established the Office of Government Reports (OGR), a division with the bi-directional directive of transmitting public opinion to the president and disseminating government information to the public.[58]

- **Analysis**

Roosevelt used little retributive rhetoric in this period, as expected by the theory. While the discourse contained some moralistic speech, language associated with intuitions of justice (i.e., atrocity tales or personalised narratives) was absent. It is worth noting that this need not have been the case, as by this time reports of the brutalities of the Nazis were available and could have been capitalised on by Roosevelt, had he so wished. The tenor of his rhetoric was,

[55] Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm, VI vols., vol. I, The Second World War* (London: Cassell & Co Ltd, 1948), 435.
[56] Richard W. Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985).
[57] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 215.
[58] Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947*, 63.

overall, calm. He was primarily concerned with reporting on events and their significance for Americans. In this respect, the dominant theme during this phase was threat and fear. Roosevelt framed the European situation as a mounting national security threat, seeking to disabuse citizens of notions of immunity and citing German victories as justification for the massive defence funding request.

In these first months of the European conflict, the Germans made no further territorial incursions, resulting in the seven months prior to the conquest of Denmark and Norway in April being labelled the so-called 'phony war'. During this time of relative quiet, Roosevelt reassured Americans of the sanctity of American neutrality. He was careful to emphasise that repealing the embargo clauses (accomplished in November 1939) and increasing defence spending were preventive measures, not steps bringing the nation closer to war. Despite Roosevelt's protestations, however, in hindsight, these measures in fact represented initial steps loosening the cords of rigid isolationism.

Phase II: Nonbelligerency: June 1940 – May 1941

U.S. policy shifted in June 1940 to "nonbelligerency", influenced in no small part by the shock of France's fall in May–June 1940. This period saw Roosevelt continue to push for increasing aid to the Allies, the vehicle for this now being the new policy of 'Lend-Lease'. Again, Roosevelt's public discourse contained little language pertinent to justice intuitions and focused mainly on the threat posed by Germany.

- **Lend-Lease**

Roosevelt came up with the idea of Lend-Lease as he relaxed on a post-election cruise in the Caribbean.[59] His public speeches from this point to March 1941 were, to a high degree, geared towards persuading the public to support this policy. Roosevelt turned to this objective in his fireside chat at the close of the year, when on 29th December 1940 he reprised the argument that providing arms to the Allies would keep the war from America's shores. He told his audience, "[t]he people of Europe who are defending themselves do not ask us to do their fighting". Instead, he said, Europeans "ask us for the implements of war, the planes, the tanks, the guns, the freighters, which will enable them to fight for their liberty and for our security". The role for the U.S., he said in a memorable phrase, was to be "the great arsenal of democracy".[60] Directly after the Lend-Lease bill was passed by Congress in March 1941, Roosevelt told White House Correspondents that "every instrument that we can spare now, we will send overseas because that is the common sense of strategy". He stressed the urgency of equipping the Allies, saying that he hoped that the phrase "[s]peed, and speed now – will find its way into every home in the nation."[61]

- **Threat**

Of course, much of the case for supporting Lend-Lease reposed upon persuading Americans that the Axis represented a real and pressing threat to the nation. On 10th June 1940, Roosevelt spoke at the University of Virginia about Italy's attack on France. He described Italy's actions as an act of betrayal, stating, "[t]he hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbour." The tone of his language expressed anger, yet he refrained from

[59] Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 11.
[60] Fireside Chat on National Security. White House, December 29, 1940. Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, v. 1940*, 633-644.
[61] Address at Annual Dinner of White House Correspondents' Association. March 15, 1941. Ibid., 60-69, v. 1941.

retributive rhetoric. He advanced his intention of increasing assistance to the Allies, stating that America "will extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation." By this time, France was being subjugated by Germany, which had a sobering effect on both the president and the public. Roosevelt spoke of the "perception of danger" which had come to Americans "clearly and overwhelmingly", and disparaged the notion that America could remain unaffected by events in Europe as an "obvious delusion".[62] When he accepted the Democratic nomination for a third term in mid-July, he told those gathered at the Democratic Convention that American progress "is gravely endangered by what is happening on other continents." He rebutted charges that his prior warnings of threat amounted to "war-mongering," arguing that it was his duty "to arouse my countrymen to the danger of the new forces let loose in the world."[63]

In early August, Roosevelt reinforced the imminency of the threat, telling journalists that whereas the U.S. had remained free from attack for thirteen and a half months after building its army during World War I, "that will never happen again".[64] By the beginning of September, Roosevelt began to portray the Nazi threat in more imaginative terms, invoking a dystopian future world governed by Germany. At an address at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, he told his audience that he hoped that one hundred years hence, ownership of the park would not be in the hands of "some strange kind of an overseas overlord."[65] Two days after the Italian invasion of Greece, on 30th October Roosevelt reassured an audience in Boston that "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again: Your boys are not going to be sent into any wars".[66]

---

[62] Address at the University of Virginia. June 10, 1940. Ibid., 259-64, v. 1940.
[63] Acceptance of Third Term. Radio Address to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. July 19, 1940. Ibid., 293-303, v. 1940.
[64] The Six Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Press Conference (Excerpts). August 2, 1940. Ibid., 319-20, v. 1940.
[65] Address at Dedication of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. September 2, 1940. Ibid., 373.
[66] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 348.

Roosevelt's fireside chat at the close of 1940 developed the theme of threat in the most explicit and dramatic way yet. His opening line dramatically reaffirmed his commitment to avoiding war. He began: "This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security; because the nub of the whole purpose of your president is to keep you now, and your children later, out of a last-ditch war." He then told the audience that "[n]ever before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilization been in such danger as now." He reinforced the connection between U.S. safety and the fortunes of Britain, stating, "[i]f Great Britain goes down, the Axis powers will control the continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australasia, and the high seas – and they will be in a position to bring enormous military and naval resources against this hemisphere. It is no exaggeration to say that all of us, in all the Americas, would be living at the point of a gun." Despite the seriousness of the threat, however, he again reassured Americans that this did not mean that the U.S. would be committing its forces to the war, telling Americans that they could "nail any talk about sending armies to Europe as deliberate untruth."[67]

Roosevelt began 1941 with his rousing "Four Freedoms" speech, in which he pledged a vision of America in which citizens would be free from want and fear, and could enjoy the freedoms of speech and worship. He began the speech by reiterating the point made several weeks previously in his December 29th fireside chat. In that speech he had claimed that America had never been so threatened since its founding, and again, Roosevelt warned that "at no previous time has American security been as seriously threatened from without as it is today".[68] By the end of May 1941, Roosevelt felt the worsening war situation had become a

[67] Fireside Chat on National Security. White House, December 29, 1940. Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 633-44.
[68] The Annual Message to the Congress. January 6th, 1941. Ibid., 663-72, v. 1940.

"state of unlimited national emergency". Announcing this in a radio address, he set the scene by stating that Hitler's conquest of Europe was but a step towards the greater goal of reaching other continents, and that "Hitlerism" must be "forcibly checked now". He embarked upon an extended version of the dystopian vision of a Nazi-dominated world that he had first sketched at Great Smoky Mountains National Park the previous September. He framed the Nazi threat in terms of its effects on working Americans, forecasting that "wages and hours" would be "fixed by Hitler". Furthermore, "[t]he dignity and power and standard of living of the American worker and farmer would be gone. Trade unions would become historic relics." Roosevelt extended this bleak fantasy to encompass spiritual life, saying that "[e]ven our right of worship would be threatened". He underscored this ominous picture with a stark warning, telling Americans that the war "is coming very close to home".[69]

A significant shift was made in this speech, as Roosevelt offered a revised, more expansive definition of what constituted an attack on the U.S. He stated, "I have said on many occasions that the United States is mustering its men and its resources only for purposes of defence – only to repel attack. I repeat that statement now. But we must be realistic when we use the word "attack"; we have to relate it to the lightning speed of modern warfare". He went on to explain that "it would be suicide to wait until they are in our front yard". In view of these new realities, he announced that he was extending shipping and air patrols in the North and South Atlantic."[70]

- **Morality**

[69] Radio Address Announcing the Proclamation of an Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941. Ibid., 181-94. *v. 1941*.
[70] Radio Address Announcing the Proclamation of an Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941. Ibid., 181-94, *v. 1941*.

Just as in the neutrality phase, retributive rhetoric was largely absent from Roosevelt's speeches. The predominant theme by far was threat. When he did mention morally salient harms committed by the Nazis, his descriptions were general rather than personalised or vivid. For example, at the University of Virginia address he described the Nazi and Italian regimes as "the gods of force and hate".[71] Similarly, in his July nomination acceptance speech, he told Democrats that "[i]t is the continuance of civilisation as we know it versus the ultimate destruction of all that we have held dear – religion against godlessness; the ideal of justice against the practice of force; moral decency versus the firing squad; courage to speak out, and to act, versus the false lullaby of appeasement".[72] Generalised references continued in his 29th December fireside chat, in which he described German brutality in terms of "shootings and chains and concentration camps".[73] Likewise, his declaration of the national emergency in May 1941 mentioned "the ugly realities of international banditry", yet did not provide further detail. Again, Roosevelt associated American morality with Christianity, juxtaposing the Nazi regime's "pagan brutality" against "the Christian ideal".[74]

- **Public Opinion**

Staying out of the war and supporting Britain remained very high priorities for the public at the beginning of this period. Despite Roosevelt's emphasis on aiding the Allies, in May 1940, polls revealed that 64 percent said they would prioritise staying out of the war over helping England. In June, Americans opposed entering the war by 77-17 percent, and after the fall of

[71] Address at University of Virginia. June 10, 1940. Ibid., 259-64.
[72] Radio Address to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois, from the White House. July 19, 1940. Ibid., 293-303.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Radio Address Announcing the Proclamation of an Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941. Ibid., 181-94. *v. 1941.*

France, this opposition increased to 79 percent.[75] The fall of France gave new impetus to the drive to step up war production. This event also caused isolationist correspondence to the press to decrease suddenly.[76] However, once the initial shock had passed, the debate about isolationism resumed.[77] Yet at the 'grass roots' level, there was widespread public support for Britain, evidenced by community fundraising efforts. By the summer of 1941, the financial value of various initiatives such as benefit dances and concerts amounted to between $50 and $100 million.[78]

By August 1940, the percentage of people saying they felt it more important to stay out of the war than to help England had dropped eleven percentage points from May, to 53 percent. At this time the issue of conscription was also high on the public agenda. The Burke-Wadsworth bill, as it was known, went before Congress early in August. The public hearings saw angry scenes, including a fistfight between two congressmen in the House and an effigy of one pro-conscription senator was hanged on Capitol Hill. Despite much anti-conscription feeling, the bill passed the House and Senate by comfortable margins, and Roosevelt signed it into law on 16th September 1940. Its passing was no doubt aided by a newfound patriotism now abounding; Broadway theatres had taken to opening or closing with the national anthem, and many people were sporting patriotic badges and pins.[79]

By December 1940, Roosevelt's efforts to convince Americans that the war would affect them personally appears to have been bearing fruit. A poll at this time showed respondents by a margin of 60-32 percent believed that if Britain were defeated, the Axis

[75] Costigliola, "Freedom from Fear," 171.
[76] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 27.
[77] Ibid., 54.
[78] Ibid., 77.
[79] Ibid., 31-33.

powers would turn their aggression on the U.S., while another poll indicated that three-quarters of respondents felt that even if the U.S. remained out of the war, a German victory would affect them personally. A significant shift in public opinion now occurred, as for the first time, a majority believed that it was *now more important to help Britain than to stay out of the war*.[80] Illustrating Americans' conflicted feelings, however, 85 percent of Americans feared entering the war.[81] Roosevelt's 29th December 1940 speech was well received by the public, with Roosevelt's press secretary, Steve Early, reporting that messages sent to the White House were positive at a ratio of one hundred to one.[82]

In January 1941, polls revealed that the percentage of Americans believing the war would affect them personally had risen to 71 percent (compared to 48 percent in March of the previous year).[83] By this time, the isolationist movement was in a perilous decline; its members now risked being labelled as "appeasers", and as the year progressed, it became increasingly difficult for one of the primary isolationist groups, America First, to conduct meetings. One month after the passage of Lend-Lease, in April 1941, two-thirds of Americans had come around to the idea of favouring aiding the British through this policy, *even if it risked war*.[84]

The immediate public reaction to Roosevelt's May 1941 declaration of national emergency was highly favourable, with 95 percent of telegrams to the White House expressing approval.[85] Yet this initial support ebbed quickly, and in short order morale

[80] Braden and Brandenburg, "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats," 299.
[81] Costigliola, "Freedom from Fear," 170.
[82] Braden and Brandenburg, "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats," 299.
[83] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 24.
[84] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 157-59.
[85] Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947*, 76.

dipped and Americans were "afraid, unhappy and bewildered". The estimated audience of 85 million were looking to Roosevelt for clarity and direction. However, the declaration of an unlimited national emergency created confusion as many did not understand what it meant, in practical terms. The White House requested Cantril to survey the public reaction to this speech. Cantril told Roosevelt that this was because he had "failed to indicate any new, overt policy that people could readily conceptualise, and that "national emergency" meant little when it meant no change whatever in daily life".[86] As Geoffrey Perret notes, "a sense of drift persisted."[87]

During the spring and summer of 1941, the issue of U.S. escort of convoys across the Atlantic also attracted public debate. Support for this began to rise from 41 percent in April, to 52 percent in May, to 55 percent in June. On the big question of entry into the war, a May poll showed that 70 percent of respondents now said that it was more important to help the Allies than to keep out of the war,[88] representing a profound change in attitudes. However, opposition to committing troops remained intransigent. At this time, other polls showed three or four to one opposed to war, however, they would accept the risk of war to protect vital U.S. interests (as set forth by Roosevelt).[89] Overall, this mixed picture indicates that attitudes to joining the war were softening, but the public was still not ready to commit.

In this period events in the East were not as high on the public's radar as events in Europe. The Chinese resistance to Japan received little media coverage. Reporting from China's capital Chungking in May 1941, war correspondent Martha Gellhorn observed that the Sino-Japanese war had been going on "so long and was so far away", that it "ranked more

[86] Ibid., 77.
[87] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 77-79.
[88] Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*, 267.
[89] Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 85.

as an historic fact than a war. Compared to the survival of Britain, the Far East was stale and stifling".[90] Still, by May 1941, Roosevelt's popularity was high, at around 72 percent. A poll taken in this month asking Americans whether they thought Roosevelt had gone too far, or not far enough, to help Britain, showed that 53 percent thought his policies were appropriate, while 19 percent thought he had gone too far, and 18 percent not far enough[91]

- **Roosevelt's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

By June 1940, the French Prime Minister Paul Reynaud was set to ask Germany to agree peace terms. However, Churchill urged Reynaud to first appeal to Roosevelt for help. On 13th June, Reynaud asked Roosevelt to "declare war if you can, but in any event to send us every form of help short of an expeditionary force." Roosevelt replied a few hours later, stating that the American government was doing "everything in its power to make available to the Allied governments the material they so urgently require, and our efforts to do still more are being redoubled." Conspicuously absent in his response, of course is any attempt to address the request for a U.S. declaration of war. Roosevelt was willing for Reynaud to make his statement public, however, Secretary of State Cordell Hull intervened to prevent this, lest the public interpret it as another step toward American participation in the war. Two days later, Churchill himself repeated Reynaud's appeal to Roosevelt, asking for the U.S. to declare war on Germany. Churchill, though, knew better than to ask for a troop commitment, reassuring him that he was "of course not thinking in terms of an expeditionary force, which I know is out of the question".[92]

[90] Quoted in Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 371.
[91] Quoted in Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947*, 76.
[92] Quoted in Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*, 317-18.

On 12th November 1940, Harold Stark, Chief of Naval Operations, set out his recommendations for U.S. war policy in his influential 'Plan Dog' memorandum. He stressed the necessity of a British victory and made the broad policy recommendation for "an eventual strong offensive in the Atlantic as an ally of the British, and a defensive in the Pacific." Although Roosevelt refrained from formally approving the memo, he agreed with the plan and this 'Germany-first' approach formed the basis of the planning at the Arcadia meetings with the British at the close of 1940 and early 1941.[93] Thus, by November 1940, Roosevelt had settled on the idea that Japan represented a secondary threat behind Germany.

The spring of 1941 saw Roosevelt's health weaken, and during this season he spent much time confined to bed.[94] Lacking concrete information of the president's thoughts, Heinrichs speculates that Roosevelt's view of public opinion, once Lend-Lease had passed in March 1941, was bound to have been dominated by caution. Roosevelt likely saw the public mood as "touchy", "moving in the right direction, passing the marker buoy of aid to Britain even at the risk of war. But a declaration of war was not even in sight. Decisive executive action might slow or shift it. […] He needed to dispel complacency, but opinion could not be forced."[95]

In mid-May 1941, Roosevelt made a revealing admission to Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, confiding that in respect of U.S. entry into the war, he was "waiting to be pushed into the situation."[96] Advice from Hadley Cantril that month should have reassured him that public opinion at least continued to strongly favour supporting the Allies. Cantril at this time advised the White House that a high majority of the public would support Roosevelt

[93] Schuessler, "The Deception Dividend: Fdr's Undeclared War," 147-48.
[94] Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 15.
[95] Ibid., 16.
[96] Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947*.

on further measures aiding the Allies, specifically convoys escorting materiel to Britain. This may have influenced Roosevelt's decision shortly afterwards to declare the national emergency on 27th May, promising to provide "all additional measures necessary to deliver the goods". Roosevelt, however, was very much unsure of the bounds of public support, telling an aide, "I figured I'd be lucky to get an even break on the speech."[97]

- **Analysis**

Once again, language pertinent to justice intuitions was largely absent from Roosevelt's speeches in this period. The most notable feature of his rhetoric during this time was the deepening tenor of threat as Roosevelt attempted to disabuse his audience of notions of invulnerability. The 29th December 1940 fireside chat is notable for its stridency in this regard. Of course, by this time, the political campaign for his re-election was over, which no doubt allowed him to speak on this issue more freely. Interestingly, this was the first speech in which Roosevelt mentioned the Nazis by name.[98] The January 1941 Four Freedoms speech continued to reinforce the logic that aiding Britain would obviate the need for direct American involvement. Despite these public proclamations, however, Roosevelt's actions told a slightly different story, bringing America closer to war. Concrete examples of this include Roosevelt's decision on 10th April 1941 to authorise an American destroyer, the *Niblack*, to drop a depth charge on a German U-boat which had sunk a Dutch merchant ship. The following day, U.S. forces occupied Greenland, and Roosevelt extended the U.S. patrol and security zone for Atlantic convoys to the 25th Meridian.[99]

[97] Quoted in ibid., 76.
[98] Robert Sherwood, quoted in Braden and Brandenburg, "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats," 299.
[99] Gilbert, *A History of the Twentieth Century, II*.

His explicit linkage in May between the necessity of stopping Hitler and preserving the survival and livelihoods of ordinary Americans was his strongest attempt yet to demolish ordinary Americans' perceptions that the war was remote. Samuel Rosenman described this as Roosevelt's "most outspoken" speech prior to Pearl Harbor.[100] Indeed, this speech stridently set out his strategic vision, informing citizens that he would use force if necessary, thus implying the risk of war. Of particular relevance is the speculatory narrative about how life might be for ordinary Americans under Nazi rule, attempting to make the distant events more personally relatable. Additionally, he introduced ambiguity about what might constitute an attack on America, which suggests an attempt to increase his latitude to interpret what counted as a provocation. Although Roosevelt made what sounded like a commitment to provide convoys to shipping across the Atlantic in this speech, he later told the press that he was not yet approving convoys. Even at this time, Roosevelt appears to have been reluctant to make bold moves, and in the latter instance backtracked on a publicly stated promise.

Yet even if Roosevelt had, by May 1941, accepted that direct American involvement was inevitable, he was not yet ready to act upon it by rousing the public to support joining the war. Instead, Roosevelt deepened American participation indirectly through continued support to the Allies. This was accomplished by measures such as furnishing the British in September 1940 with fifty World War I destroyers in exchange for land bases along America's eastern flank and the Lend-Lease law in March 1941. With both his re-election and the passing of Lend-Lease, Roosevelt now stood on firmer ground in terms of his mandate to take more decisive actions. While he had, in this period, once again deepened America's commitments to the Allies while keeping public opinion on side, the public's deep

[100] Radio Address Announcing the Proclamation of an Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941. Note. Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 444-45.

aversion to direct participation in the war held. As Heinrichs notes, at this juncture, "it was impossible to say how far down the road that risked war the American people were prepared to go, or how far they could be led."[101]

This period largely aligns to the theoretical priors. We know that by May 1941, Roosevelt favoured intervention. As the majority of this phase is prior to May, the fact that Roosevelt did not use retributive rhetoric is consistent with the theory. We see a change in Roosevelt's rhetoric in May onwards, which is especially evident in the speech on the 27th. Additional factors to take into consideration are that Roosevelt's critics were now attacking him with the "warmonger" charge. This no doubt also contributed to why Roosevelt refrained from retributive rhetoric and continued to emphasise the defensive nature of his policies. It may also explain why, in addition to his public pledges and concrete support to the Allies, he also provided some support covertly, having signed a secret deal on 24th October 1940 to equip and maintain ten British divisions and agreeing that half of all munitions manufactured in the U.S. would go to Britain.

Phase III: Active Defence: June–December 1941

The period of Active Defence saw the U.S. adopt a stronger war policy, undertaking a more assertive, yet still ostensibly defensive role. In this final phase of the discourse prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt began to employ retributive rhetoric.

- **Retributive Rhetoric: Making a Case for Provocation**

[101] Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 12.

On 20th June, Roosevelt spoke to Congress reporting on the sinking of an American ship in the South Atlantic one month previously, the *Robin Moor*. This was the first instance in which Roosevelt overtly used language associated with justice intuitions. Using the tell-tale word associated with moral outrage, he described the sinking as an "outrageous and indefensible sinking" and branded the perpetrator "an international outlaw". It appears that Roosevelt may have been attempting to construct this event as a provocation, hinting darkly that it may have been an opening salvo in a Nazi campaign against the U.S. He stated, "[w]e are warranted in considering whether the case of the *Robin Moor* is not a step in a campaign against the United States analogous to campaigns against other nations".

He told Congress that "[v]iewed in the light of the circumstances the sinking of the *Robin Moor* becomes a disclosure of policy as well as an example of method." Appearing to answer his own question, he told his audience that "[w]e must take it that notice has now been served upon us that no American ship or cargo on any of the seven seas can consider itself immune from acts of piracy", adding defiantly, "[w]e are not yielding and we do not intend to yield."[102]

Roosevelt broadcast a long and significant fireside chat on 11th September, using the attacks on U.S. shipping to justify a policy shift to "active defence". He began by addressing another sinking of a U.S. vessel which had occurred on 4th September, the USS *Greer.* The *Greer* had been torpedoed by a German submarine, with the loss of U.S. navy personnel. Roosevelt's description of the attack again used language associated with justice intuitions. He twice described the attack as "deliberate" and told how the first torpedo attack was

[102] Message to the Congress on the Sinking of the Robin Moor. June 20, 1941. Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 227-30.

followed by a second round, serving to underscore the intentionality of the perpetrator. He made two further points concerning the obvious intentionality of the attack, asserting that the *Greer's* "identity as an American ship was unmistakable" and that the destroyer was in waters the U.S. had previously declared to be "waters of self-defence." He added that the submarine fired first, an action that was "without warning, and with deliberate design to sink her."

Roosevelt then speculated further about German intentions. He first considered that if the submarine had identified the destroyer as American before firing, then this was a deliberate act of aggression. On the other hand, he then considered the scenario in which the submarine had not realised it was a U.S. ship. At this point, perhaps the natural logical thought is to wonder whether this could have been an unfortunate accident. However, this is not the track Roosevelt's thought followed. He supposed instead that in this scenario "the attack was even more outrageous. For it indicates a policy of indiscriminate violence against any vessel sailing the seas." He denounced the attack as "piracy legally and morally". Roosevelt then related a tally of four additional ships had been sunk, three of which had been flying American flags, and one flying a Panamanian flag.

According to Roosevelt, these aggressive actions were not about to cause America to blindly retaliate, however. He said that "[o]ur type of democratic civilisation has outgrown the thought of feeling compelled to fight some other nation by reason of any single piratical attack on one of our ships. We are not becoming hysterical or losing our sense of proportion." At the same time, he said, nor was it right to "minimise such incidents." The only way to evaluate the situation was to consider whether, over the longer term, such actions represented "part of a general plan." After weighing up the evidence, Roosevelt concluded that in fact

these acts were "a manifestation of a design which has been made clear to the American people for a long time" – that the Nazis planned to dominate the seas. Roosevelt interpreted the *Greer* attack as "one determined step toward creating a permanent world system based on force, on terror, and on murder." Roosevelt then outlined the situation using a metaphor that has since been oft-repeated: "[w]hen you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until he has struck before you crush him. […] These Nazi submarines are the rattlesnakes of the Atlantic."[103]

- **Edging Towards War**

In this speech on 11th September, Roosevelt used the attacks on U.S. vessels to justify ordering the navy to shoot on sight any enemy vessels in American defensive waters. He stated, "the time for active defence is now. […] This is the time for prevention of attack." However, he made sure to stress that America's more assertive policy to shoot on sight still did not represent an escalation to war, stating that the policy change was "no act of war on our part," and that U.S. actions were "solely defence."

Despite Roosevelt's dogged insistence up to this point that material assistance to the Allies represented America's best hope of avoiding the war, he now began, very slightly, to undermine sole reliance on this policy. He did this by contextualising aid to the Allies not as an objective in itself, but as an intermediary step to the real objective. In a message to the Foreign Policy Association on 25th October, he stated that providing assistance to Britain "represents merely a method, certainly not an end in itself. The real end, the inescapable end,

[103] Fireside Chat to the Nation. September 11, 1941. Ibid., 384-92.

is the destruction of the Hitler menace. […] I know that our country will not shrink from that responsibility nor quail before whatever sacrifices it may demand.[104]

In mid-October, another attack on a U.S. ship had occurred, this time involving the destroyer USS *Kearny*. Eleven crew were killed and more than a dozen seriously wounded, bringing total U.S. losses at sea to ten merchant ships (sunk), two warships (attacked), and one hundred dead.[105] On Navy Day, 27th October, Roosevelt made his first dedicated foreign policy speech after his May declaration of the national emergency. This speech effectively announced that the U.S. was now involved as an unofficial belligerent. Roosevelt proclaimed that "the shooting has started. […] America has been attacked." He claimed knowledge of a Nazi "secret plan" to abolish "all existing religions" practised in the United States, as well as a "secret Nazi map" which showed how the Nazis planned to reorganise Latin America into five vassal states. He had instructed the House of Representatives and the Senate to repeal provisions of the Neutrality Act of 1937 relating to the use of force, which were now "outmoded", allowing U.S. merchant ships to be armed. He again described German submarines as "the rattlesnakes of the seas."[106]

- **Public Opinion**

Anti-Axis sentiment was mounting and was being reflected in multiple ways. Roosevelt's mid-June order freezing Axis' assets and shutting down all German consulates garnered a favourable popular response.[107] Cities across the nation began to organise civil defence

[104] Message to the Foreign Policy Association. October 25, 1941. Ibid., 434.
[105] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 170-71.
[106] Navy Day Address. October 27, 1941. Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 438-45, v. 1941.
[107] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 79-80.

programmes, and by the summer of 1941, 60,000 New Yorkers had volunteered as air raid wardens.[108] In July, Cantril informed the White House that 38 percent of Americans supported negotiations with Hitler, while 50 percent rejected this approach out of hand.[109]

Importantly, over the summer, several leading newspapers began to support direct involvement. In July, the *New York Post* advocated for war; the *New Republic* followed suit in August; and the San Francisco *Chronicle* and the president of Harvard were not far behind.[110] Yet on 12th August, extending Selective Service passed Congress by only a single vote. As Heinrichs observes, this sobering result "did not really signify a relapse into isolationism, but it indicated the limits of interventionism".[111] By the autumn, Ernest Brandenburg notes that "sentiment against the Axis was overwhelming."[112] Roosevelt's 11th September 1941 fireside chat announcing the shoot first policy was supported by both the public (62 percent approval versus 28 percent disapproval)[113] and the press.[114]

With attacks now occurring against U.S. vessels and causing loss of life, one might think that these would have been perceived by the public as Category One harms, activating a strong moral response. Yet when the sinking of the *Robin Moor* in May failed to generate public outrage. Likewise, when the *Greer* was attacked in September, the public failed to react strongly.[115] By late autumn, the growing crisis caused by Japan's provocative actions lead to an almost unanimous consensus among Americans to now consider war with Japan.[116]

---

[108] Ibid., 142.
[109] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 28.
[110] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 191.
[111] Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 160.
[112] Brandenburg, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's International Speeches, 1939-1941."
[113] Costigliola, "Freedom from Fear," 178.
[114] Braden and Brandenburg, "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats," 300.
[115] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 170.
[116] Ibid., 190.

At the end of November, Perrett describes public opinion on the war as characterised by "lingering doubts about the will to fight and endure. For though the country was now predominantly interventionist, ready to accept war, it was still a damp explosive."[117] By December 1941, support for aiding Britain, even at the risk of war, now reached a striking 85 percent.[118] Roosevelt's policies enjoyed broad public support in this period, with his decisions on international affairs approved "by more than half of the people questioned in various polls, while only about a fourth of those interviewed believed he was "going too far" in helping the Allies."[119]

- **Roosevelt's Thoughts, Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

Roosevelt was heartened by Germany's June invasion of Russia, considering it a strategic misstep. He speculated to Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy on 26th June that "it will lead to the liberation of Europe from Nazi domination" and described the move in a letter to Lord Halifax on 7th July as Hitler's "first big political miscalculation".[120] Roosevelt strongly advocated aiding Russia, and on 1st August berated the Cabinet for its tardiness in delivering U.S. supplies to the country.[121]

As previously mentioned, Casey argues that by the autumn, Roosevelt "now deemed it desirable for the U.S. to become fully and formally engaged in the conflict". However, the evidence suggests that he still felt constrained by public opinion from translating this desire into policy. If we recall, it was in October that Roosevelt told Lord Halifax that the American

[117] Ibid., 196.
[118] Ibid., 169.
[119] Brandenburg, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's International Speeches, 1939-1941," 25.
[120] Quoted in Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii*, 102.
[121] Ibid., 140.

public would not allow a declaration of war and he would therefore continue supporting the Allies.

- **Analysis**

This final period signals a significant change in Roosevelt's speeches, as for the first time he employed retributive rhetoric. This is consistent with the theoretical expectations of the theory, as by now he likely had not only accepted U.S. participation as an inevitability, but desired it. His speeches employed many of the hallmarks of retributive rhetoric. He emphasised the harms committed against the U.S., as well as the lack of provocation by the U.S. and the intentionality of German actions. These details went in tandem with a new narrative constructing the attacks in the Atlantic as evidence of a deliberate Nazi plan to bring the U.S. into the war. During this phase he paid much attention to the U.S. right to "freedom of the seas", thus making this issue a matter of principle, in addition to accentuating the moral transgressions of the attacks. Interestingly, Roosevelt said in his fireside chat on 11th September that the U.S. would rise above simple retribution for the attacks on U.S. vessels. However, his rhetoric was playing on those very same intuitions that would generate retributive sentiment.

One aspect of this phase which appears to run contrary to the theory is the absence of public outrage over the attacks on the *Robin Moor* and the *Greer*. One possible explanation for this could be that they were one-off incidents, which could have plausibly been perceived as remote and therefore more abstract. Another possible explanation is that by mid-1941, an economic resurgence caused by the drive for military production had caused Americans to be better off than they had ever been. In a year, retail sales increased 16 percent, and automobile

sales by 40 percent.[122] Perhaps this general rise in fortunes helped make Americans feel less attuned to these war losses.

Surveying the entire pre-Pearl Harbor period, Roosevelt had taken concrete policy steps which incrementally increased America's involvement in the war. He had repealed the embargo provisions of the Neutrality Acts allowing aid to be sold to Britain; rearmed the military; acquired military bases from the British; introduced a peacetime military draft; and had sanctioned U.S. forces to patrol the North Atlantic. So, why did America not simply join the war at this point? Geoffrey Perrett argues that no one wanted to take this responsibility – "not the people, not the president, not the Congress. […] This was a people that did not want to step straight into the war but preferred to be pushed, pulled or kicked into it."[123] At the close of November, with the public still not animated over war, Perrett observes that the public "could be roused – what modern people could not? – but no one, not even Roosevelt, had found a way to do it."[124]

Overall, the three phases conform to the expectations of the theory. Roosevelt emphasised threat in the first two phases, but this largely failed to dislodge the public's aversion to joining the war. Only in the final phase did opinion start to change to support war. Whether this can be attributed to Roosevelt's use of retributive rhetoric is impossible to judge. What can be said, however, is that the very fact of his use of retributive rhetoric suggests that Roosevelt indeed was attempting to bring the nation into the war in the six months prior to Pearl Harbor.

[122] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 86.
[123] Ibid., 191.
[124] Ibid., 196.

The Discourse After Pearl Harbor to the Doolittle Raids

We now turn to Roosevelt's discourse in the period following Pearl Harbor to the Doolittle raids in April 1942. As the theory predicts, during this time Roosevelt's public communications did *not* contain retributive rhetoric. The tenor of his speeches was low-key, diminishing topics relevant to justice intuitions as is characteristic of reverse retributive rhetoric. It is also the period in which he directed public animus away from Japan and towards Germany.

- **Morality and Retributive Rhetoric**

During this period, when Roosevelt referred to retribution, it was to speak disparagingly about this impulse. On the evening of 7th December, at 8:30pm, Roosevelt gathered his cabinet for a meeting in the Oval Office,[125] informing them that the following day he would ask Congress for a declaration of war. This speech was to become one of Roosevelt's most famous. Broadcast on radio to an audience of sixty-two million, this was the largest ever daytime radio audience. Roosevelt labelled December 7th "a date which will live in infamy" and stressed the deliberate nature of the attack. He emphasised Japan's intentionality and premeditation, stating, "[i]t will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago" and described it as a "premeditated invasion", a "form of treachery", and an "unprovoked and dastardly attack."

[125] Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath*, 14.

The following day, Roosevelt expanded on the new situation in a lengthy fireside chat. He described the attack in moral terms, stating "[t]he sudden criminal attacks perpetrated by the Japanese in the Pacific provide the climax of a decade of international immorality. Powerful and resourceful gangsters have banded together to make war on the whole human race. … no honest person today or a thousand years hence, will be able to suppress a sense of indignation and horror at the treachery committed by the military dictators of Japan. He did not furnish details of the destruction, but simply stated that "[t]he casualty lists of these first few days will undoubtedly be large". In addition to describing the Japanese leaders as "gangsters", he also labelled them "bandits." Roosevelt referenced "the shame of Japanese treachery", which, he said, must "be wiped out".

Roosevelt addressed the issue of retribution directly, remarkably, denying its power. He stated, "I do not think any American *has any doubt of our ability to administer proper punishment to the perpetrators of these crimes*. … The true goal we seek is far above and beyond the ugly field of battle. When we resort to force, as now we must, we are determined that this force shall be directed toward ultimate good as well as against immediate evil. We Americans are not destroyers – we are builders. We are now in the midst of a war, not for conquest, *not for vengeance*, but for a world in which this Nation, and all this Nation represents, will be safe for our children."[126]

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson had advised Roosevelt to detail the history of Japanese-American relations in this address, but Roosevelt had refused. Instead, he provided this in a lengthy message to Congress on 15th December. This speech was neutral in tone,

[126] Fireside Chat to the Nation Following the Declaration of War with Japan. December 9th, 1941 [Emphasis added]. Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 522-31.

almost entirely devoid of language relevant to justice intuitions, except for the closing lines. Then, he described Pearl Harbor as an event which people will read about in "amazement, in sorrow, in horror, and in disgust! We are now at war. We are fighting in self-defence."[127] At the turn of the new year, Roosevelt again diminished the desire for retribution against Japan as a base impulse that the nation was above. In his Annual Message to Congress, he said, "[w]e have not been stunned. We have not been terrified or confused. […] That mood [in Congress] is *stronger than any mere desire for revenge.* It expresses the will of the American people to make very certain that the world will never suffer again."[128]

- **Security**

Roosevelt's attitude in his first fireside chat after Pearl Harbor was not oriented towards the past, focusing on the harm that had set the nation reeling, but was forwards-looking, emphasising the present and future threat to U.S. security. He told his audience that the attack taught the nation that "[t]here is no such thing as security for any nation – or any individual – in a world ruled by the principles of gangsterism. There is no such thing as impregnable defence against powerful aggressors who sneak up in the dark and strike without warning. We have learned that our ocean-girt hemisphere is not immune from severe attack – that we cannot measure our safety in terms of miles on any map anymore."[129]

On 17th December, Roosevelt addressed informally a 'Management-Labor Conference. Reflecting on America's sudden entry into the war, he said, "as we have begun to realise now and realise more deeply as time goes on, there is very real danger to the whole

[127] A Message to the Congress Outlining the History of Relations Between the United States and Japan. December 15th, 1941. Ibid., 539-54.
[128] Address to the Congress on the State of the Union. January 6th, 1942 [Emphasis added]. Ibid., 32-52.
[129] Fireside Chat to the Nation Following the Declaration of War with Japan. December 9th, 1941. Ibid., 522-31.

world, because there is a new philosophy in the world which would end for all time […] private industry, and it would mean the end of trade unionism equally. It is a real danger." He then went on to state that he hoped American "civilization" and its freedoms would persist and not succumb to the Nazi threat.[130]

- **Redirecting Attention Towards Germany**

Roosevelt began shifting the public's gaze away from Japan and towards Germany almost immediately. One of the most striking ways in which he did this was by framing Japanese actions as masterminded by Germany. In his first fireside chat on 9th December, he told Americans that "for weeks Germany has been telling Japan that if Japan did not attack the United States, Japan would not share in dividing the spoils with Germany when peace came. She was promised by Germany that if she came in she would receive the complete and perpetual control of the whole Pacific area." […] We also know that Germany and Japan are conducting their military and naval operations in accordance with a joint plan. […] That is their simple and obvious grand strategy".

He then explained how Japanese and German military operations were intertwined and mutually beneficial, stating that "Japanese successes against the United States in the Pacific are helpful to German operations in Libya; that any German success against the Caucasus is inevitably an assistance to Japan in her operations against the Dutch East Indies; that a German attack against Algiers or Morocco opens the way to a German attack against South America, and the Canal." While Roosevelt assumed that Japan would be dealt with and

[130] Informal, Extemporaneous Remarks to the Management-Labor Conference. December 17th, 1941. Ibid., 558-63.

suppressed – "[w]e expect to eliminate the danger from Japan", he pointed out that the wider, and more ominous danger was presented by the European Axis powers. He told his listeners that "it would serve us ill if we accomplished that [defeating Japan] and found that the rest of the world was dominated by Hitler and Mussolini.[131]

On 15th December, Roosevelt made a radio address commemorating the Bill of Rights. This speech is significant in terms of his effort to redirect popular attention onto Germany. Perhaps the most impressive aspect is that given the U.S. had just suffered a shocking attack perpetrated by Japan, Roosevelt spoke exclusively about Hitler. He used the American Bill of Rights as an example of American righteousness, against which he juxtaposed the depravity of the Nazis. He told his listeners that whereas "four-fifths of the world" respected the principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights, "in the year 1933, there came to power in Germany a political clique which did not accept the declaration of the American bill of human rights as valid."

He labelled the German regime "political and moral tigers", whose goal was "the overthrow, throughout the earth, of the great revolution of human liberty of which our American Bill of Rights is the mother charter." The truths in the Bill "were to these men hateful," and "to Hitler and his fellows, empty words which they proposed to cancel forever." Roosevelt then outlined a list of basic human rights that Hitler would deny: the rights to a "soul", a "mind", a "tongue", a "trade," and to live and marry as people so chose." Individuality would be worthless, as a man's only value would be "as a unit of the Nazi state." To Hitler, American ideals such as being free and self-governing were "incomprehensible," as to him, the people are simply "the masses."

[131] Fireside Chat to the Nation Following the Declaration of War with Japan. December 9th, 1941. Ibid., 522-31.

Roosevelt then expanded on Hitler's policies towards spiritual life, stating that Hitler considered "the church, as we conceive it, is a monstrosity to be destroyed". He then reeled off an extensive list of freedoms that Hitler would demolish, and described Hitler's designs as a "revival of barbarism", a "proposed return to tyranny", "dictatorial rule", "absolute authority and despotic rule". Roosevelt's final lines seemed to be attempting to rouse Americans to action, to fight against the Nazi scourge. He stated, "We are solemnly determined that no power or combination of powers of this earth shall shake our hold upon them. We covenant with each other before all the world, having taken up arms in the defence of liberty, we will not lay them down before liberty is once again secure."[132]

On 22nd December, an official White House statement announced the arrival of Winston Churchill. The primary objective of the visit was stated as "the defeat of Hitlerism throughout the world", again failing to mention the Japanese leadership.[133] On 23rd December, Churchill appeared with Roosevelt at a presidential press conference. Again, Roosevelt described the objective of the meetings as "defeating Hitlerism in the world." Churchill sat at Roosevelt's side as he made his Christmas Day broadcast, which was a short, heart-warming message under the new circumstances of war.

Roosevelt took the opportunity in his Annual Message to Congress to remind Congress of his previous year's Annual Message, in which he had warned that "[w]hen the dictators are ready to make war upon us, they will not wait for an act of war on our part … They – not we – will choose the time and the place and the method of their attack." Now,

[132] Radio Address Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Ratification of the Bill of Rights. December 15th, 1941. Ibid., 554-57.
[133] White House Statements Announcing the Arrival of Prime Minister Churchill and the Beginning of Conferences. December 22, 1941. Ibid., 579-80.

Roosevelt said "We know now their choice of the time: a peaceful Sunday morning – Dec 7th, 1941. We know their choice of the place: an American outpost in the Pacific. We know their choice of the method: *the method of Hitler himself*." Again, it bears repeating that the attack about which Roosevelt refers was committed by the Japanese, not Hitler.

Roosevelt then sketched Japanese and Italian imperial designs, but diminished these issues in the face of the true evil, Hitlerism, stating that these nations' efforts were "modest in comparison with the gargantuan aspirations of Hitler and his Nazis." Again, Roosevelt constructed Japan's actions at Pearl Harbor as a subsidiary action of Hitler's bid for world conquest. Under Hitler's master plan, Roosevelt told Congress that "in addition to her own schemes of conquest, Japan's role was to cut off our supply of weapons of war to Britain, Russia, and China – weapons which increasingly were speeding the day of Hitler's doom. The act of Japan at Pearl Harbor was intended to stun us – to terrify us to such an extent that we would divert our industrial and military strength to the Pacific area, or even to our own continental defence. The plan failed in its purpose." He later referred to "Hitler and his Italian and Japanese chessmen."

Roosevelt described Hitler's evil nature rather elegantly, saying "the world is too small to provide adequate 'living room' for both Hitler and God". He reminded his audience of the 'four freedoms' enunciated in his Annual Message of the previous year, and stated that the country was fighting to preserve these, and "to cleanse the world of ancient evils, ancient ills." Finally, Roosevelt situated his narrative within the context of Christianity. Compared to the "brutal cynicism" and "unholy contempt for the human race" of the enemy, the U.S. was

"inspired by a faith which goes back through all the years to the first chapter of the Book of Genesis."[134]

Roosevelt gave his second fireside chat since Pearl Harbor on 23rd February, to an audience of approximately 70 percent of the population.[135] He again expanded on the logic of the Germany-first policy. Asking his audience to follow along by consulting a world map, he explained the logistical reasons dictating why the U.S. must fight Germany first. The U.S. would, he said, have to fight at "vast distances to protect our supply lines and our lines of communication with our Allies." He described the difficulties in moving reinforcements to the southwest Pacific, stating that "for forty years it has always been our strategy a strategy born of necessity – that in the event of a full-scale attack on the islands by Japan, we should fight a delaying action, attempting to retire slowly into Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor. We knew that the war as a whole would have to be fought and won by a process of attrition against Japan itself. […] Nothing that has occurred in the past two months has caused us to revise this basic strategy."

At this point, approximately two and a half months after Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt now made public the full details of the losses. He did this in order to scupper rumours that the destruction was far worse. He said the losses "serious as they were - have been wildly exaggerated". In addition to the tallies of the dead and wounded, he stated that only three vessels "were permanently put out of commission. Very many of the ships of the Pacific Fleet were not even in Pearl Harbor. Some of those that were there were hit very slightly; and

[134] Annual Message to Congress. January 6th, 1942. Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, ed. Samuel I. Rosenman, vol. 1942 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 26-30, v. 1942.
[135] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 69.

others that were damaged have either re-joined the Fleet by now or are still undergoing repairs. When these repairs are completed, the ships will be more efficient fighting machines than they were before."[136]

Roosevelt made no more public speeches between the above fireside chat in late February and the Doolittle raids on 18th April. After the mission was complete, he made no official announcement of the raids, instead allowing the news to break through the press. His first comments on the topic came involuntarily, in response to a reporter's question at a press conference on 21st April. When asked "how about the story about the bombing of Tokyo?" Roosevelt replied cryptically, recalling a recent supper conversation in which he had been asked, "Mr President, couldn't you tell us about that bombing? Where did those planes start from and go to?" And I said, "Yes. I think the time has now come to tell you. They came from our new secret base at Shangri-La!" When pressed again to confirm the reports of the bombing, he refused, saying, "[n]o. I couldn't even do that. I am depending on Japanese reports very largely".[137]

Roosevelt's only other public reference to the raid came on 28th April, in a radio address to the nation. He stated, "[i]t is even reported from Japan that somebody has dropped bombs on Tokyo and on other principal centres of Japanese war industries. If this be true, it is the first time in history that Japan has suffered such indignities." As if to cement the role of Pearl Harbor as being the trigger which set into train the Germany-first policy, he immediately followed with "[a]lthough the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor was the immediate cause of our entry into the war, that event found the American people spiritually

[136] Fireside Chat on Progress of the War. February 23, 1942.Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 1942, 105-17.
[137] The Eight Hundred and Twentieth Press Conference (Excerpts). April 21, 1942. Ibid., 212-16.

prepared for war on a world-wide scale. We went into this war fighting. We know what we are fighting for. We realise that the war has become what Hitler originally proclaimed it to be – a total war.[138]

- **Public Opinion**

The attack on Pearl Harbor had the immediate effect of unifying the public and Congress in supporting American participation in the war. Roosevelt's 8th December appeal requesting the war declaration on Japan was approved by Congress with only one dissenting vote in the House.[139] Mass moral outrage and retributive sentiment was reflected in press headlines and editorials. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "Japan has asked for it. Now it is going to get it."[140] Opinion polls revealed that the public's anger encompassed Germany as well as Japan, with a Gallup poll on 10th December showing that 90 percent favoured declaring war on Germany in addition to Japan.[141] As the month progressed, continuing Japanese territorial gains heightened Americans' concerns over the threat in the Pacific.[142] By January, public commitment to Roosevelt's Germany-first policy was starting to fracture, as isolationism (now referred to as "divisionism" by the administration) was resurgent. One poll in January found that 30 percent of Americans were "willing to end the war and discuss peace terms with the German army, if it were to take over the reins of government from Hitler." Furthermore, more than one-tenth supported accepting a negotiated settlement with Hitler based on the current "territorial and political situation existing at that time."[143] This attitude

[138] Fireside Chat to the Nation. April 28, 1942. Ibid., 227-38.
[139] Roosevelt and Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 516.v. 1941
[140] Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor*, 55.
[141] Richard F. Hill, *Hitler Attacks Pearl Harbor: Why the United States Declared War on Germany* (Boulder and London: L. Rienner, 2003), 207, note 37.
[142] Carroll V. Glines, *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1980), 11.
[143] Quoted in Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 51.

was premised on the idea that if a settlement was made with Hitler, American resources could be funnelled into fighting Japan.[144] Steven Casey observes that the first months of 1942 saw public support for the Germany-first policy fluctuate "in line with military fortunes."[145]

Still, a majority of the public was confused about the war after 1941. Around only 60 to 70 percent of the public had "a clear idea what the war is about," while a substantial minority was unsure."[146] In January, opinion surveys suggested that in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, there was now broad support among the press for an American Expeditionary Force (AEF). However, public ignorance of the enemy was woefully high. A poll conducted in January showed that only 23 percent had heard of the Atlantic Charter authored by Roosevelt and Churchill the previous August.[147] On 14th February, Alan Barth of the Office of War Information, reported that public support for war was beginning to wane, which he attributed to "smugness – and, on the other hand, to a mere absence of hysteria or defeatism." He judged that "the American people as a whole do not appreciate the seriousness of the situation confronting them today." He reported that many papers were warning of complacency that victory would be easy.[148]

In late February, the Japanese Navy had defeated a combined Anglo-American-Dutch fleet resulting in the fall of Java. By the end of March, the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, Burma and Malaya had fallen to the Japanese.[149] Between Pearl Harbor and March, press editorials began to focus more on Japan than Germany. Polls in April showed that although

---

[144] Stoler, "Selling Different Kinds of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Public Opinion During World War Ii," 76.
[145] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 91.
[146] Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War*, 156.
[147] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 56.
[148] Quoted in ibid., 52.
[149] Glines, *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders*, 390.

most Americans perceived Germany to be the primary enemy, a majority (62 percent) believed that the focus should be on Japan.[150]

This period saw Roosevelt enjoy high levels of public support. A Gallup poll taken in the days following Pearl Harbor registered Roosevelt his highest job approval rating of 84%.[151] Perhaps unsurprisingly, upon America's entry into war, the primary metric by which the public judged Roosevelt's job performance shifted from the economy to the war.[152] During this period, Roosevelt's approval ratings peaked again at 79 percent in January 1942.[153]

The news of the Doolittle raids resulted in a popular emotional outpouring and provided a powerful morale boost. Once convinced that the reports were true, "the whole country thrilled to it."[154] In May, Doolittle was awarded the Medal of Honor, and photographs of Roosevelt pinning the medal on his lapel were plastered across newspapers.[155] Doolittle and some of his airmen embarked upon a publicity tour of the country, appearing at factories and luncheons. James Scott writes that Doolittle "was now a hero not just to the aviation community but to a grateful nation, the leader of a mission so dramatic that both Universal Pictures and Warner Brothers begged for the rights to tell it."[156]

- **Roosevelt's Thoughts and Perceptions, and Appraisals of Public Opinion**

[150] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 49-50.
[151] David W. Moore, "Americans Believe U.S. Participation in Gulf War a Decade Ago Worthwhile," *Life Magazine/Gallup*, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1963/americans-believe-us-participation-gulf-war-decade-ago-worthwhile.aspx.
[152] Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell, "Economic Class and Popular Support for Franklin Roosevelt in War and Peace," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2001): 209.
[153] Ibid., 204.
[154] Perret, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945*, 210.
[155] Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor*, 665.
[156] Ibid., 705-07.

Dan Reiter and Allan Stam observe that "Roosevelt was personally stunned that the Japanese attack came as far east as Pearl Harbor."[157] On 29th December, the Committee of War Information (CWI) which oversaw domestic propaganda, noted that the "emotional upsurge following Pearl Harbor will not last forever," and warned that the public could revert to "a defensive psychology."[158] Perhaps it was not unconnected that Roosevelt closed his Annual Message to Congress that day by warning, "we cannot wage this war in a defensive spirit."[159]

At the beginning of January 1942 Roosevelt began to pay extra scrutiny to public opinion, and was assisted in this when Archibald MacLeish, head of the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), began sending him detailed opinion surveys. On 12th February, Roosevelt wrote to MacLeish, telling him that he was preoccupied with public ignorance about the war. [160] On 11th April, Henry Morgenthau and Harold Ickes argued in a cabinet meeting that the government should conduct a more aggressive information policy portraying the Germans as hateful. However, Roosevelt appeared unmoved by these appeals.[161] In April and May, the OFF informed Roosevelt that almost two-thirds of the public wanted to direct resources towards Japan.[162] On 1st April, an OWI report to Roosevelt stated that by now, the public was persuaded "on an intellectual level, that it is sensible to fight fascism. But it has not kindled their imagination."[163] On 8th April, MacLeish wrote to Roosevelt emphasising that the public must be made aware that America could very easily lose the war.[164]

---

[157] Reiter and Stam, *Democracies at War*, 147.
[158] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 48-49.
[159] Address to the Congress on the State of the Union. January 6th, 1942. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 1942, 32-42.
[160] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 54.
[161] Ibid., 57.
[162] Ibid., 85.
[163] Quoted in ibid., 76.
[164] Ibid., 75.

- **Analysis**

Overall, Roosevelt's discourse in this period lacked all but a minimal amount of language referencing justice intuitions. While acknowledging the grievous harm committed against the U.S., he did not stoke retributive sentiment in his speeches. Instead, he persistently framed the Nazi regime as responsible for the attack, barely mentioning Japan. Roosevelt's 9th December fireside chat, the 15th December address commemorating the Bill of Rights, and the 6th January Annual Message to Congress were notable for redirecting American retributive sentiment towards Germany. He also denied revenge as a motive twice, first in his 9th December fireside chat, and again in his Annual Message to Congress.

Roosevelt also employed several tactics to downplay or diminish retributive sentiment towards Japan, presenting an example of reverse retributive rhetoric. Most notably, he refrained from mentioning the Japanese and attributed the attack to Hitler. Additionally, he attempted to downplay the damage sustained at Pearl Harbor. First, he did not release the facts to the public until late February. Second, when he did furnish the details, he minimised the damage, framing the fleet as being "temporarily disabled"[165] rather than irreparably damaged.

Interestingly, Roosevelt did not rely on retributive rhetoric in the redirect towards Germany. He instead employed expository language and logic, explaining how Germany was the real mastermind behind Pearl Harbor. When laying out the strategic rationale of the Germany-first policy, his expository approach was especially evident in that he asked

[165] Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*, 136.

Americans to take out maps and follow along as he explained his reasoning. Roosevelt's lack of retributive rhetoric does not mean that he overlooked this powerful imperative. No longer needing to use this tactic to mobilise the public, he chose to acknowledge and satisfy the popular desire for retribution through deeds, rather than words.

Although Roosevelt was successful in selling the Germany-first policy, the public's commitment to it remained tenuous, and began to unravel in March and April. Despite the one-off, symbolic bombing and its morale-boosting effects, the pull of exacting retribution against Japan on the popular mind could not be quashed so easily.

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF THE MOBILISATION DISCOURSE

The period from the outbreak of war to Pearl Harbor saw Roosevelt's policy move incrementally from strict neutrality through to a position which brought the U.S. precipitously close to direct participation. Despite these moves, Roosevelt refrained from using retributive rhetoric until June 1941. In the first two phases, Roosevelt's communications were predominantly concerned with reassuring Americans of neutrality, warning of the threat posed by Hitler, reporting on events, and rousing a sense of patriotism which often referenced Christian values. Overall, Roosevelt's communications in these phases were future-oriented, as opposed to a past-oriented focus typically associated with retributive rhetoric.

From June 1941, Roosevelt began to employ rhetoric associated with justice intuitions. His speeches contained a strong backwards-looking focus on the harms committed against U.S. vessels, which of course constituted Category One harms. He emphasised the lack of U.S. provocation and the obvious intent behind Germany's actions. He constructed a

narrative of German malintent towards the U.S., which he cast as evidence of a wider plan to begin attacking America. Additionally, he used terms characteristically associated with retributive rhetoric such as “outrageous” in describing German actions.

So why did Roosevelt adjust his speeches to include retributive rhetoric in the active defence phase? The issue at the heart of this question is whether Roosevelt was following or attempting to lead public opinion. In the neutrality period, most Americans were resolutely isolationist. Roosevelt made no attempt to swim against this tide of opinion. Although he perceived the threat to America to be far greater than the public realised, he concentrated on dispelling what he regarded as complacency among the public and stopped short of using mobilising language. It appears that popular complacency only started to erode in in the early summer of 1940, particularly with the fall of France. Therefore, much of this change in popular attitudes was driven by external events, rather than the persuasiveness of Roosevelt’s warnings invoking threat.

The non-belligerency period saw Roosevelt promote the next logical policy step following the amendments to the neutrality laws, Lend-Lease. Again, he continued his strong emphasis on fear and threat as he appealed to citizens’ self-interest, linking self-preservation with support for Britain. Still, however, Roosevelt refrained from engaging in retributive rhetoric. This was likely because public opinion during this phase was still resolutely opposed to joining the war. This restraint again suggests that he was constrained by mass attitudes from attempting stronger persuasive methods.

Recalling that the theory assumes that use of retributive rhetoric implies a president’s desire to mobilise, Roosevelt’s switch to retributive rhetoric in the active defence stage

suggests that he was now explicitly attempting to lead the public to war. The degree to which he was leading rather than following public opinion is difficult to evaluate, because the tide of public opinion had already begun to shift towards supporting intervention, anyway. This was therefore a time of transition in public attitudes. Although support for joining the war began to increase, this should not be overstated, as the public still did not wish to commit American forces directly. These conflicting imperatives were in tension with one another and were no doubt compounded by the steady decline in the fortunes of the Allies. According to the theory, then, this period may have seen the public more open to moral suasion, and these are the circumstances in which we would expect to see a president use retributive rhetoric, *were war desired*. As previously mentioned, several lines of evidence suggest that Roosevelt by this stage did desire direct American participation, and correspondingly, this was indeed the only period in which he used retributive rhetoric.

Roosevelt's discourse after Pearl Harbor also conforms to the expectations of the theory. In order to avoid 'pouring fuel on the fire' already raging against Japan, Roosevelt's language returned to a format largely devoid of retributive rhetoric. The period after Pearl Harbor saw Roosevelt make his most overt attempts to lead public opinion in redirecting attention away from Japan and towards Germany. Here, the direction of causality is more straightforward. While the public was fixated on fighting Japan first, Roosevelt straightforwardly attempted to manipulate opinion, redirecting the popular focus to Germany. We would *not* expect Roosevelt to engage in retributive rhetoric in this phase, which is borne out by the empirical record.

In the entire period surveyed, then, public reticence about joining the war *and* presidential retributive rhetoric coincided in only one of the four phases, active defence. In

the first two phases of the pre-war period, Roosevelt appeared to have been following public opinion and did not attempt to mobilise support for joining the war. Although he apprehended the danger more acutely than most ordinary Americans, his mobilisation efforts were indeed cautious and low-key, warning of the threat, yet refraining from retributive rhetoric. Cognisant that the current of public opinion ran counter to direct involvement, it appears he did not want to challenge this mood. However, in the final period of active defence, Roosevelt did appear to attempt to lead public opinion, as evidenced by his attempts to use retributive rhetoric. Yet even then, his retributive rhetoric was muted. The issues he emphasised relevant to justice intuitions mainly concerned enemy intentions and the lack of U.S. provocation; he did not engage in stronger devices such as atrocity rhetoric.

Bearing in mind that Roosevelt is believed to have resolved, in May 1941, that American forces would inevitably join the war effort, the retributive lens suggests that Roosevelt had in fact begun mobilising for war in the active defence phase, yet he did not do this as vigorously as he could have. During the first two phases he moved in lockstep with public opinion. In the active defence stage, he may have attempted to lead public opinion, but it is also worth bearing in mind that opinion may have been turning now anyway, independently of his rhetoric, giving him greater latitude to mobilise. Ultimately, however, he did not take the decisive action of joining the war before Pearl Harbor, suggesting that public opinion likely had a constraining effect on Roosevelt's actions prior to Pearl Harbor.[166]

An Example of Positive Retributive Rhetoric, Retributive Restraint, and Reverse Retributive Rhetoric

[166] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, 45.

This case shows a positive, if muted, use of retributive rhetoric prior to Pearl Harbor in the active defence stage. After Pearl Harbor, the lack of language relevant to justice intuitions is consonant with the theory's expectations of when we expect to see retributive restraint and reverse retributive rhetoric. A Category One harm had occurred and the attack itself naturally generated the desire for retribution, rendering it unnecessary for Roosevelt to mobilise for war. The power of this phenomenon is observed by John Toland, who writes that immediately on hearing of the Pearl Harbor attack, "[w]ith few exceptions 130,000,000 Americans accepted total war with determination and unity."[167] Similarly, John Mueller notes that Pearl Harbor "utterly closed off careful thought and propelled the country heedlessly into a long, ghastly war."[168] Whereas Roosevelt had been trying to convince the public of the potential necessity and seriousness of the threat to America, these efforts, largely geared towards instilling fear in the populace, had not been able to successfully generate a consensus on entering the war. After the attack, however, mobilisation was redundant.

This turnaround therefore illustrates the intoxicating power of mass popular retributive sentiment. Roosevelt demonstrated retributive restraint in refraining from using positive retributive rhetoric to inflame popular outrage further. However, Roosevelt's new priority to harness the popular surge of emotion in order to proceed with his strategic planning required him to employ reverse retributive rhetoric in respect of how he framed the Japanese enemy. As Todd Hall and Andrew Ross write, "[f]ear of mass emotion can mobilise elite, top-down efforts to prevent its outbreak, quarantine and calm its perceived fires, or

[167] Toland, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath*, 13.
[168] John E. Mueller, "Pearl Harbor: Military Inconvenience, Political Disaster," *International Security* 16, no. 3 (1991): 173.

direct its force toward desired targets."[169] Roosevelt's strategic imperatives dictated that he needed to accomplish the latter objective, to "direct its force to desired targets".

Roosevelt's reverse retributive rhetoric was manifested in several different ways. First, he withheld publicising the damage sustained at Pearl Harbor until he felt he could no longer do so, and when he did address this, he minimised its severity. Second, as will be discussed, he held Germany responsible for the attacks, barely mentioning the Japanese.

However, despite holding Germany responsible, he did not use retributive rhetoric against Germany to further his redirect. Casey observes that Roosevelt "eschewed a vigorous and exaggerated crusade aimed at whipping up a mass frenzy against the [German] enemy."[170] One may ask whether this conclusion contradicts the argument of this thesis – surely, if Roosevelt were trying to redirect retributive sentiment away from Japan to Germany, he would have used retributive rhetoric against Germany? In fact, he did not need to. Pearl Harbor generated such a high degree of retributive sentiment that his task then became a comparatively minor one (compared to mobilising in the absence of a serious provocation), that being, to channel its flow towards the alternative target. In a sense, the 'raw material' of popular retributive sentiment was already there. Conceivably, Roosevelt felt that constructing Germany as the mastermind behind the attacks was all he needed to do to redirect the focus onto Germany.

Why Was Fear Unpersuasive?

[169] Hall and Ross, "Rethinking Affective Experience and Popular Emotion: World War I and the Construction of Group Emotion in International Relations," 1363.
[170] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, xxi.

Despite Roosevelt's efforts prior to Pearl Harbor, fear and threat failed to disabuse Americans of their isolationist complacency. It is likely that was because the fear of a Nazi dominated America seemed abstract and theoretical, and therefore remained unpersuasive. Conversely, people understood clearly that committing to war meant American deaths. Again, the lens of justice intuitions helps explain this. With the costs and benefits of intervening not sufficiently persuasive to push Americans into the state where they were truly ready to commit troops, this situation of reticence is when we expect moral arguments to be more persuasive. But during this time Roosevelt relied on expository arguments centring on threat.

Expository information requires us to utilise our intellect, requiring an expenditure of cognitive effort. It is reasonable to infer that many people lack the motivation to perform the labour of analysis. Retributive argumentation, on the other hand, relies on storytelling, binding information together in a way that makes intuitive sense. In short, it targets System 1 automatic processes, involving feelings. These arise automatically and are foregrounded in our experience. Furthermore, our brains evolved to resolve uncertainty. In such cases, we are more receptive to incoming information, and this is a moment rich in political potential. Information salient to emotional responses are processed into rapid and instinctive inferences about situations and actors.

In the absence of vivid imagery to make this salient to Americans, it is unlikely that these arguments would have engaged citizens' "System 1" mental processing systems. Instead, citizens would have been required to deliberate about the threat, and the geographical distance from the U.S. would no doubt have assisted perceptions that the conflict remained distant and remote from their everyday lives.

The Substantive Behaviour: The Doolittle Raids

Part of the theory developed in this thesis concerns the substantive behaviours that may accompany retributive rhetoric, namely aerial bombing operations. However, in this case, the bombing of Japan was not directly associated with retributive rhetoric. Rather, it was ordered to satiate the appetite for retribution that was generated naturally by events. It is argued that the Doolittle raids played an important role in facilitating acceptance of Roosevelt's Germany first policy. The fact that these raids could never have inflicted serious damage to Japan's industrial capacity is testament to the symbolic nature of the operation. The joyous reception of the news by Americans provides further testament to the power of retributive sentiment in shaping international politics. The operation provided a morale boost at home, fulfilling a psychological need.

The desire to strike back at Japan originated with Roosevelt himself. He first began discussions about a retaliatory attack on the Japanese on 21st December.[171] At a meeting with his War Council he stated his desire to strike Japan at the earliest opportunity, "to bolster the morale of America and her allies." This was an "emphatic request", which was "repeated over and over again".[172] Chief of the Army Air Forces, General Henry 'Hap' Arnold would later recall that "the president was insistent that we find ways and means of carrying home to Japan proper, in the form of a bombing raid, the real meaning of war."[173]

[171] I. C. B. Dear, "Doolittle Raid," ed. M. R. D. Foot, *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604464.001.0001/acref-9780198604464-e-496.
[172] Glines, *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders*, 6.
[173] Scott, *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor*, 62-63.

The symbolism of the raids was also reflected in the target selection. As Michael Sherry points out, selecting Japanese cities was not the most effective use of American bombs. On practical grounds, bombing Japanese military installations would have been more damaging to the enemy. He writes, "[b]y ordering the Doolittle raid, Roosevelt through action rather than word, was not simply holding out a promise to take the offensive and secure final victory. He was setting expectations for the nature of that offensive: destruction of Japanese cities, with due revenge meted out."[174]

Thus, a symbolic bombing operation reaped huge psychological rewards. Writing almost forty years after the Doolittle raids, General Ernest E. LeMay recalled that the raids functioned as "a badly needed morale booster" for America and her allies.[175] This was especially important in the face of mounting Japanese victories. Doolittle wrote in his memoir that "[t]he bombs could only do a fraction of the damage the Japanese had inflicted on us at Pearl Harbor, but the primary purpose of the raid we were about to launch against the main island of Japan was psychological."[176] He hoped he could give the American people a morale boost by "a retaliatory surprise attack against the enemy's home islands launched from a carrier, precisely as the Japanese had done at Pearl Harbor. It would be the kind of touché the Japanese military would understand."[177]

The unique lens of retributive psychology can explain why a bombing raid that achieved very little practically achieved a great deal for the psychological health of Americans. The Doolittle raid was a communicative, expressive act, designed to assuage the popular desire for retribution. Sherry argues that there was a "popular expectation to take on

[174] Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon*, 124.
[175] Foreward, in Glines, *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders*, vii.
[176] Doolittle, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 24-25.
[177] Ibid., 26.

Tokyo before Berlin. The Doolittle raid had been designed to curb such expectations by offering Americans a token of revenge."[178]

CONCLUSION

This case study has demonstrated how Roosevelt was constrained by public opinion in the early phases of the war and used retributive rhetoric to try to mobilise the public at the precise moment that the theory expects (namely, in the active defence phase). Additionally, the theoretical expectations are confirmed in the post-Pearl Harbor period. Roosevelt was not expected to use positive retributive rhetoric against Japan after the Category One attack. In fact, not only did he refrain from employing it, but he employed reverse retributive rhetoric in minimising the damage sustained at Pearl Harbor. In this case, aerial bombing was not associated with retributive rhetoric, however, the Doolittle raid functioned to satisfy popular retributive sentiment towards Japan, and arguably helped smooth the way for Roosevelt's "Germany first" policy.

[178] Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon*, 124.

CHAPTER 5

Some Additional Plausibility Probes

This thesis has analysed mobilisation rhetoric for three major U.S. wars of the last century. In the interests of investigating how the theory performs in other U.S. wars, below follows three brief plausibility probes into the generalisability of the argument. Those considered are the remaining major wars post-World War II, being the Korean War of 1950, the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and the Iraq War of 2003.

The Korean War, June 1950

The Situational Meaning of the Crisis

Just like the Vietnam case and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the theory predicts that the public would have been reticent to intervene in Korea. The victim was a geographically distant and little-known country. It is also predicted that public perceptions of the case seriousness of the invasion would have aligned with Category Two harms relating to property and invasions in third countries. Which leaves the final piece of the puzzle: did President Harry S. Truman desire the U.S. to become involved militarily in the Korean peninsula?

Truman was caught off-guard by the invasion and was shocked by it.[1] Once the invasion was underway, his overriding strategic priority was to *avoid escalation* with the Soviet Union and communist China, afraid of the possibility of a third world war. Importantly, Truman was afraid of generating among the public "war hysteria".[2] At the beginning of the crisis, Truman believed the conflict would require a limited international "police action" from the United States working through the United Nations.[3] He was reluctant to ask Congress for a resolution because he did not want to panic the public into thinking that he was asking for a declaration of war. However, his administration was almost unanimous in agreeing that defending Korea was important symbolically, more than for its strategic value. Therefore, it seems that Truman's hand was forced, against his better wishes. This led Truman to adopt a strategy of minimising the Soviet Union's involvement in the crisis to avoid public pressure to take a stronger stance against Moscow.[4]

Drawing this together, two of the conditions for expecting retributive rhetoric are in place: public reticence and a Category Two harm. However, a military entanglement in Korea was clearly not desired by Truman. This latter factor effectively negates the first two conditions, entailing that we would not expect to see Truman use positive retributive rhetoric. In fact, given his desire to avoid implicating the Soviet Union, he may even use reverse retributive rhetoric directed towards the Soviet Union, playing down aspects of the case relevant to justice intuitions.

---

[1] Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953*, 19.
[2] Ibid., 34.
[3] Michael Twedt, "The War Rhetoric of Harry S. Truman During the Korean Conflict" (University of Kansas, 1969), 81-82.
[4] Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953*, 20-33.

The Discourse

Truman's rhetoric corresponds to this prediction. Most notably, he committed U.S. troops to combat before requesting congressional approval or engaging in any degree of public deliberation. Effectively, this means that this case does not possess a mobilisation discourse at all. During the relevant period, Truman delivered fourteen public speeches, and only four of these were national addresses.[5] In the few war-related speeches among them, he refrained from using retributive rhetoric and downplayed connections between events in Korea and the Soviet Union and China.

On Sunday 25th June 1950, the evening after the North Korean invasion, Truman requested that the State Department begin drafting a speech which he could deliver to Congress in two days' time, on Tuesday 27th June, and prohibited his aides from making any statements to the press in the interim.[6] The following evening the situation escalated and Truman decided to send U.S. air and naval power to repel North Korean forces infiltrating below the thirty-eighth parallel, and he also deployed the Seventh Fleet to Formosa.[7] Before the crisis occurred, Truman was scheduled to make a public speech on Tuesday 27th at a ceremony laying the cornerstone for the new United States Courts building in the district of Columbia. He made no mention the Korean situation at this event.[8] Despite having previously instructed a speech to be drafted for delivery to Congress on this day, he apparently changed his mind and abandoned this, opting instead for a private briefing of congressional leaders.

[5] Twedt, "The War Rhetoric of Harry S. Truman During the Korean Conflict," 70.
[6] Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953*, 21.
[7] Ibid., 25.
[8] Twedt, "The War Rhetoric of Harry S. Truman During the Korean Conflict," 74-75.

After this meeting, a short statement was given to the press summarising the situation in Korea and notifying the public that U.S. air and naval power was now engaged in the conflict. The statement emphasised that U.S. actions were being taken in tandem with the U.N., and placed the blame on a nebulous, abstract enemy, "communism". It was widely expected that Truman would speak about Korea the following day at an address to the American Newspaper Guild, but he made only a brief reference to the conflict, pledging assistance to South Korea, and telling his audience that "we must counteract the communist weapon of fear".[9]

On 29th June, Truman agreed with a reporter at a press conference that U.S. actions were best described as "a police action under the U.N."[10] Early on Friday 30th June, Truman authorised one regimental combat unit under General Douglas MacArthur to be sent to Korea from Japan. Even after the decision to send ground troops had been taken, Truman still had not justified his actions to the public. He spoke again to congressional leaders on Friday, and remarkably, made little mention of the U.S. troops. Another press statement was issued after this meeting announcing that MacArthur had been authorised to use "supporting ground units" in Korea.[11] On 5th July, the first U.S. troops became engaged in battle.[12] Thus, Truman had committed troops to battle overseas without a single presidential speech to explain his actions or mobilise public support; nor did he make an official address to Congress or ask for congressional authorisation.

[9] Ibid., 75.
[10] Ibid., 90.
[11] Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953*, 26-29.
[12] Ibid., 40.

Truman attended a second press conference on 6th July in which he replied with a "no comment" on the subject of the conflict, and another on 13th July in which he was asked whether he intended to speak to Congress and the nation and replied that it was "under consideration".[13] By this point, Truman had remained silent for a full nineteen days after committing ground troops abroad. His silence was finally broken on 19th July, when he spoke to Congress and then the nation in a fireside chat to an estimated audience of 130 million.

His lengthy address to Congress described the North Korean invasion as "naked, deliberate, unprovoked aggression, without a shadow of justification" and an act of "contempt for the United Nations". Truman framed U.S. military actions there as part of a multilateral effort under the U.N. Only once did he reference the Soviets, stating, "[o]n June 27th, we requested the Soviet government, in view of its known close relations with the North Korean regime, to use its influence to have the invaders withdraw at once. The Soviet government, in its reply of June 29th and in subsequent statements, has taken the position that the attack launched by the North Korean forces was provoked by the Republic of Korea, and that the actions of the United Nations Security Council were illegal. These Soviet claims are flatly disproved by the facts. The attitude of the Soviet government toward the aggression against the Republic of Korea, is in direct contradiction to its often-expressed intention to work with other nations to achieve peace in the world."[14]

Truman's fireside chat to the nation later that day was highly similar. He began by explaining the background to the crisis. At one point he used the language of justice intuitions, stating that the "attack came without provocation and without warning. It was an

[13] Twedt, "The War Rhetoric of Harry S. Truman During the Korean Conflict," 138-39.
[14] The American Presidency Project. "Special Message to the Congress Reporting on the Situation in Korea. July 19, 1950." *The American Presidency Project*, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-reporting-the-situation-korea]

act of raw aggression, without a shadow of justification. I repeat that it was an act of raw aggression. It had no justification whatever".[15] However, this was an isolated instance of retributive rhetoric in the speech. He went on to explain the reasons for intervention and what would be required from the nation in a flat, expository manner.

Drawing this evidence together, Truman's behaviour conforms to the expectations of the theory. Not only did he refrain from retributive rhetoric, but he went a step further and for the critical analytical period between the trigger event and the first use of offensive force, and outright avoided speaking about the crisis. When he did finally address the issue, he did employ a little retributive rhetoric in stating that the North Korean invasion was "naked, deliberate, unprovoked aggression, without a shadow of justification". He used flat language to describe the Soviet Union's role in the episode, distancing the nation from direct involvement by accentuating that its role was limited to "using its influence" on North Korea. *Time* magazine on 31st July described the speech as "without the inspiration that the occasion called for. It was a plan for defence, and a competent one, but it was no compelling call to arms. It was a deliberately low-keyed speech."[16]

Still, Truman's lack of public engagement and failure to mobilise support did not cost him, politically. By the close of the first week of U.S. involvement, a *Gallup* poll reported that 81 percent of the public supported his decision to send U.S. troops to South Korea, and letters to the White House were positive at a ratio of ten to one in favour of the troop deployment, while the press were also supportive.[17]

---

[15] The American Presidency Project. "Radio and Television Address to the American People on the Situation in Korea." *The American Presidency Project*, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-and-television-address-the-american-people-the-situation-korea]

[16] Quoted in Twedt, "The War Rhetoric of Harry S. Truman During the Korean Conflict," 36.

[17] Casey, *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953*, 35-36.

Overall, the Korea case lines up well with the theory. The contours of the trigger event suggest that the public would have been reticent to intervene, given South Korea's geographic distance and obscurity, and that the Category Two nature of the harm. Both conditions suggest that retributive rhetoric would have been likely, had Truman desired military intervention. However, Truman did not, since his priority was to avoid provoking China and the Soviets.

The Global War on Terror, Afghanistan, October 2001

The Situational Meaning of the Crisis

The theoretical prediction for this case is highly similar to the Pearl Harbor case. Like Pearl Harbor, a grievous attack on U.S. territory occurred, causing Category One harms and entailing that retributive rhetoric is not expected. Polls taken in the aftermath of the attacks revealed that two-thirds of Americans rated the attack as "more serious than Pearl Harbor", an additional one-quarter equated the two events.[18] The theory predicts that a Category One harm entails that the strategic incentives of intervention become overwhelmingly clear, and this position was reflected in another poll taken in the aftermath showing that Americans were willing to use force against nations that supported terrorism.[19] The final consideration is whether President George W. Bush desired to intervene, and we know from his stated position that he was determined that the U.S. would respond to this attack using all means necessary. In summary, the prediction for this case is that Bush would *not* have engaged in

[18] Costigliola, "Freedom from Fear," 185.
[19] As quoted in Winkler, "Parallels in Preemptive War Rhetoric," 314.

retributive rhetoric, simply because it was redundant. The requisite retributive sentiment required to sanction the use of force had been generated by the force of events.

The Discourse

Bush's rhetoric conforms to this prediction. As rhetoric scholar Kevin Coe observes, "since the war in Afghanistan followed so closely upon the heels of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, Bush needed few words to persuade the public to support the war – 9/11 was all the rationale he needed.[20]

The immediate military response, Operation Enduring Freedom, began one month later, on 7th October, making the relevant period of analysis 11th September to 7th October 2001. Several hours after Bush had received the news, he flew to Barksdale Air Force base in Louisiana. Here, he made a brief public speech in which he assured his audience that "the United States will hunt down and punish those responsible for these cowardly acts."[21] That evening he made his first national address about the attacks. Naturally, this contained some language relevant to justice intuitions, but this was confined to the first four sentences of his speech, after which he shifted to a rallying tone. In those initial sentences, he labelled the attacks "deliberate and deadly", "evil, despicable acts of terror", and referenced the victims as ordinary, relatable people: "moms and dads, friends and neighbours". The remainder, more

[20] Coe, "The American Presidency at War: An Examination of Three Possibilities for Presidential Rationales," 479.
[21] Remarks at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, on the Terrorist Attacks. September 11, 2001. *President United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: 2001: Vol.2: Bush,"* (District of Columbia: District of Columbia: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O, 2001), 1098-99.

dominant part of the speech had a defiant theme expressing his resolve to bring the perpetrators to justice. He ended the speech with a biblical quote referencing evil.[22]

The following day, Bush made public remarks confirming that the nation was now at war. No retributive themes were invoked. Bush said that the attacks "were more than acts of terror. They were acts of war." He ended the statement with a strong framing of a theme that would define his discourse, stating "[t]his will be a monumental struggle between good versus evil."[23] Later that day, in a letter to the House requesting additional funding to deal with the attacks, he began by labelling the attacks "evil and despicable acts", before moving on swiftly to the details of the request.[24] On 13th September in an exchange with reporters, Bush cemented America's designation of now being at war. Several times he referenced this, for example, "this war that has been declared on America."[25]

On 14th September, Bush made remarks at a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service. He devoted only one paragraph to addressing the attacks, using language relevant to justice intuitions. He described the attacks vividly and personalised the victims. However, as before, he moved swiftly on, this time to contextualise the attacks within a Christian context, stating that America must "answer these attacks and rid the world of evil."[26] On 15th September in an exchange with reporters at Camp David, Bush repeated for the second time that "this act will not stand", a familiar refrain of his father's during the Persian Gulf War. He also downplayed revenge, stating, "there is a desire by the American

[22] Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks. September 11, 2001. Ibid., 1099-100.
[23] Remarks Following a Meeting with the National Security Team. September 12, 2001. Ibid., 1100-01.
[24] Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Requesting Supplemental Appropriations To Address the September 11 Terrorist Attacks. September 12, 2001. Ibid., 1102-03.
[25] An Exchange with Reporters. September 13, 2001. Ibid., 1103-07.
[26] Remarks at the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance Service. September 14, 2001. Ibid., 1108-09.

people to not seek only revenge but to win a war against barbaric behaviour".[27] In an exchange with reporters on 17th September, Bush again refrained from retributive rhetoric and concentrated on future actions. He did, however, continue the tactic of referring to the attackers as "those evildoers, those barbaric people who attacked our country."[28] On 18th September Bush made a statement on signing Joint Resolution 23 authorising the use of force. Again, he refrained from retributive rhetoric, aside from noting that "[c]ivilised nations and people around the world have expressed outrage at, and have unequivocally condemned, these attacks."[29]

Bush's next public address was a radio address on 22nd September. This speech was a significant public communication, and importantly, was devoid of retributive rhetoric, being entirely future-oriented.[30] On 25th September in an exchange with reporters, Bush again reiterated the word evil to describe the enemy, stating, "[t]his is good versus evil. These are evildoers. They have no justification for their actions. There's no religious justification; there's no political justification. The only motivation is evil".[31] On the same day, Bush's summarised the spirit of his entire discourse in a few sentences, when he told FBI employees, "we're angry. But we're also clear – we've got a clear vision about what the country needs to do." He then went on to describe the perpetrators as "flat evil. That's all they can think about, evil. And as a nation of good folks, we're going to hunt them down, and we're going to find them, and we will bring them to justice. Ours is a nation that does not seek revenge, but we do seek justice.[32]

[27] Remarks in a Meeting with the National Security Team and an Exchange with Reporters at Camp David, Maryland. September 15, 2001. Ibid., 1111-13.
[28] Remarks to Employees in the Pentagon and an Exchange with Reporters in Arlington, Virginia. September 17, 2001. Ibid., 1117-20.
[29] Statement on Signing the Authorization for Use of Military Force. September 18, 2001. Ibid., 1124-25.
[30] The President's Radio Address. September 22, 2001. Ibid., 1144-45.
[31] Remarks Following Discusssions with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan and an Exchange with Reporters. September 25, 2001. Ibid., 1157-60.
[32] Remarks to Federal Bureau of Investigation Employees. September 25, 2001. Ibid., 1160-62.

On 4th October, Bush gave a speech to Department of State employees. Significantly, he began framing action in Afghanistan as a compassionate action to help its citizens, stating, "in order to overcome evil, the great goodness of America must come forth and shine forth. And one way to do so is to help the poor souls in Afghanistan. And we're going to do so. I want to remind the world that helping people in need is a central part of not only the Christian faith but of Judaism and the Hindu faith and of course a central part of Islamic traditions.[33]

On the same day, Bush spoke to Department of Labor employees. At one point in the speech, he again denied that Americans were motivated by retribution, stating, "[w]e're a nation united in our conviction that we must find those evildoers and bring them to justice. We seek not revenge in America; we seek justice."[34] On 7th October Bush announced to the nation that he had authorised strikes against al Qaida training camps in Afghanistan. Not only was there no retributive rhetoric, but he did not even reference the September 11th attacks.[35]

Surveying Bush's discourse, perhaps the most obvious attribute is his emphasis on and repetition of the word "evil". As Michael Sherry comments, the word "provided Bush with an effective vocabulary for expressing national shock, grief, and anger, as it had when Franklin Roosevelt condemned Japan's 'infamy' at Pearl Harbor".[36] As previously explained, using good versus evil framing is not directly connected to justice intuitions concerning judgements of moral culpability, as this terminology is a moral overlay derived from Christian ideology. However, as Sherry notes, this framing would serve as rhetorical

[33] Remarks to Department of State Employees. October 4, 2001. Ibid., 1189-91.
[34] Remarks to Department of Labor Employees. October 4, 2001. Ibid., 1193-96.
[35] Address to the Nation Announcing Strikes Against Al Qaida Training Camps and Taliban Military Installations in Afghanistan. October 7, 2001. Ibid., 1201-02.
[36] Sherry, "Dead or Alive: American Vengeance Goes Global," 257.

shorthand, providing the audience with a direct understanding of the moral significance of the situation. This kind of framing would help reinforce judgements of moral culpability. Of course, a core constituency for Bush was the Christian Right, and this good versus evil framing could have been a highly rational strategy for him to pursue.[37]

Other notable features include Bush's emphasis, evident from the beginning, that an act of war had been declared on America, thus casting America into a more morally legitimate role of responding in self-defence. A problem facing Bush was that the enemy was stateless and elusive, making it harder for Bush to furnish Americans with the much-needed identifiability of the enemy. Feeding into this, Bush used the analogy of hunting outlaws in the Wild West.

In summary, although the foregoing appears to show evidence of retributive rhetoric, these are the 'cherry-picked' instances of retributive rhetoric residing in a more dominant context of non-retributive language. Most commonly, Bush began his speeches with some retributive rhetoric but then moved on to more patriotic, rousing, future-oriented themes. Some degree of retributive rhetoric was to be expected, given the shock and the magnitude of the harm sustained by the U.S. It would have been odd if this kind of language were absent entirely. Despite these instances, overall, Bush refrained from emphasising retributive themes. His national address on 22nd September was a key speech in terms of communicating to the nation his position at a distance of eleven days from the attack. The fact that he refrained from employing retributive rhetoric on this occasion, as well as on other significant occasions on the path to war, including his signing of the Joint Resolution authorising force, and his announcement to the nation on 7th October that he had authorised the first air strikes,

[37] Rex, "The President's War Agenda: A Rhetorical View," 107.

fits with the theory. As is typical of the rally effect, when U.S. forces entered Afghanistan that October in Operation Enduring Freedom, over 80 percent of Americans approved.[38]

The Global War on Terror, Iraq, March 2003

The Situational Meaning of the Crisis

Bush and his associates made the case for invading Iraq on the basis of the continuing war on terror initiated by 9/11. However, unlike the 2001 action in Afghanistan, the case against Iraq evolved gradually and was based on perceptions of threat emanating from within the Bush administration. For the public, the connection between the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, and Iraq, was tenuous. As Justin Rex puts it, "Iraq was not a logical response for the average citizen", so the administration had to "make 9/11 spill over into Iraq."[39] Given these features, it is argued that the public would have been reticent to intervene in Iraq.

Concerning popular perceptions of the moral gravity of Iraq's offence, the initial torrent of moral outrage caused by 9/11 would undoubtedly have dissipated somewhat by the autumn of 2002, when Bush began mobilising for action against Iraq. In the meantime, there had been no new morally salient trigger event committed by Iraq capable of igniting moral outrage. Instead, the case rested on Bush's assertions that Saddam Hussein was breaking his commitment imposed after the Persian Gulf War to refrain from developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). On this basis, it is argued that that popular perceptions of the case

[38] Brownlee, "Cognitive Shortcuts and Public Support for Intervention," 262.
[39] Rex, "The President's War Agenda: A Rhetorical View," 108.

seriousness of Iraq's supposed transgressions would have been consistent with Category Three harms, cheating on agreements.

There is debate about exactly when Bush decided to go to war in Iraq, but by late 2002 there was no doubt that his preference for action had crystallised and intervening in Iraq was beyond question. Moreover, evidence suggests that even prior to 9/11, neoconservatives in the Bush administration had desired to remove Saddam Hussein from power.[40] In terms of the theoretical expectations, therefore, two conditions are present – public reticence/low support, and a presidential desire to intervene. However, case seriousness was likely Category Three, encompassing cheating on agreements and victimless crimes. The theoretical expectation, therefore, is that Bush would *not* undertake retributive rhetoric, because Category Three harms lack the moral gravity and vividness to easily translate into grounds for military intervention.

However, if we revert back to Chapter One's discussion of the expectations of retributive rhetoric for Category Three harms, the expectation of retributive rhetoric in response to Category 3 harms is that it is not expected, although it may occur, and if it does, it is expected to be weak or infrequent. This is because "these types of harms are unlikely to possess the qualities that could easily be constructed or confabulated through presidential rhetoric into more serious harms, unless, of course, leaders are willing to pursue high risk strategies of serious deception."

In fact, Bush did not eschew retributive rhetoric entirely in his mobilisation discourse. However, nor did he rely upon it. Overall, his discourse was dominated by an emphasis on

[40] Michael J. Mazarr, "The Iraq War and Agenda Setting," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 1 (2007).

threat. His speeches during this time were, for the most part, concerned with laying out the problem of Hussein's deceit of the international community for the past eleven years concerning his development of weapons, and the grave threat this potential posed to Americans and the rest of the world. In most speeches, however, he would insert details about Saddam's past atrocities, and of course employ the word "evil" liberally.

In the most obvious sense, the discourse aligns with the theoretical predictions because this was a discourse dominated by rationales concerning threat, a form of expository, rather than retributive, rhetoric. As explained in Chapter One, it is to be expected that presidents will use both types of argumentation simultaneously, however, it is also expected that one type will dominate. In this case, the predominant theme was threat, with a much smaller proportion of language relevant to justice intuitions. In this way, Bush used retributive rhetoric to inject his expository discourse with moral 'colour', helping inflate this Category Three harm into its most serious presentation possible.

The Discourse

From the perspective of the theory, the absence of a trigger event complicates the issue of identifying the period of analysis, which ideally should begin with such an event and end with the first use of offensive force. However, due to the lack of a trigger event and space constraints (Bush's speeches were extensive in this period), the analytical decision has been made to give fine-grained attention to Bush's public communications for an approximately one-month period from 1st September 2002, when Bush first announced to his cabinet his intention of seeking a congressional resolution authorising the use of force in Iraq, to 11th October 2002, when this was granted. The analysis focuses on his most important public

addresses during this time. After this time, the analysis draws upon secondary scholarship which has surveyed the entirety of Bush's discourse.

On 4th September, Bush self-consciously started a public debate about the threat posed by Saddam Hussein to the U.S. and the world. He made public remarks following a meeting with congressional leaders, stating that most of the discussion had centred on "a serious threat to the United States, and a serious threat to the world, that's Saddam Hussein." He said that the administration looked forward "to an open dialogue with Congress and the American people about the threat" and would be speaking on the matter with the leaders of the United Kingdom, Canada, France, China and Russia, followed by a speech at the United Nations. In a clear opening salvo, he stated, "Saddam Hussein is a serious threat. He is a significant problem. And it's something that this country must deal with. And today the process starts about how to have an open dialogue with the elected officials and, therefore, the American people about our future and how best to deal with it."[41]

The following day in Louisville, Kentucky, Bush stated that "[s]lowly but surely, we're bringing people to justice. Notice I don't say 'slowly but surely, we're seeking revenge'. I said, 'slowly but surely, we're bringing people to justice.'" He then went on to address Saddam Hussein, stating, "[y]esterday I announced to the country that I would be working closely with our United States Congress and the American people to explain the threat that Saddam Hussein poses to world peace. I take that threat very seriously. I take that fact that he develops weapons of mass destruction very seriously. I remember the fact that he has invaded two countries before. I know for a fact that he's poisoned his own people. He

[41] Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters. September 4, 2002. President United States, "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: 2002: Vol.2," (District of Columbia: District of Columbia: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 2002), 1523-25.

doesn't believe in the worth of each individual. He doesn't believe in public dissent. I look forward to a dialogue. I'm a patient man."

He then explicitly included Iraq as among the locations relevant to harbouring terrorists, stating, "[y]ou need to tell your loved ones, the little ones in particular, that when they hear the president talking about Al Qaida, Iraq, and other places, I do so because I long for peace."[42] At a luncheon that same day, Bush told his audience that "[o]ne of my jobs is to think ahead and to think – is to cause debate, and I started that yesterday, to encourage the American people to listen to and have a dialogue about Iraq. … I look forward to the debate. I look forward to the American people understanding the threats we face."[43] Again, the same day at South Bend, Indiana, he spoke of the debate he had opened the previous day on Iraq, and this time introduced atrocity stories, saying, "[t]his is a man who used poisons on his own people. He's invaded two countries – two countries. He's a person who has ignored all admonitions by international organisations."[44]

Bush made his address to the U.N. on 12th September 2002. He listed atrocities committed by Hussein, followed by a litany of his alleged violations of U.N. agreements to cease producing offensive weapons. He stated, "Saddam Hussein's regime is a grave and gathering danger. To suggest otherwise is to hope against the evidence." He stated baldly that Hussein "continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. The first time we may be completely certain he has a – nuclear weapons is when, God forbids, he uses one."[45] That evening, he gave an address to U.N. heads of state, in which he explicitly reinforced the

[42] Remarks to the Community at Louisville, Kentucky. September 5, 2002. Ibid., 1530-36.
[43] Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Anne M. Northup in Louisville. September 5, 2002. Ibid., 1537-42.
[44] Remarks to the Community in South Bend, Indiana. September 5, 2002. Ibid., 1543-50.
[45] Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. September 12, 2002. Ibid., 1572-76.

connection to his current objectives with 9/11. He told the gathered heads of state that "September the 11th, in just a few moments, that skyline was a scene of fire and murder. This atrium was filled with steel and glass, and history turned a page. Scores of nations lost citizens that day. […] Our nations have enjoyed – have employed the powers of law enforcement, of diplomacy, military force, and financial controls to bring justice – not to seek revenge but to bring justice – and to prevent further attacks."[46]

In an exchange with reporters on 18th September, Bush closed the session by stating that Hussein "not only kills his own people, he's terrorised his neighbourhood, and he's developing weapons of mass destruction. We must deal with him."[47] On 25th September, Bush was asked by a reporter: "Do you believe that Saddam Hussein is a bigger threat to the United States than Al Qaida?" Bush responded, "[t]hey're both risks. They're both dangerous. […] But the danger is, is that they work in concert. The danger is, is that Al Qaida becomes an extension of Saddam's madness and his hatred and his capacity to extend weapons of mass destruction around the world. Both of them need to be dealt with. The war on terror – you can't distinguish between Al Qaida and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror."[48]

On 28th September, the president gave a radio address, updating his audience on the progress of the resolution. In this, he mainly invoked the threat posed by Hussein, stating, "[t]he danger to our country is grave, and it is growing. The Iraqi regime possesses biological and chemical weapons, is rebuilding the facilities to make more and, according to the British

[46] Remarks at a Reception for Heads of United Nations General Assembly Delegations in New York City. September 12, 2002. Ibid., 1580-81.
[47] Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters. September 18, 2002. Ibid., 1611-12.
[48] Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia and an Exchange with Reporters. September 25, 2002. Ibid., 1656-58.

Government, could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes after the order is given. The regime has longstanding and continuing ties to terrorist groups, and there are Al Qaida terrorists inside Iraq. This regime is seeking a nuclear bomb and with fissile material could build one within a year." He followed this rhetoric with a description of atrocities, stating, "Iraq has already used weapons of mass death against its own citizens. The Iraqi regime practices the rape of women, as a method of intimidation, and the torture of dissenters and their children."[49]

On 2nd October, Bush made a statement announcing bipartisan agreement on the resolution. This was another hybrid statement, emphasising threat, but also including Hussein's past atrocities.[50] On 5th October he made another radio address, which was focused mainly on threat, "the danger to America from the Iraqi regime is grave and growing." with a sprinkling of atrocity tales, "he has committed genocide with chemical weapons, ordered the torture of children, and instituted the systematic rape of the wives and daughters of his political opponents."[51]

On 7th October, Bush addressed the nation on Iraq. He focused almost exclusively on threat. He stated, "some ask how urgent this danger is to America and the world. The danger is already significant, and it only grows worse with time." He also told Americans that "[w]hile there are many dangers in the world, the threat from Iraq stands alone because it gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place." The remainder of the speech continued emphasising the threat of Hussein's weapons potential, save for one reference to atrocities, "[t]he dictator of Iraq is a student of Stalin, using murder as a tool of terror and

[49] The President's Radio Address. September 28, 2002. Ibid., 1696-97.
[50] Remarks Announcing Bipartisan Agreement on a Joint Resolution to Authorise the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq. October 2, 2002. Ibid., 1707-08.
[51] The President's Radio Address. October 5, 2002. Ibid., 1735-36.

control, within his own cabinet, within his own army, and even within his own family." He then recounted decapitation, rape, and the torture of children before their parents' eyes.[52]

This marks the end of the fine-grained analysis of Bush's speeches during the first month of his mobilisation attempt for action in Iraq. Regarding the remainder of Bush's discourse, evidence suggests that it continued in much the same vein. One study observes that Bush continued to emphasise three themes throughout: "9/11, the presence of external threats, and America's battle against evil",[53] while another supports the observation of the present study that the theme of external threat was the "primary justification" of the administration.[54]

Some quantitative analysis of Bush's discourse provides some useful insight, confirming that the preponderant theme was threat. First, Bush expended greater effort on justifying the intervention in Iraq than he had for Afghanistan. In mobilising for Afghanistan, 14.68 of Bush's words per 1000 were taken up with justifications for intervention. For Iraq, however, this jumped to 23.76 per 1000."[55] Again, this is perfectly consistent with the theory. Lacking the moral gravity or persuasiveness of higher Categories of moral harm, Bush had to devote greater attention to justifying this Category Three offence, in effect, attempting to make it as salient to the public as possible.

Further insight comes from a relative comparison of the rationales used in both discourses. When mobilising for Iraq, Bush increased his use of all rationales he had used previously in respect of the Afghanistan intervention – except, that is, use of the word "evil",

[52] Address to the Nation from Cincinnati, Ohio. October 7, 2002. Ibid., 1751-57.
[53] Sue Lockett John et al., "Going Public, Crisis after Crisis: The Bush Administration and the Press from September 11 to Saddam," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2007): 203.
[54] Winkler, "Parallels in Preemptive War Rhetoric," 320.
[55] Coe, "The American Presidency at War: An Examination of Three Possibilities for Presidential Rationales," 478.

which decreased by roughly half of what it was for Afghanistan. This further supports the observation that the tenor of the second discourse was less moral. Bush roughly doubled his references to troops and faith, and strikingly, he roughly *quadrupled* references to freedom and threat. [56] Furthermore, Bush *favoured threat over freedom at a rate of more than 2:1* (11.01 to 5.38 uses per 1,000 words).[57]

That mobilising for military action in Iraq was a far more taxing task is clearly reflected in these statistics. Bush needed to rationalise this action in a way that had not been necessary for Afghanistan, which came off the heels of the Category One harm of 9/11. While he did continue to utilise retributive rhetoric for Iraq, this was dwarfed by his greater emphasis on threat. Notably, Bush overcame the problem of a diffuse enemy ("terrorism"), by constructing Hussein himself as a terrorist, a step that was no doubt made all the easier by the groundwork lain by his father's rhetorical depiction of him as a tyrant "worse than Hitler".

Another interesting feature about this case, and one which sets it apart from the others investigated in this thesis, is that this war was justified as a pre-emptive action. If we can assume that the public has a greater bias towards moral/emotional reasoning and therefore retribution when individuals are reticent about intervening, then trying to sell war based on non-retrospective arguments or threats may be even more challenging for presidents. Indeed, the argument set forth in the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy, also known as the "Bush doctrine", for the right of pre-emptive self-defence has failed to obtain strong support in policy circles. In December 2004, the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats,

[56] Ibid., 479.
[57] Ibid., 482-83.

Challenges and Change, failed to support amending international law to support this justification. The group of foreign policy elites on the panel (including Brent Scowcroft) concluded, "in a world full of perceived potential threats, the risk to the global order and the norm of non-intervention on which it continues to be based is simply too great for the legality of unilateral preventive action, as distinct from collectively endorsed action, to be accepted."[58]

However, Bush's demonisation of Hussein seems to have been partially successful. An October 2002 Pew poll showed that 66 percent of respondents believed that Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks, and in February 2003 76 percent believed that Iraq was supporting Al Qaida.[59] Polls in August 2003 showed that seven in ten Americans believed Hussein was involved in the 9/11 attacks, and almost ninety percent of soldiers fighting in Iraq believed they were there as retaliation for Hussein's involvement.[60] When the invasion began in March 2003, it was supported by around 70 percent of Americans.[61]

Overall, these additional cases support the assumptions and expectations of the theory. With the Korean War, Truman refrained from engaging in retributive rhetoric almost completely, which aligns with his intention to avoid becoming in a wider conflict with the communist powers. With Afghanistan, Bush used an expected degree of retributive rhetoric, but his dominant emphasis was future oriented. Finally, the discourse for Iraq was defined by its focus on threat, which was again, future-oriented, relying on stoking fear of what Hussein might do.

---

[58] Byers, *War Law*, 80.
[59] Rex, "The President's War Agenda: A Rhetorical View," 109.
[60] Winkler, "Parallels in Preemptive War Rhetoric," 324.
[61] Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005).

The variation in these cases further support the theoretical implications discussed above. Especially illuminating are the comparisons between Bush's mobilisation attempts for Afghanistan and Iraq. Holding the president constant, yet having variation in the case seriousness, is a valuable illustration of the central argument of this thesis, that moral evaluations of international situations matter, and have tangible effects. The fact that these two mobilisation discourses differed from one another highlights the relatively greater importance of external (including moral) circumstances on presidential rhetoric, than that of a president's individual characteristics.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This thesis began with a research question asking why, how, and when U.S. presidents create, and sometimes deflate, a public desire for retribution to sell war. In answer to the 'why' aspect of the research, it was argued that presidents use retributive rhetoric because they intuitively understand its persuasive power. The 'how' question has been demonstrated in the case studies, illustrating that presidents did this by using language relevant to widely held intuitions of justice, projecting a discourse expressing moral outrage and emphasising issues pertaining to moral culpability, such as intent and provocation, as well as constructing personalised narratives. Conversely, when a president wished to dampen retributive sentiment, he either refrained from using retributive rhetoric or minimised the aforementioned characteristics.

In answer to the 'when' question, the research has demonstrated that presidents employed retributive rhetoric when the public was reticent about supporting military intervention and when the type of moral harm was a medium Category Two, relating to property violations and medium strength offences. Public reticence opened the space for retributive rhetoric, and presidential rhetoric varied with the Category of the harm. This chapter brings together these arguments and findings, and discusses some of their implications.

Following the Introduction in which the puzzle, argument, contribution and limitations of the thesis were discussed, Chapter One laid out the theory of retributive rhetoric. It contextualised why retribution is the focus of this thesis and why understanding this impulse is important for the International Relations scholarship. It justified the focus on the president and surveyed the existing International Relations literature on the relationship between public opinion and presidential rhetoric and the determinants of presidential rhetoric. The next section modelled the idiom of retribution as a form of emotional mobilisation.

The empirical material began with Chapter Two's study of the events in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964 precipitating America's first official use of force against North Vietnam. The crisis saw President Lyndon Johnson expertly deploy the idiom of retribution to achieve the pre-existing political objective of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. This case provided a strong illustration of the close association between retributive rhetoric and aerial bombing. Chapter Three presented the case of President George W. Bush's mobilisation discourse preceding the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Bush began mobilising public support for the war by appealing to Americans' self-interest in safeguarding the nation's oil supply and protecting its national security. However, these rationales failed to persuade the public that war was necessary. A key insight of this case is that as predicted by the theory, when support for war was particularly low, Bush introduced highly charged retributive rhetoric into his discourse, and began retreating from his prior insistence on the importance of oil. Despite his colourful retributive rhetoric, popular support for the war remained tenuous.

The third and final case study presented in Chapter Four jumps back in time to Roosevelt's mobilisation attempts preceding America's official entry into World War II. This case demonstrates that, consonant with the theory, it is unnecessary for presidents to use

retributive rhetoric following a Category One harm. Furthermore, as also predicted by the theory, when retributive sentiment threatened to thwart the president's foreign policy plans, Roosevelt engaged in retributive restraint and reverse retributive rhetoric. This case has added value because it may help shed light on whether Roosevelt was trying to lead America into the war. The findings suggest that he did not embark on leadership of public opinion on foreign policy until June 1941.

The use of aerial bombing in this case offers additional insights to the argument that bombing may accompany retributive rhetoric. In this case, Roosevelt did not engage in retributive rhetoric to an extensive degree, so the bombing was not ordered to 'make good' on an expectation stemming from his discourse. Instead, retributive sentiment had been generated automatically, and Roosevelt redirected it towards his favoured political policy.

This chapter will cover these findings, along with a consideration of how the theory fares in explaining rhetoric in other cases of U.S. military interventions. Following this, some theoretical and policy implications are drawn.

THE ARGUMENT

The puzzle spurring this research is whether presidents respond to public uncertainty about the strategic merits of war by injecting moral arguments into their mobilisation discourse. The central claim of this research is that presidents are more likely to use retributive rhetoric when the public is uncertain about war. While presidents may sometimes use retributive rhetoric to express genuinely felt moral outrage over an adversary state's actions, this does not explain why presidents engage in this kind of rhetoric to a greater degree when mass

attitudes are ambivalent and the public needs to be persuaded. Retributive rhetoric is a form of emotional mobilisation aimed at the popular domestic audience to achieve the strategic goal of war mobilisation. It is characterised by language relevant to intuitions of justice. Just as significant as when retributive rhetoric is used is when it is not used. When retributive sentiment has been aroused naturally by events and presidents do not desire a military intervention, they will avoid language invoking justice intuitions and diminish aspects of the enemy's behaviour likely to inflame moral outrage.

This thesis has argued that sometimes, the substantive military action of aerial bombing may accompany retributive rhetoric. When an aerial bombing operation follows retributive rhetoric, its purpose may be largely symbolic, as opposed to achieving material goals. Having generated a sense of moral outrage among citizens, a president may appear weak if they do not act to 'follow through' on belligerent rhetoric.

Therefore, the intuitions of justice held by ordinary people are a powerful resource when activated by state leaders. However, retributive rhetoric is not a 'magic bullet' for war mobilisation. Unless a Category One harm has been committed against the U.S., public support for war is difficult to generate, even using retributive rhetoric. However, retributive rhetoric is one tool available that may have more persuasive power than more rational arguments.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Perhaps the most significant finding to report is that this study confirms that presidents do use retributive rhetoric as a distinct, identifiable mobilisation tactic. In fact, it may well be a

common *modus operandi* of holders of the executive office. The distinctive retributive idiom, in which recurring ideas, themes and concepts relevant to justice intuitions were invoked, was evident in all three cases, to lesser and greater degrees, and varying with circumstances expected by the theory. This occurred despite variance over time in cultural, political, and geopolitical circumstances.

In all the case studies, the issue of provocations, specifically, what constitutes a legitimate provocation justifying intervention, was a major consideration of presidents. We saw this in the Vietnam case, where the attributes of the first North Vietnamese attack fell short of constituting a legitimate provocation, but the attributes of the second attack enabled Johnson to construct the event as a provocation justifying the Resolution and bombing the enemy. In the absence of a tangible Axis provocation prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt knew he would not achieve support for a war on the grounds available. In the Gulf War, Bush emphasised how Iraq's string of provocative actions - including the invasion of Kuwait, moving forces to the Saudi border, and the human rights abuses – justified military intervention. Relatedly, this new understanding of retributive rhetoric is also important because it helps illuminate the underlying motives of presidents in crisis situations. As a very broad rule of thumb, when we observe presidents using retributive rhetoric, we may infer that they are attempting to mobilise and are serious about intervening militarily.

Second, the empirical results support the significance of Liberman's identification of situations of public ambivalence being a crucial window of opportunity for heightened moral reasoning. This inference is drawn on the basis that this appears to be the moment when presidents resort to moral argumentation in their mobilisation discourses (assuming the president desires intervention). However, whereas Liberman identifies "public uncertainty"

about the strategic incentives of intervention as the relevant condition, this study finds that sometimes, even when legitimate strategic incentives for action are comprehended by the public, support can still be lacking. Thus, Liberman's observation may need to be refined.

Third, the moral gravity of an offence is relevant to judgments about support for war. We have seen that this factor appears to have a bearing on the types of presidential mobilisation discourse embarked upon. In the Vietnam case, President Lyndon Johnson refrained from using retributive rhetoric after the first North Vietnamese attack, a Category Three event. With the occurrence of the second, Category Two attack, Johnson changed his approach entirely and embarked upon a skilful performance of retributive rhetoric. Following the Category Two Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President George H. W. Bush engaged in a vigorous performance of retributive rhetoric after perceiving low public support for war. Finally, in the World War II case, Roosevelt engaged in retributive rhetoric for a brief period in the months preceding Pearl Harbor in which harm perceptions were Category Two, but after the Category One harm committed at Pearl Harbor he reacted with almost no retributive rhetoric. Interestingly, he subsequently framed the Japanese enemy using reverse retributive rhetoric.

Fourth, the case studies support the association between retributive rhetoric and aerial bombing. The Gulf of Tonkin case was a strong example of a bombing ordered as a symbolic supplement to Johnson's rhetoric. This association was not relevant in the Gulf War case, but it was not expected here, since Bush and his advisors had decided early on that this situation would be resolved by full-scale war and thus did not need to engage in token symbolism to follow through on his retributive rhetoric. In the World War II case, Roosevelt did not use retributive rhetoric after Pearl Harbor, but he knew very well that retributive sentiment had

been generated, in this case by events, not rhetoric. Although the Doolittle raids were not associated with retributive rhetoric, they were motivated to satisfy popular retributive sentiment, thus showing the power of this value in shaping international relations.

Fifth, although it is problematic to attribute changes in public attitudes to the effects of presidential rhetoric, the empirical material suggests that retributive rhetoric has variable results in mobilising support. The Vietnam case appears to demonstrate a successful use of retributive rhetoric. However, the Gulf War case suggests that the effects of retributive rhetoric can also be modest. In the World War II case, it is impossible to gauge the effects of Roosevelt's use of retributive rhetoric prior to Pearl Harbor, but certainly, his use of reverse retributive rhetoric to minimise retributive sentiment directed at Japan seems to have been successful, at least to the degree that he was able to successfully persuade the public to accept the Germany first policy.

Sixth, if retributive rhetoric enjoys variable success, expository rhetoric appears to have even weaker mobilising effects when the public is reticent about war and the crisis is a Category Two harm. Arguments based on rational self-interest failed to generate support for war in both the Persian Gulf War and World War II. In the former, securing oil supplies and arguments based on national security failed to motivate Americans. In the latter, prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt consistently and forcefully warned Americans of the security threat posed by the Nazi war machine. Despite these very real threats to the everyday lives of ordinary Americans, these arguments failed to dislodge isolationist reticence over committing to the war.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Presidential Communication

The inferences drawn from the above findings contribute to several theoretical debates. First, this study's refinement of retributive rhetoric helps define it as a distinct and identifiable genre of presidential discourse. It has built on the foundation lain by Stein's theorising of retributive discourse and extended the research in some novel directions. With this comprehensive theory explaining how justice intuitions operate and are manifested in presidential behaviour, this study represents a valuable scholarly contribution in facilitating other scholars to be able to recognise retributive concepts when they are utilised in presidential speech.

The finding that the moral gravity of a trigger event has a bearing on the type of presidential discourse undertaken has implications for the debate about the determinants of presidential rhetoric. As noted previously, this debate turns on the relative importance of intrinsic or extrinsic factors in shaping rhetoric. This study helps confirm the importance of extrinsic circumstances, as it has shown that the moral gravity of a trigger event correlates with the type of presidential discourse undertaken. Moral judgments can act as a reliable guide to the presidential rhetoric.

Moral Psychology and International Relations

The finding that judgments about moral culpability transport from the domestic to the international realm is one of the major contributions of this thesis. It has theoretical significance for scholars of International Relations, demonstrating the validity of moral

judgment in decision-making about international affairs and supporting previous work identifying the influence of morality and values. Furthermore, the hierarchy of harms can be used as a useful index for scholars working in the field of political psychology to help guide investigations into the moral inputs of foreign policy attitudes.

An important theoretical implication concerns the role of justice intuitions as a constraining framework arbitrating what the public will and will not accept in the realm of foreign policy. This is particularly evident when one considers how the importance of provocations surfaced in each of the case studies. While some prior work has recognised this, the value of the present study is that it illuminates the decision rules about what makes a provocation be considered a provocation by the public, thus investigating a logically prior step than existing scholarship which has investigated provocations as a manifestation of their outward expression through moral outrage.[1]

Additionally, the insights from the case studies about when we see presidents use retributive rhetoric has significant theoretical implications for the study of current affairs and the historical international conflicts. When scholars are challenged by a dearth of information concerning a president's private thoughts, the use of retributive rhetoric, with its function as a mobilisation tool, offers new insights into presidential motives and provides scholars with an additional tool for historical "sleuthing". For example, the World War II case study sheds light on the debate about Roosevelt's intentions for involving the U.S. in World War II prior to Pearl Harbor.

Public Opinion on War

[1] Hall, "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco-Prussian War."

The support for Liberman's observation in the case studies has consequential theoretical implications for the debate about how the public forms its attitudes about war. Liberman's focus on public uncertainty is not quite accurate because it is too restrictive. Strategic incentives can be obvious and comprehensible to the public, but even so, popular support can still be lacking. The Gulf War case demonstrated that people were not prepared to sanction intervention, even when they were aware that their interests were threatened. This was also the case prior to Pearl Harbor, when Roosevelt repeatedly tried to impress upon Americans the threat posed to their way of life by the Nazis. The present study has refined Liberman's initial observation, expanding the reliance on public perceptions of uncertain strategic incentives to a more expansive condition which has been labelled here popular *reticence* about war.

Finding support for Liberman's observation entails that the borders of the rationality assumption in public support for war need to be circumscribed. This study has demonstrated that the assumption has limits, and public support for war is a complex phenomenon that cannot be fully explained with such parsimony. Rationalist assumptions about public decision-making undoubtedly explain attitudes when strategic incentives are clear, but when the public is reticent about intervention, models incorporating moral judgement need to be utilised.

The (tentative) inferences about the variable effects of retributive rhetoric have implications for the debate between rationalist versus elite cues models. Retributive rhetoric may well be the most powerful mobilisation tool at a president's disposal. Yet the empirical work demonstrates that even so, public opinion is not especially malleable. When a crisis involves a third country, individuals do not yield to the retributive impulse easily. For

example, in the prelude to the Gulf War, despite Bush's repeated, dramatic retellings of the atrocity stories, support for intervention did not increase. Likewise, in the prelude to World War II, the fall of France in June 1940 appears to have had a far more dramatic effect in bringing home the level of threat than did Roosevelt's strenuous efforts to communicate this in his public speeches.

Yet, in situations of public reticence and Category Two harms, expository explanations also proved to be unpersuasive, perhaps even more so. The explanation is most plausibly found in the distinction between System 1 and 2 brain processing, and the greater cognitive labour entailed in processing expository information. An important finding of this study is that elite messaging using expository language may be less compelling than emotive or moral language.

The three cases in this thesis suggest that elite messages were influential, but that events themselves proved to be equally, if not more, decisive. This may imply that individuals reason about military interventions in a more independent manner than assumed by the elite cues literature. Yet it need not imply that individuals are exercising critical judgment in the manner suggested by rationalist models. The evidence in this research appears to support the idea that citizens think quite independently, but in the subset of cases we are concerned with, they may not think rationally, in terms of cost-benefit evaluations. Rather, individuals are subjected to cognitive biases, one of which is the bias towards retribution, if, and when, it is activated.

One strand of rationalist theorising to which the present findings speak is work on casualty aversion. This scholarship has argued that the public evaluates foreign interventions

in a rational, objective manner by way of cost-benefit calculation.[2] Scott Gartner writes that "the mechanism linking casualties to opinion remains opaque; knowledge of the micro-foundations underlying this wartime reaction is weak, both theoretically and empirically.[3] While Gelpi Feaver and Reifler delineate the moral legitimacy of action as influencing casualty tolerance, they do not explore this any further and do not provide any kind of theoretical basis for this variable. Additionally, they specify that evaluations of moral legitimacy mainly relate to aspects of national security.

The present work offers to bring some clarity to these theoretical challenges because it identifies how people are likely to evaluate the moral legitimacy of foreign interventions via the hierarchy of harms. The hierarchy of harms can provide the "mechanism linking casualties to opinion" which Gartner laments is the missing micro-foundation to the theory. Indeed, people *should* find the loss of human life as the most morally aversive outcome.

Another theoretical debate with relevance to these findings is the question of whether leaders follow or lead public opinion, which of course is also important for democratic peace theory. To borrow Steven Casey's succinct summary, the central question is "who influences whom?"[4] All presidents exhibited a strong concern with public opinion, and considerations of public opinion affected their rhetorical choices. However, in the Vietnam and Gulf War cases, concerns about public opinion did not alter the actual policies pursued by presidents. In the World War II case, prior to Pearl Harbor Roosevelt did appear to tailor his policies to public opinion, in that he did not seek a declaration of war, knowing that this would likely

---

[2] See for example, Eichenberg, "Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005."; Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force."; Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public [Electronic Resource] : Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences, American Politics and Political Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[3] Scott Sigmund Gartner, "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach," *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008): 95.

[4] Casey, *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany*, xix.

fail. However, after Pearl Harbor, he pursued his policy of Germany first, even though it ran counter to public preferences and crafted his rhetoric in line with this objective. A more accurate inference might be that presidents do not tend to change their policies based on public opinion after they have settled upon a policy, although they may be more open to factoring in public opinion before the decision has been made.

Another theoretical implication to consider is how these findings speak to existing theorising about rally effects. The argument could reasonably be made that retributive psychology helps explain this phenomenon. In all three cases, public support for presidents surged in the aftermath of offensive foreign policy actions (in Bush's case, public support surged after the August troop deployment to Saudi Arabia). Justice intuitions underpinning retributive responses may well be implicated in this interesting aspect of public opinion, and this is discussed further in the section on future avenues of research.

Retributive Rhetoric and Aerial Bombing

The evidence supporting the association between retributive rhetoric and aerial bombing has theoretical implications for the study of coercion. With the dominant explanation for bombing being that air power is almost solely used for the purposes of coercion, this thesis has demonstrated that bombing can also be employed for moral-intuitive reasons. This thesis therefore complements coercion theories by providing an additional strand of explanation for aerial bombing.

Generalisability

The final theoretical implication is a word of caution concerning the surety of the findings derived from the empirical material, in other words, the problem of inductive knowledge. What we have learned from the past about the patterns and properties of retributive rhetoric may give a misleading impression that it will be used in the future. The presidency of Donald J. Trump represented an astounding break with traditional expectations of presidential behaviour, illustrating that changes can occur that are outside the scope of our theories, rendering predictions irrelevant.

Circumspection regarding generalisability is advisable, given that evidence suggests that the types of justice violations that trigger retribution differ between individualistic and collectivist cultures, with the former more sensitive to procedural justice, and the latter are more attuned to interactional justice and social context.[5] Most obviously, the United States is a country with a pronounced punitive culture compared to countries with similar political and economic characteristics.[6] It has the highest incarceration rate in the world, assigns criminal sentences of longer duration than other countries, and retains the death penalty when almost all comparable polities have banned this practise.[7]

In light of this, it is worth bearing in mind that the majority of the experimental research on punishment emanates from western countries, particularly the U.S. Therefore, the findings on how people evaluate harms and ascribe punishment may reflect the psychological processes of Americans and possibly citizens in other so-called "WEIRD" (western,

[5] V. Lee Hamilton and Joseph Sanders, *Everyday Justice: Responsibility and the Individual in Japan and the United States* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992); Osgood, "Is Revenge About Retributive Justice, Deterring Harm, or Both?."
[6] James Q. Whitman, *Harsh Justice: Criminal Punishment and the Widening Divide between America and Europe* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[7] Kugler et al., "Differences in Punitiveness across Three Cultures: A Test of American Exceptionalism in Justice Attitudes," 1071.

educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) countries.[8] It is plausible that conceptions of justice may be specific to particular cultures, or are perhaps only partially shared across cultures. After all, it has been documented that penal cultures and the ideas of justice underpinning them evolve over time.[9] In a sociological study of punishment, David W. Garland considers conceptions of crime and criminals "not as revealed truths standing outside of time and place, but instead as specific cultural forms."[10] On the other hand, there is substantial evidence suggesting that the most fundamental intuitions of justice, at least, may transcend specific regional or cultural contexts. Irrespective of the cultural forms that punishment takes, the fact that it is practised universally in human societies suggests less that it is grounded in more durable psychological architecture. This point is even acknowledged in the most socially oriented streams of social science explanation, for example constructivist scholars Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink find that basic ideas about protecting life and bodily integrity are shared transculturally.[11]

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The empirical case studies have demonstrated that presidents and their officials use retributive rhetoric as an expedient tool for mobilisation. This finding has more than theoretical importance; its worrisome implication is that retributive rhetoric may obstruct the effective functioning of the democratic institutions of government. It suggests that presidents may treat the public casually, merely as a 'box to be ticked' before proceeding with pre-

[8] Joseph Henrich, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan, "The Weirdest People in the World?," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 2-3 (2010); Joseph Patrick Henrich, *The Weirdest People in the World: How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous* (London: Allen Lane, 2020).
[9] J. M. Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England*, 1660-1800 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).
[10] David Garland, *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 209.
[11] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

existing policies. This is important, because the ease or difficulty with which leaders can generate support has implications for the ease with which democracies enter international conflict. If leaders can use these deceptive tactics, it means that publics can be manipulated, and public opinion really has little constraining effect on foreign policy. Conversely, some might argue that retributive rhetoric is an acceptable practise of statecraft, which ultimately protects the interests of citizens. Should we then think of retributive rhetoric as a pathology, or a positive design feature of American democracy?

This is a complex normative question, and the answer will undoubtedly vary by individual case. However, the value of this study in terms of policy outcomes is that it provides readers with the ability to recognise retributive rhetoric. Retributive rhetoric should function in the manner of an alarm bell for democracy, alerting foreign policy practitioners and the public, when they hear it, to give special scrutiny to the case a president is making for intervention. As we have seen, often, the justifications for intervention cited in retributive rhetoric ostensibly concern objectives masking other, more strategic political goals.

Another policy implication concerns the normative issue of whether the popular retributive impulse is something that should be accepted as part of human nature and thus international relations, or whether we should seek to minimise its effects, perhaps through attempts to re-educate people away from it. Darley, Carlsmith and Robinson broach this issue in the context of domestic criminal sentencing, proposing that retribution may be a key device regulating social life. They note that a "just deserts sentencing philosophy can lie in a society's desire to assert that the violation of the rule is a threat to societal order and to the values that the society holds. It is this order that is at least partially restored by the extraction

of a just amount of punishment from the offender. There are, in other words, moral arguments for the retributive motive for punishment."[12]

Indeed, this may well hold in international affairs, too. The bias towards retribution may be considered a beneficial "strategic instinct", supplying impetus to leaders' efforts to protect state interests and stand up to norm violators. In this way, the deontological underpinning of the retributive instinct may guide leaders to act on principle, or 'stand up for what is right'. This becomes particularly pertinent when one considers that at times, more powerful states may be required to take military action that is not so closely connected to self-interest, but also functions to protect the wider international order or 'society' of states.[13]

Yet would it even be possible to alter this human tendency towards punishment? Given the universality and deeply rooted psychological roots, it is doubtful that attempts at social engineering could eradicate this impulse completely. In another article, Robinson and Darley argue that "a criminal justice system that adopts rules that predictably and regularly fail to do justice or that regularly do injustice will inevitably be widely seen as failing in a mission thought important, even foundational, by the community."[14] For presidents, the consequences of failing to meet the retributive expectations of the electorate will obviously be manifested at the polls and in the election booths. Given the strictures of the current political system whereby elected officials must tailor their behaviour towards the goal of public popularity and, often, re-election, it is arguably not in a president's interests to neglect the retributive impulses of the masses.

[12] Darley, Carlsmith, and Robinson, "Incapacitation and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment," 679.
[13] Dominic D. P. Johnson, *Strategic Instincts: The Adaptive Advantages of Cognitive Biases in International Politics*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020).
[14] Robinson and Darley, "Intuitions of Justice: Implications for Criminal Law and Justice Policy," 2.

NORMATIVE IMPLICATIONS

While it is not doubted that sometimes leaders use the language of justice sincerely, it is often the case that these arguments are employed instrumentally as an expeditious technique to manipulate public opinion. In this way, this form of rhetoric may be used as a tool of political opportunism, justifying offensives which have premeditated political goals, or to pre-empt debates about sensitive issues.[15] This point has been noted by Liberman, who writes that "national injury might also create opportunities for leaders to pursue strategically unrelated war agendas."[16] Of course, the legitimacy of democratic political systems reposes on the idea that citizens receive accurate information about policies, and retributive rhetoric used for manipulative purposes therefore has implications for the proper functioning of democratic governance.

According to International Relations theorist Robert A. Pape, "social scientists have a responsibility to advance knowledge on subjects relevant to policy, especially when the decisions we make have great moral consequences."[17] This thesis contributes to the realm of policy is thus one of highlighting this form of communication in order that citizens may be forewarned when they encounter it. Armed with the ability to recognise the idiom of retribution, citizens (including scholars and those within the 'foreign policy establishment') should be alerted, when they see it, to attend to a president's motives with special scrutiny.

[15] Liberman and Skitka, "Revenge in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq," 639.
[16] Liberman and Skitka, "Vicarious Retribution in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq," 191.
[17] Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, 3.

FUTURE RESEARCH

As mentioned in the Introduction, the phenomenon of retributive intuitions in international relations offers two main avenues of research: investigating the effects of genuinely experienced retributive sentiment on leaders themselves and their policy decisions, and investigating presidents' observable behaviour utilising retribution for instrumental purposes. While this study has explored the latter, the former would make a fascinating companion study. After all, this thesis has not argued that presidents are unsusceptible to experiencing retributive sentiment, but has taken the analytical decision to remain agnostic on this point and to investigate the observable indicators of this value in presidential rhetoric. A study exploring how and when presidents experience moral outrage and a desire to punish retributively would contribute to the research programme on punishment in International Relations and to the debate about just how rational presidents are as executive office holders.

An obvious avenue for future research stemming from the present study is the development of a theory of retributive rhetoric encompassing all regime types, extending the present work's focus on the dynamics of retributive rhetoric in a democracy. A study of this kind would build knowledge of the bigger, underlying question towards which this study represents a first step at answering: the role of retributive tendencies in international relations more generally. While — primarily for purposes of tractability — the present study limits itself to a democratic subset of the worldwide population of cases, a study investigating retributive rhetoric in non-democracies and autocracies would be useful in terms of deepening understanding of this presidential strategy and from the perspective of not only international relations, but also of comparative politics.

Similarly, future work could fruitfully consider the use and effects of retributive rhetoric along two additional dimensions. First, the use of retributive language to members of Congress. Given the powers of Congress to sanction war, a study analysing speeches to Congress and congressional debates would make an enlightening study. Second, retributive rhetoric could be studied over the entirety of wars. The research literatures considered in this thesis point to the likelihood that war rationales will be different in the prelude to war and after fighting has commenced. For example, once the 2003 war in Iraq had begun, Bush's former ratio emphasising threat over freedom at more than 2:1 reversed to emphasise freedom over threat at a rate of more than 3:1 (10.63 to 2.78 uses per 1,000 words). As Kevin Coe notes, "a war that was about one thing as it was being proposed came to be about something very different once it began. This change is further evidence that presidents' wartime rationales are related to changes in the circumstances of war. The result, it appears, is that Bush sought a new rationale and found one in freedom."[18] While the present study has focused exclusively on war mobilisation, a wider theory would investigate how presidents behave once the mandate for war has been secured, when presumably objectives will shift to a concern with maintaining public support. Such a study would no doubt intersect with work on casualty aversion, as concerns about casualties often become more salient as wars progress.

The current work is the mere beginning of theorising how judgements about moral culpability transport to the domain of international politics. It has attempted to show that the moral salience of an international trigger event is, among other factors, a valid guide to expectations about presidential rhetoric. The prospect of researching the dynamics of the

[18] Coe, "The American Presidency at War: An Examination of Three Possibilities for Presidential Rationales," 482-83.

hierarchy of harms is an exciting avenue of future research, which ideally requires psychological experiments to gauge how these evaluations are made and to calibrate the contours of the categories' boundaries.

This thesis has drawn attention to the fact that rationalist models of public support for war may need to recognise that a parallel mode of opinion formation may operate in the subset of cases investigated here. Currently, almost all work on public support for war views public opinion as operating within the rational cost-benefit model.[19] It is also hoped that the work herein might guide scholars of public opinion on war to develop dual, complementary models, accommodating more nuance in opinion formation.

Relatedly, another direction for future research is the role of retributive psychology in rally effects. As mentioned, the case studies have shown consistent rally effects following presidential decisions and/or action initiating force. The logic of retribution suggests that retributive rhetoric, or at least, retributive sentiment, may be implicated. Yet in the case of the Korean War, the rally effect occurred even though Truman had not engaged in retributive rhetoric. Certainly, the relationship between retributive rhetoric and this phenomenon remains unclear, and merits further investigation. In the present study, the effects of retributive rhetoric have been tangential to the main research focus. However, parsing out the effects of underlying retributive sentiment from the effects of retributive rhetoric would make for a very interesting future study addressing the question of effectiveness. This is the kind of study that experimental methods could investigate nicely.

[19] For representative exceptions, see Ginges and Atran, "War as a Moral Imperative (Not Just Practical Politics by Other Means)."; Johnson and Tierney, *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics*.

FINAL WORDS

The universally held value of retribution is both elementary and ubiquitous. It represents a powerful resource for presidents to draw upon as they seek to mobilise support for war, and this thesis has demonstrated why and how presidents go about this, projecting justice intuitions relevant to retribution as a distinctive performative idiom. In explaining when presidents undertake this, we need to consider the strategic incentives for intervention, but we also need to consider how the moral gravity of a crisis event can act as an extrinsic lever in terms of conditioning the rhetorical output of presidents. This thesis has attempted to illuminate the relationship between popular moral judgements about foreign affairs and presidential rhetoric, contributing to the study of International Relations a novel form of rhetorical genre, *retributive rhetoric*.

Bibliography

Adriaenssen, A., L. Paoli, S. Karstedt, J. Visschers, V. A. Greenfield, and S. Pleysier. "Public Perceptions of the Seriousness of Crime: Weighing the Harm and the Wrong." *European Journal of Criminology* (2018): 127-50.

Aldrich, John, John Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida. "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates Waltz before a Blind Audience?". *The American Political Science Review* 83, no. 1 (1989): 123-41.

Alicke, Mark. "Blaming Badly." *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 8, no. 1-2 (2008): 179-86.

———. "Culpable Causation." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 3 (1992): 368-78.

Allen, Susan Hannah. "Time Bombs: Estimating the Duration of Coercive Bombing Campaigns." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 1 (2007): 112-33.

Alterman, Eric. "Republic Opinion." *Nation* 269, no. 5 (1999): 11. https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2713/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nih&AN=2101474&site=ehost-live.

———. *When Presidents Lie: A History of Official Deception and Its Consequences.* New York and London: Viking, 2004.

Arendt, Hannah. *Crises of the Republic.* San Diego and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1972.

Austin, Anthony. *The President's War: The Story of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and How the Nation Was Trapped in Vietnam.* Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971.

Axelrod, Robert M. *The Evolution of Cooperation.* New York: Basic Books, 2006.

Baker, James Addison, and Thomas M. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Ball, George W. *The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs.* New York and London: Norton, 1982.

Ball, Moya Ann. "Revisiting the Gulf of Tonkin Crisis: An Analysis of the Private Communication of President Johnson and His Advisers." *Discourse & Society* 2, no. 3 (1991): 281-96.

Barber, James David. *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House.* 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1992.

Barnhart, Joslyn. *The Consequences of Humiliation: Anger and Status in World Politics.* Cornell Scholarship Online. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021.

Bates, Benjamin R. "Audiences, Metaphors, and the Persian Gulf War." *Communication Studies* 55, no. 3 (2004): 447-63.

Batson, C. Daniel, Mark J. Bowers, Emily A. Leonard, and Emily C. Smith. "Does Personal Morality Exacerbate or Restrain Retaliation after Being Harmed?". *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 26, no. 1 (2000): 35-45.

Baum, Matthew A. "How Public Opinion Constrains the Use of Force: The Case of Operation Restore Hope." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2004): 187-226.

———. *Soft News Goes to War: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy in the New Media Age.* Princeton, N.J. and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Baum, Matthew A., and Samuel Kernell. "Economic Class and Popular Support for Franklin Roosevelt in War and Peace." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2001): 198-229.

Baum, Matthew, and Tim J. Groeling. *War Stories: The Causes and Consequences of Public Views of War.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Beattie, J. M. *Crime and the Courts in England, 1660-1800.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1986.

Ben-Porath, Eran N. "Rhetoric of Atrocities: The Place of Horrific Human Rights Abuses in Presidential Persuasion Efforts." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2007): 181-202.
Beschloss, Michael R. *Taking Charge: The Johnson White House Tapes, 1963-1964.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.
Bessner, Daniel and Logevall, Fredrik. "Recentering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations." *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (2020).
Blumstein, Alfred, and Jacqueline Cohen. "Sentencing of Convicted Offenders: An Analysis of the Public's View." *Law & Society Review* 14, no. 2 (1980): 223-61.
Brace, Paul and Hinckley, Barbara. *Follow the Leader: Opinion Polls and the Modern President.* New York: Basic Books, 1992.
Braden, Waldo W., and Earnest Brandenburg. "Roosevelt's Fireside Chats." *Speech Monographs* 22, no. 5 (1955): 290-302.
Brandenburg, Earnest. "Franklin D. Roosevelt's International Speeches, 1939-1941." *Speech Monographs* 16, no. 1 (1949): 21-40.
Brody, Richard A. *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.
Brody, Richard, and Catherine Shapiro. "Policy Failure and Public Support: The Iran-Contra Affair and Public Assessment of President Reagan." *Political Behavior* 11, no. 4 (1989): 353-69.
Brown, Donald E. *Human Universals.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.
Brownlee, Jason. "Cognitive Shortcuts and Public Support for Intervention." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 2-3 (2020): 261-89.
Burgin, Eileen. "Rethinking the Role of the War Powers Resolution: Congress and the Persian Gulf War." *Journal of Legislation* 21, no. 1 (1995): 23-47.
Burnham, Terence C., and Dominic D. P. Johnson. "The Biological and Evolutionary Logic of Human Cooperation." [In ger
eng]. *Analyse & Kritik* 27, no. 1 (2005): 113-35.
Burns, Zachary C., Eugene M. Caruso, and Daniel M. Bartels. "Predicting Premeditation: Future Behavior Is Seen as More Intentional Than Past Behavior." *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 141, no. 2 (2012): 227-32.
Bush, George H. W. *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings.* New York: Scribner, 1999.
Bush, George H. W., and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed.* New York: Knopf, 1998.
Byers, Michael. *War Law.* London: Atlantic, 2005.
Byman, Daniel L., and Kenneth M. Pollack. "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In." *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 107-46.
Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
———. *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
Caprara, Gian Vittorio, Shalom Schwartz, Cristina Capanna, Michele Vecchione, and Claudio Barbaranelli. "Personality and Politics: Values, Traits, and Political Choice." *Political Psychology* 27, no. 1 (2006): 1-28.
Carlsmith, Kevin. "On Justifying Punishment: The Discrepancy between Words and Actions." *Social Justice Research* 21, no. 2 (2008): 119-37.
Carlsmith, Kevin, John Darley, and Paul Robinson. "Why Do We Punish? Deterrence and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 2 (2002): 284-99.

Carlsmith, Kevin M. "The Roles of Retribution and Utility in Determining Punishment." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 42, no. 4 (2006): 437-51.
Carlsmith, Kevin M., and John M. Darley. "Psychological Aspects of Retributive Justice." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 40 (2008): 193-236.
Carlsmith, Kevin M., Timothy D. Wilson, and Daniel T. Gilbert. "The Paradoxical Consequences of Revenge." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95, no. 6 (2008): 1316.
Carruthers, Peter, and Peter K. Smith. "Introduction." In *Theories of Theories of Mind*, edited by Peter Carruthers and Peter K. Smith, 1-8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Casey, Steven. *Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
———. *Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Centers, Richard, Robert William Shomer, and Aroldo Rodrigues. "A Field Experiment in Interpersonal Persuasion Using Authoritative Influence." *Journal of Personality* 38, no. 3 (1970): 392-403.
Cherwitz, Richard A. "Masking Inconsistency: The Tonkin Gulf Crisis." *Communication Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1980): 27-37.
Cherwitz, Richard A., and Kenneth S. Zagacki. "Consummatory Versus Justificatory Crisis Rhetoric." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50, no. 4 (1986): 307-24.
Chong, Dennis. "How People Think, Reason, and Feel About Rights and Liberties." *American Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 3 (1993): 867-99.
Chong, Dennis, and James Druckman. "Framing Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 103-26.
Chun, Clayton K. S., and Howard Gerrard. *The Doolittle Raid 1942: America's First Strike Back at Japan.* Campaign (Osprey Publishing). Oxford and New York: Osprey Publishing, 2006.
Churchill, Winston. *The Gathering Storm.* The Second World War. VI vols. Vol. I, London: Cassell & Co Ltd, 1948.
Clutton-Brock, T. H., and G. A. Parker. "Punishment in Animal Societies." *Nature* 373, no. 6511 (1995): 209.
Cody, James R. "Awpd-42 to Instant Thunder: Consistent, Evolutionary Thought or Revolutionary Change?", Report, *Air University Press* (1996): 35-53. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA424862.
Coe, Kevin. "The American Presidency at War: An Examination of Three Possibilities for Presidential Rationales." *Communication Studies* 64, no. 5 (2013): 470-87.
Cohen, Mitchel. "How Bush Senior Sold the Gulf War." *Counterpunch.org*, https://www.counterpunch.org/2002/12/28/how-bush-sr-sold-the-gulf-war/.
Colaresi, Michael. "The Benefit of the Doubt: Testing an Informational Theory of the Rally Effect." *International Organization* 61, no. 1 (2007): 99-143.
Costigliola, Frank. "Freedom from Fear." Chap. 5 In *The Four Freedoms: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Evolution of an American Idea*, edited by Jeffrey A. Engel, 166-88. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Crawford, Neta. *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention.* Cambridge Studies in International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Crews, Anthony Michael. "“The Art of Ruling the Minds of Men”: George H. W. Bush and the Justifications for Intervention in the Gulf War." Ohio University, 2010.

Crombag, Hans, Eric Rassin, and Robert Horselenberg. "On Vengeance." *Psychology, Crime & Law* 9, no. 4 (2003): 333-44.
Curry, Oliver Scott, Mark Alfano, Mark J. Brandt, and Christine Pelican. "Moral Molecules: Morality as a Combinatorial System." *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* (2021).
Curry, Oliver Scott, Daniel Austin Mullins, and Harvey Whitehouse. "Is It Good to Cooperate? Testing the Theory of Morality-as-Cooperation in 60 Societies." [In eng]. *Current Anthropology* 60, no. 1 (2019): 47-69.
Cushman, Fiery, Anna Dreber, Ying Wang, and Jay Costa. "Accidental Outcomes Guide Punishment in a "Trembling Hand" Game." *PLoS ONE* 4, no. 8 (2009): e6699.
Dallek, Robert. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945.* Oxford University Press. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
———. *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
———. "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam: The Making of a Tragedy." *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 2 (1996): 147-62.
Daly, Martin, and Margo Wilson. *Homicide.* Foundations of Human Behavior. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1988.
Damasio, Antonio R. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain.* London: Picador, 1995.
Darley, J. M., and T. S. Pittman. "The Psychology of Compensatory and Retributive Justice." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 7, no. 4 (2003): 324-36.
Darley, John, Kevin Carlsmith, and Paul Robinson. "Incapacitation and Just Deserts as Motives for Punishment." *Law and Human Behavior* 24, no. 6 (2000): 659-83.
Darley, John M. "Morality in the Law: The Psychological Foundations of Citizens' Desires to Punish Transgressions." *Annual Review Law and Social Science* 5, no. 1 (2009): 1-23.
Darley, John M., and Mark P. Zanna. "Making Moral Judgments." *American Scientist* 70, no. 5 (1982): 515.
de Quervain, Dominique J. F., Urs Fischbacher, Valerie Treyer, Melanie Schellhammer, Ulrich Schnyder, Alfred Buck, and Ernst Fehr. "The Neural Basis of Altruistic Punishment." *Science* 305, no. 5688 (2004): 1254.
Dear, I. C. B. . "Doolittle Raid." In *The Oxford Companion to World War II,* edited by M. R. D. Foot Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604464.001.0001/acref-9780198604464-e-496.
Delli Carpini, Michael X. "Vietnam and the Press." Chap. 7 In *The Legacy: The Vietnam War in the American Imagination*, edited by D. Michael Shafer, 125-56. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.
Donald Cameron, Watt, A. Stoler Mark, L. O'Neill William, S. Sherry Michael, and D. Doenecke Justus. "World War Ii (1939–45)." In *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195071986.001.0001/acref-9780195071986-e-1018.
Doolittle, General James H., with Carroll V. Glines. *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again.* New York: Bantam Books, 2001.
Dow, Bonnie J. "The Function of Epideictic and Deliberative Strategies in Presidential Crisis Rhetoric." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 53, no. 3 (1989): 294-310.
Downes, Alexander B. "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War." *International Security* 30, no. 4 (2006): 152-95.
Doyle, M. "The Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 180-84.

Doyle, Michael W. "Liberalism and World Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (1986): 1151-69.
Dustin, D. S., and H. P. Davis. "Authoritarianism and Sanctioning Behaviour." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 6, no. 2 (1967): 222-24.
Edelman, Murray J. *Political Language: Words That Succeed and Policies That Fail.* New York and London: Academic Press, 1977.
———. *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence.* New York: Academic Press, 1971.
Edwards, George C. *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003.
———. "Presidential Rhetoric: What Difference Does It Make?". In *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, edited by Martin J. Medhurst. Texas: A&M University Press, 1996.
Edwards, George C., and B. Dan Wood. "Who Influences Whom? The President, Congress, and the Media." *The American Political Science Review* 93, no. 2 (1999): 327-44.
Eichenberg, Richard C. "Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005." *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 140-77.
Ellsberg, Daniel. *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers.* New York and London: Penguin, 2003.
Ellsworth, Phoebe C., and Samuel R. Gross. "Hardening of the Attitudes: Americans' Views on the Death Penalty." *Journal of Social Issues* 50, no. 2 (1994): 19-52.
Ellsworth, Phoebe C., and Lee Ross. "Public Opinion and Capital Punishment: A Close Examination of the Views of Abolitionists and Retentionists." *Crime & Delinquency* 29, no. 1 (1983): 116-69.
Elster, Jon. "Norms of Revenge." *Ethics* 100, no. 4 (1990): 862-85.
England, Jane C. "Capital Punishment in the Light of Constitutional Evolution: An Analysis of Distinctions between "Furman" and "Gregg"." *Notre Dame Lawyer* 52, no. 4 (1977): 596.
Entman, Robert M. *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
Euben, Roxanne L. "Humiliation and the Political Mobilization of Masculinity." *Political Theory* 43, no. 4 (2015): 500-32.
Fattah, Khaled, and K. M. Fierke. "A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East." *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 1 (2009): 67-93.
Feather, N. T. "Reactions to Penalties for an Offense in Relation to Authoritarianism, Values, Perceived Responsibility, Perceived Seriousness, and Deservingness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71, no. 3 (1996): 571-87.
Fehr, Ernst, and Simon Gächter. "Altruistic Punishment in Humans." *Nature* 415, no. 6868 (2002): 137-40.
Feinberg, Joel. "The Expressive Function of Punishment." *The Monist* 49, no. 3 (1965): 397-423.
Feinberg, Matthew, and Robb Willer. "From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?". *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 41, no. 12 (2015): 1665-81.
———. "The Moral Roots of Environmental Attitudes." *Psychological Science* 24, no. 1 (2013): 56-62.
Fetherstonhaugh, David, Paul Slovic, Stephen Johnson, and James Friedrich. "Insensitivity to the Value of Human Life: A Study of Psychophysical Numbing." *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 14, no. 3 (1997): 283-300.

Finkel, Norman J., Stephen T. Maloney, Monique Z. Valbuena, and Jennifer Groscup. "Recidivism, Proportionalism, and Individualized Punishment." *American Behavioral Scientist* 39, no. 4 (1996): 474-87.
Fisher, Walter R. "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument." *Communication Monographs* 51, no. 1 (1984): 1-22.
Foyle, Douglas C. "Leading the Public to War? The Influence of American Public Opinion on the Bush Administrations Decision to Go to War in Iraq." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 16, no. 3 (2004): 269-94.
Freedman, L., and E. Karsh. "How Kuwait Was Won." *International Security* 16, no. 2 (1991): 5-41.
Friedman, Thomas L. "Mideast Tensions Us Jobs at Stake in Gulf Baker Says." *New York Times*, November 14th 1990.
Galeotti, Anna E. *Political Self-Deception.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
"Gallup and Fortune Polls." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1940): 83-115.
Gardner, Lloyd. "The Ministry of Fear: Selling the Gulf Wars." Chap. 9 In *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, edited by Alan Frank Kenneth Osgood, and David Halberstam 224-49. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010.
Garland, David. *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
Gartner, Scott Sigmund. "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach." *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 1 (2008): 95-106.
Gelpi, Christopher, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler. "Success Matters." *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005): 7-46.
Gerring, John. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?". *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 341-54.
Gershkoff, Amy, and Shana Kushner. "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric." *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005): 525-37.
Gilbert, Martin. *A History of the Twentieth Century.* Vol. II, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998.
Ginges, Jeremy, and Scott Atran. "War as a Moral Imperative (Not Just Practical Politics by Other Means)." *Proceedings Royal Society B* 278, no. 1720 (2011): 2930-38.
Glines, Carroll V. *Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders.* Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1980.
Gordijn, Ernestine H., Daniël Wigboldus, and Vincent Yzerbyt. "Emotional Consequences of Categorizing Victims of Negative Outgroup Behavior as Ingroup or Outgroup." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 4, no. 4 (2001): 317-26.
Goulden, Joseph C. *Truth Is the First Casualty: The Gulf of Tonkin Affair: Illusion and Reality.* Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969.
Govier, Trudy. *Forgiveness and Revenge.* London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Brian Nosek. "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96, no. 5 (2009): 1029-46.
Greenawalt, Kent. "Punishment." *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 74, no. 2 (1983): 343-62.
Greenstein, Fred I. *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization.* Princeton Legacy Library. New ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Groeling, Tim, and Matthew A. Baum. "Crossing the Water's Edge: Elite Rhetoric, Media Coverage, and the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon." *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 4 (2008): 1065-85.
Grundmann, Reiner, Dennis Smith, and Sue Wright. "National Elites and Transnational Discourses in the Balkan War: A Comparison between the French, German and British Establishment Press." *European Journal of Communication* 15, no. 3 (2000): 299-320.
Guglielmo, Steve, Andrew E. Monroe, and Bertram F. Malle. "At the Heart of Morality Lies Folk Psychology." *Inquiry* 52, no. 5 (2009): 449-66.
Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., D. Alex Hughes, and David G. Victor. "The Cognitive Revolution and the Political Psychology of Elite Decision Making." *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (2013): 368-86.
Haidt, J. "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment." *Psychological Review* 108 (2001): 814-34.
Haidt, Jonathan, and Jesse Graham. "When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions That Liberals May Not Recognize." *Social Justice Research* 20, no. 1 (2007): 98-116.
Haidt, Jonathan, and Matthew A. Hersh. "Sexual Morality: The Cultures and Emotions of Conservatives and Liberals." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 31, no. 1 (2001): 191-221.
Hall, Todd H. *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2015.
———. "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco-Prussian War." *Security Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 1-29.
Hall, Todd H., and Andrew A. G. Ross. "Affective Politics after 9/11." *International Organization* 69, no. 4 (2015): 847-79.
Hall, Todd, and Andrew A. G. Ross. "Rethinking Affective Experience and Popular Emotion: World War I and the Construction of Group Emotion in International Relations." *Political Psychology* 40 (2019): 1357-72.
Hall, Wynton C. ""Reflections of Yesterday": George H. W. Bush's Instrumental Use of Public Opinion Research in Presidential Discourse." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2002): 531-47.
Hallin, Daniel C. *The "Uncensored War" : The Media and Vietnam.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
Hamilton, V. Lee, and Steve Rytina. "Social Consensus on Norms of Justice: Should the Punishment Fit the Crime?" [In eng]. *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 5 (1980): 1117-44.
Hamilton, V. Lee, and Joseph Sanders. *Everyday Justice: Responsibility and the Individual in Japan and the United States.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992.
Hamlin, Alan P. "Rational Revenge." *Ethics* 101, no. 2 (1991): 374-81.
Heinrichs, Waldo H. *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War Ii.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
Henrich, Joseph, Steven J. Heine, and Ara Norenzayan. "The Weirdest People in the World?". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 2-3 (2010): 45-67.
Henrich, Joseph, Richard McElreath, Abigail Barr, Jean Ensminger, Clark Barrett, Alexander Bolyanatz, Juan Camilo Cardenas*, et al.* "Costly Punishment across Human Societies." *Science* 312, no. 5781 (2006): 1767-70.
Henrich, Joseph Patrick. *Foundations of Human Sociality: Economic Experiments and Ethnographic Evidence from Fifteen Small-Scale Societies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

———. *The Weirdest People in the World: How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous.* London: Allen Lane, 2020.
Herrmann, Richard K., Philip E. Tetlock, and Penny S. Visser. "Mass Public Decisions to Go to War: A Cognitive-Interactionist Framework." *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 3 (1999): 553-73.
Hess, Gary R. *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf.* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
Hill, Richard F. *Hitler Attacks Pearl Harbor: Why the United States Declared War on Germany.* Boulder and London: L. Rienner, 2003.
Hofmann, Wilhelm, Mark J. Brandt, Daniel C. Wisneski, Bettina Rockenbach, and Linda J. Skitka. "Moral Punishment in Everyday Life." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 44, no. 12 (2018): 1697-711.
Holsti, Ole R. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy.* Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2004.
Holsti, Ole R., and James N. Rosenau. *American Leadership in World Affairs: Vietnam and the Breakdown of Consensus.* Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984.
Horowitz, Michael, and Dan Reiter. "When Does Aerial Bombing Work?: Quantitative Empirical Tests, 1917-1999." [In eng]. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 2 (2001): 147-73.
Hsu, Marlene. "Cultural and Sexual Differences on the Judgment of Criminal Offenses: A Replication Study of the Measurement of Delinquency." *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 64, no. 3 (1973): 348-53.
Hurst, Steven. "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush During the Persian Gulf Crisis 1990–91: How to Help Lose a War You Won." *Political Studies* 52, no. 2 (2004): 376-92.
Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley. "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model." *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (1987): 1099-120.
Itoi, Ritsu, Ken-Ichi Ohbuchi, and Mitsuteru Fukuno. "A Cross-Cultural Study of Preference of Accounts: Relationship Closeness, Harm Severity, and Motive of Account Making." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 26, no. 10 (1996): 913-34.
Ivie, Robert L. "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War." *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 4 (1980): 279-94.
———. "Presidential Motives for War." *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 3 (1974): 337-45.
———. "Speaking “Common Sense" About the Soviet Threat: Reagan's Rhetorical Stance." *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 48, no. 1 (1984): 39-50.
Iyengar, Shanto, and Adam Simon. "News Coverage of the Gulf Crisis and Public Opinion: A Study of Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing." *Communication Research* 20, no. 3 (1993): 365-83.
Jacobs, Lawrence R. "The Recoil Effect: Public Opinion and Policymaking in the U.S. And Britain." *Comparative Politics* 24, no. 2 (1992): 199-217.
Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Robert Y. Shapiro. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
———. "Presidential Manipulation of Polls and Public Opinion: The Nixon Administration and the Pollsters." *Political Science Quarterly* 110, no. 4 (1995): 519-38.
Jacobs, Lawrence, and Robert Shapiro. "The Rise of Presidential Polling: The Nixon White House in Historical Perspective." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (1995): 163.

James, Patrick, and Athanasios Hristoulas. "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy: Evaluating a Model of Crisis Activity for the United States." *Journal of Politics* 56, no. 2 (1994): 327-48.
James, Patrick, and John R. Oneal. "The Influence of Domestic and International Politics on the President's Use of Force." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (1991): 307-32.
Jamieson, Kathleen Hall, and Paul Waldman. *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists, and the Stories That Shape the Political World.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
Jentleson, Bruce. "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force." *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1992): 49.
Jentleson, Bruce W., and Rebecca L. Britton. "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 4 (1998): 395-417.
Jervis, Robert. *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
John, Sue Lockett, David Scott Domke, Kevin M. Coe, and Erica S. Graham. "Going Public, Crisis after Crisis: The Bush Administration and the Press from September 11 to Saddam." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2007): 195-219.
Johns, Andrew L. "Introduction." In *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, edited by Alan Frank Kenneth Osgood, and David Halberstam, 1-17. Florida: University Press of Florida, 2010.
Johnson, Dominic. *God Is Watching You: How the Fear of God Makes Us Human.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Johnson, Dominic D. P. *Strategic Instincts: The Adaptive Advantages of Cognitive Biases in International Politics.* Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020.
Johnson, Dominic D. P., and Dominic Tierney. *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
Johnson, James Turner. *The Quest for Peace: Three Moral Traditions in Western Cultural History.* Princeton
Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1987.
Johnson, Lyndon B. *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972.
Jones, Od, and R. Kurzban. "Intuitions of Punishment." *University of Chicago Law Review* 77, no. 4 (2010): 1633-41.
Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow.* London: Penguin, 2012.
Kaiser, Cheryl R., S. Brooke Vick, and Brenda Major. "A Prospective Investigation of the Relationship between Just-World Beliefs and the Desire for Revenge after September 11, 2001." *Psychological Science* 15, no. 7 (2004): 503-06.
Kane, Robert B. "The Doolittle Raid - 75 Years Later." *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 1 (2017): 72.
Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History.* New York: Viking Press, 1983.
Katz, Andrew Z. "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Nixon Administration and the Pursuit of Peace with Honor in Vietnam." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1997): 496-513.
Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Keith, Jensen, Call Josep, and Tomasello Michael. "Chimpanzees Are Vengeful but Not Spiteful." [In eng]. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 32 (2007): 13046.
Kennan, George F., and John J. Mearsheimer. *American Diplomacy.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012.
Kertzer, Joshua D. "Re-Assessing Elite-Public Gaps in Political Behavior." *American Journal of Political Science* (2020).
Kertzer, Joshua D., Kathleen E. Powers, Brian C. Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer. "Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes." *The Journal of Politics* 76, no. 3 (2014): 825-40.
Kertzer, Joshua D., and Dustin Tingley. "Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21, no. 1 (2018): 319-39.
Kertzer, Joshua D., and Thomas Zeitzoff. "A Bottom-up Theory of Public Opinion About Foreign Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 3 (2017): 543-58.
Khong, Yuen Foong. *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
Kiers, E. Toby, A. Rousseau Robert, A. West Stuart, and R. Ford Denison. "Host Sanctions and the Legume–Rhizobium Mutualism." *Nature* 425, no. 6953 (2003): 78-81.
King, A., and S. Maruna. "Is a Conservative Just a Liberal Who Has Been Mugged? Exploring the Origins of Punitive Views." *Punishment & Society* 11, no. 2 (Apr 2009): 147-69.
Kocher, Matthew Adam, Thomas B. Pepinsky, and Stathis N. Kalyvas. "Aerial Bombing and Counterinsurgency in the Vietnam War." *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 2 (2011): 201-18.
Kogut, Tehila, and Ilana Ritov. "The "Identified Victim" Effect: An Identified Group, or Just a Single Individual?". *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 18, no. 3 (2005): 157-67.
Kohut, Andrew, and Robert Toth. "Arms and the People." *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 6 (1994): 47.
Krebs, Dennis. "Empathy and Altruism." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32, no. 6 (1975): 1134-46.
Krebs, Dennis L. "Altruism: An Examination of the Concept and a Review of the Literature." *Psychological Bulletin* 73, no. 4 (1970): 258-302.
Kuehnhanss, Colin R., Joshua Holm, and Bram Mahieu. "Rally 'Round Which Flag? Terrorism's Effect on (Intra)National Identity." *Public Choice* 188, no. 1-2 (2020): 53.
Kugler, M. B., F. Funk, J. Braun, M. Gollwitzer, A. C. Kay, and J. M. Darley. "Differences in Punitiveness across Three Cultures: A Test of American Exceptionalism in Justice Attitudes." *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 103, no. 4 (Fal 2013): 1071-113.
Kull, Steven, and Ramsay, Clay. "The Myth of the Reactive Public: American Public Attitudes on Military Fatalities in the Post-Cold War Period." In *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force*, edited by Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia. London: Routledge, 2001.
Kupchan, Charles A. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.
Kutateladze, Besiki, and Angela M. Crossman. "An Exploratory Analysis of Gender Differences in Punitiveness in Two Countries." *International Criminal Justice Review* 19, no. 3 (2009): 322-43.
Lagnado, David A., and Shelley Channon. "Judgments of Cause and Blame: The Effects of Intentionality and Foreseeability." *Cognition* 108, no. 3 (2008): 754-70.

Lakoff, George. "Metaphor and War: The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf." *Cognitive Semiotics* 4, no. 2 (1992): 5-19.
———. *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think.* Third ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
Lang, Anthony F. *Agency and Ethics: The Politics of Military Intervention.* Suny Series in Global Politics. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
Lebow, Richard Ned. *Between Peace and War.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.
Legro, Jeffrey. "Which Norms Matter? Revisiting the "Failure" of Internationalism." *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (2003): 31-63.
Leigh, Michael. *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976.
Levy, Jack S. "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference." [In eng]. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no. 1 (2008): 1-18.
Lewis, David A., and Roger P. Rose. "The President, the Press, and the War-Making Power: An Analysis of Media Coverage Prior to the Persian Gulf War." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (2002): 559-70.
Liberman, Peter. "An Eye for an Eye: Public Support for War against Evildoers." *International Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): 687-722.
———. "Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 1 (2007): 3-32.
———. "Retributive Support for International Punishment and Torture." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 2 (2013): 285-306.
———. "War and Torture as “Just Deserts"." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2014): 47-70.
Liberman, Peter, and Linda Skitka. "Vicarious Retribution in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq." *Security Studies* 28, no. 2 (2019): pp189-215.
Liberman, Peter, and Linda J. Skitka. "Revenge in U.S. Public Support for War against Iraq." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2017): 636-60.
Lind, E. A. "Fairness Heuristic Theory: Justice Judgments as Pivotal Cognitions in Organizational Relations." In *Advances in Organizational Justice*, edited by J. Greenberg and R. Cropanzo. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Lippmann, Walter. *Essays in the Public Philosophy.* New York: New American Library, 1955.
Logevall, Fredrik. *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam.* Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999.
Löwenheim, Oded, and Gadi Heimann. "Revenge in International Politics." *Security Studies* 17, no. 4 (2008): 685-724.
Lubasch, Arnold H. "Reds Driven Off." *New York Times*, August 5 1964 1964, 1.
MacArthur, John R. *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War.* Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993.
Macdonald, Scot. "Hitler's Shadow: Historical Analogies and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 13, no. 4 (2002): 29-59.
Malle, Bertram F., and Joshua Knobe. "The Folk Concept of Intentionality." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 33, no. 2 (1997): 101-21.
Manheim, Jarol B. "Strategic Public Diplomacy: Managing Kuwait’s Image During the Gulf Conflict." In *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War*, edited by W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Maoz, Zeev. "Revisionism or Misinterpretation? A Reply to Professor Walker." *Political Psychology* 8, no. 4 (1987): 623-36.
Maoz, Zeev, and Anat Shayer. "The Cognitive Structure of Peace and War Argumentation: Israeli Prime Ministers Versus the Knesset." *Political Psychology* 8, no. 4 (1987): 575-604.
Marietta, Morgan. *The Politics of Sacred Rhetoric: Absolutist Appeals and Political Persuasion.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012.
Marra, Robin F., Charles W. Ostrom, and Dennis M. Simon. "Foreign Policy and Presidential Popularity: Creating Windows of Opportunity in the Perpetual Election." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34, no. 4 (1990): 588-623.
Masterson, Michael. "Humiliation and International Conflict Preferences." *The Journal of Politics* 84, no. 2 (2022): 874-88.
Mazarr, Michael J. "The Iraq War and Agenda Setting." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 1 (2007): 1-23.
McDermott, Rose. *Presidential Leadership, Illness, and Decision Making.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
McKean, David. "After Iraq: The Trigger Doctrine." *Survival* 54, no. 1 (2012): 159-74.
McNamara, Robert S., and Brian VanDeMark. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam.* New York: Times Books, 1995.
Mervin, David. *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency.* Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996.
Mikula, Gerold, Birgit Petri, and Norbert Tanzer. "What People Regard as Unjust: Types and Structures of Everyday Experiences of Injustice." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 20, no. 2 (1990): 133-49.
Miller, Dale T. "Disrespect and the Experience of Injustice." [In eng]. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 52, no. 1 (2001): 527-53.
Mitchell, H. E., and D. Byrne. "The Defendant's Dilemma: Effects of Jurors' Attitudes and Authoritarianism on Judicial Decisions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 25, no. 1 (1973): 123-29.
Moïse, Edwin E. *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War.* Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
Moore, David W. "Americans Believe U.S. Participation in Gulf War a Decade Ago Worthwhile." Life Magazine/Gallup, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1963/americans-believe-us-participation-gulf-war-decade-ago-worthwhile.aspx.
Morgan, G. Scott, Linda J. Skitka, and Daniel C. Wisneski. "Political Ideology Is Contextually Variable and Flexible Rather Than Fixed." *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 37, no. 3 (2014): 321-22.
Morgenthau, Hans J., and Kenneth W. Thompson. *Politics among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace.* [in eng] 6th ed. ed. New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1985.
Mueller, John E. "Pearl Harbor: Military Inconvenience, Political Disaster." *International Security* 16, no. 3 (1991): 172-203.
———. *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War.* American Politics and Political Economy. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
———. *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion.* New York: Wiley, 1973.
Neff, Stephen C. *War and the Law of Nations: A General History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, and Walter Kaufmann. *On the Genealogy of Morals.* New York: Vintage Books, 1967.

Nincic, Miroslav, and Jennifer Ramos. "Torture in the Public Mind." *International Studies Perspectives* 12, no. 3 (2011): 231-49.
Norrander, B., and C. Wilcox. "Rallying around the Flag and Partisan Change - the Case of the Persian Gulf War." *Political Research Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1993): 759-70.
Now!, Democracy. "A Debate on One of the Most Frequently Cited Justifications for the 1991 Persian Gulf War." https://www.democracynow.org/2003/12/2/a_debate_on_one_of_the. Democracynow.org, 2003.
Nozick, Robert. *Philosophical Explanations.* [in eng] Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981.
Ohbuchi, Kennichi, and Toshihiro Kambara. "Attacker's Intent and Awareness of Outcome, Impression Management, and Retaliation." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 21, no. 4 (1985): 321-30.
Okimoto, Tyler G., and Michael Wenzel. "The Other Side of Perspective Taking: Transgression Ambiguity and Victims' Revenge against Their Offender." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 2, no. 4 (2011): 373-78.
Osgood, J. M. "Is Revenge About Retributive Justice, Deterring Harm, or Both?". *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 11, no. 1 (2017).
Ostrom, Charles W., and Brian L. Job. "The President and the Political Use of Force." *The American Political Science Review* 80, no. 2 (1986): 541-66.
Page, Benjamin I., B. I. Page, Marshall M. Bouton, and M. M. Bouton. *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don't Get.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. doi:10.7208/chicago/9780226644592.001.0001.
Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. "Presidents as Opinion Leaders: Some New Evidence." *Policy Studies Journal* 12, no. 4 (1984): 649-61.
———. *The Rational Public [Electronic Resource] : Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences.* [in eng] American Politics and Political Economy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Pape, Robert Anthony. *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
Payne, Andrew. "Bringing the Boys Back Home: Campaign Promises and U.S. Decision-Making in Iraq and Vietnam." *Politics* 41 (2020).
———. "Presidents, Politics, and Military Strategy: Electoral Constraints During the Iraq War." *International Security* 44, no. 3 (2020): 163-203.
Peake, Jeffrey S., and Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha. "The Agenda-Setting Impact of Major Presidential Television Addresses." *Political Communication* 25, no. 2 (2008): 113-37.
Perret, Geoffrey. *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945.* New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973.
Piaget, Jean. *The Moral Judgment of the Child.* London: Routledge, 2013.
Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.* New York: Penguin Books, 2011.
Powlick, P., and A. Katz. "Defining the American Public Opinion/Foreign Policy Nexus." *International Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (1998): 29-61.
Press, Daryl G., Scott D. Sagan, and Benjamin A. Valentino. "Atomic Aversion: Experimental Evidence on Taboos, Traditions, and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons." *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 1 (2013): 188-206.
Price, Michael E., Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby. "Punitive Sentiment as an Anti-Free Rider Psychological Device." *Evolution and Human Behavior* 23, no. 3 (2002): 203-31.

Pusey, Allen. "The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution Begins a War." *ABA Journal* 102, no. 8 (2016): 72.
Raihani, Nichola J., Ana I. Pinto, Alexandra S. Grutter, Sharon Wismer, and Redouan Bshary. "Male Cleaner Wrasses Adjust Punishment of Female Partners According to the Stakes." *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 279, no. 1727 (2012): 365-70.
Rathbun, Brian. "The Rarity of Realpolitik: What Bismarck's Rationality Reveals About International Politics." *International Security* 43, no. 1 (2018): 7-55.
Rathbun, Brian C. "Hierarchy and Community at Home and Abroad: Evidence of a Common Structure of Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs in American Elites." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 3 (2007): 379-407.
———. *Reasoning of State: Realists, Romantics and Rationality in International Relations.* Cambridge Studies in International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
Read, Stephen J., Ian L. Cesa, David K. Jones, and Nancy L. Collins. "When Is the Federal Budget Like a Baby? Metaphor in Political Rhetoric." *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 5, no. 3 (1990): 125-49.
Regan, Tom. "When Contemplating War, Beware of Babies in Incubators." Christian Science Monitor, https://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0906/p25s02-cogn.html.
Reiter, Dan, and Allan C. Stam. *Democracies at War.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
"Remembering the Gulf War: Key Facts and Figures About the Conflict." Forces.net, https://www.forces.net/news/remembering-gulf-war-key-facts-figures.
Renshon, Stanley A. "Good Judgment, and the Lack Thereof During the Gulf War: A Preliminary Psychological Model with Some Applications." Chap. 4 In *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War: Leaders, Publics, and the Process of Conflict*, edited by Stanley A. Renshon, 67-105. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.
Rex, Justin. "The President's War Agenda: A Rhetorical View." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 93-118.
Robert, E. Harkavy. "Defeat, National Humiliation, and the Revenge Motif in International Politics." *International Politics* 37, no. 3 (2000): 345.
Robinson, P. H., and J. M. Darley. "Intuitions of Justice: Implications for Criminal Law and Justice Policy." *Southern California Law Review* 81, no. 1 (2007): 1-67.
Robinson, Paul H. *Intuitions of Justice and the Utility of Desert.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
Robinson, Paul H., and John M. Darley. *Justice, Liability, and Blame: Community Views and the Criminal Law.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.
Robinson, Paul H., and Robert Kurzban. "Concordance and Conflict in Intuitions of Justice." *Minnesota Law Review* 91, no. 6 (2007): 1829-907.
———. "Concordance and Conflict in Intuitions of Justice, 91 No." *Minn. L. Rev.(*6: 2007.
Robinson, Paul, Robert Kurzban, and Owen Jones. "The Origins of Shared Intuitions of Justice." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 60, no. 6 (2007): 1631-88.
Rohrer, Tim. "The Metaphorical Logic of (Political) Rape: The New Wor(L)D Order." *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 10, no. 2 (1995): 115-37.
Roosevelt, Franklin D. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt.* Edited by Samuel I. Rosenman. Vol. 1942, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950.
Roosevelt, Franklin D., and Samuel I. Rosenman. *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt.* London: Macmillan, 1941.
Rosenblatt, A. J. . "Aggressive Foreign Policy Marketing - Public Response to Reagan's 1983 Address on Lebanon and Grenada." *Political Behavior* 20, no. 3 (1998): 225-40.

Rossi, P. "The Seriousness of Crimes: Normative Structure and Individual Differences." *American Sociological Review* 39, no. 2 (1974): 224-37.
Rottinghaus, Brandon. "Presidential Leadership on Foreign Policy, Opinion Polling, and the Possible Limits of "Crafted Talk"." *Political Communication* 25, no. 2 (2008): 138-57.
———. "Strategic Leaders: Determining Successful Presidential Opinion Leadership Tactics through Public Appeals." *Political Communication* 26, no. 3 (2009): 296-316.
Rozzell, Mark J. "In Reagan's Shadow: Bush's Antirhetorical Presidency." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (1998): 127-38.
Russett, Bruce M., William Antholis, Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember, and Zeev Maoz. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
Sagan, Scott D. "Not Just a War Theory: American Public Opinion on Ethics in Combat." *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2018): 548-61.
Saurette, Paul. "You Dissin Me? Humiliation and Post 9/11 Global Politics." *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2006): 495-522.
Schuessler, John M. "The Deception Dividend: Fdr's Undeclared War." *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010): 133-65.
Sciolino, Elaine. *The Outlaw State: Saddam Hussein's Quest for Power and the Gulf Crisis.* New York and Chichester: Wiley, 1991.
Scott, James. *Target Tokyo: Jimmy Doolittle and the Raid That Avenged Pearl Harbor.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.
Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008): 294-308.
"The Senator Gravel Edition: The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam [Volume Iii]." 1971.
Sheehan, Neil. *The Pentagon Papers as Published by the New York Times.* [in eng] London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.
Sheehan, Neil, E. W. Kenworthy, Fox Butterfield, Hedrick Smith, and James L. Greenfield. *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War.* New York: Racehorse Publishing, 2017.
Sherry, Michael. "Dead or Alive: American Vengeance Goes Global." *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1 (2005): 245-63.
Sherry, Michael S. *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987.
Shogan, Colleen J. *The Moral Rhetoric of American Presidents.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006.
Silver, J. R., and E. Silver. "Why Are Conservatives More Punitive Than Liberals? A Moral Foundations Approach." *Law and Human Behavior* 41, no. 3 (2017): 258-72.
Singer, Tania, Ben Seymour, John P. O'Doherty, Klaas E. Stephan, Raymond J. Dolan, and Chris D. Frith. "Empathic Neural Responses Are Modulated by the Perceived Fairness of Others." *Nature* 439, no. 7075 (2006): 466-69.
Sjursen, Danny. "The Last Great Debate: Congressional Veterans and the First Persian Gulf War." *World Affairs* 180, no. 1 (2017): 8-41.
Skitka, Linda J., and Elizabeth Mullen. "Understanding Judgments of Fairness in a Real-World Political Context: A Test of the Value Protection Model of Justice Reasoning." *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 28, no. 10 (2002): 1419-29.

Small, Deborah A., and George Loewenstein. "The Devil You Know: The Effects of Identifiability on Punishment." *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 18, no. 5 (2005): 311-18.
Small, Deborah, and George Loewenstein. "Helping a Victim or Helping the Victim: Altruism and Identifiability." *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 26, no. 1 (2003): 5-16.
Sniderman, Paul M. and Theriault, Sean M. . "The Structure of Political Argument and the Logic of Issue Framing." Chap. 5 In *Studies in Public Opinion: Attitudes, Nonattitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*, edited by Willem E. Saris and Paul M. Sniderman, 133-65. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.
Sobel, Richard. *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy since Vietnam: Constraining the Colossus.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
Souleimanov, Emil, and Huseyn Aliyev. "Blood Revenge and Violent Mobilization: Evidence from the Chechen Wars." *International Security* 40, no. 2 (2015): 158-80.
Spellman, Barbara, and Keith Holyoak. "If Saddam Is Hitler Then Who Is George Bush? Analogical Mapping between Systems of Social Roles." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62, no. 6 (1992): 913-33.
Stauber, John C., and Sheldon Rampton. *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You!* London: Constable & Robinson, 2004.
Stavins, Ralph, Richard J. Barnet, and Marcus G. Raskin. *Washington Plans an Aggressive War.* London: Davis-Poynter, 1972.
Steele, Richard W. *Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985.
Stein, Janice Gross. "The Micro-Foundations of International Relations Theory: Psychology and Behavioral Economics." *International Organization* 71, no. S1 (2017): S249-S63.
Stein, Rachel M. *Vengeful Citizens, Violent States: A Theory of War and Revenge.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
———. "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 3 (2015): 556-73.
———. "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies." 109, no. 3 (2015): 556-73.
Stern, Jessica. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill.* New York: HarperCollins 2009.
Stoler, Mark A. "Selling Different Kinds of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Public Opinion During World War Ii." In *Selling War in a Media Age: The Presidency and Public Opinion in the American Century*, edited by Alan Frank Kenneth Osgood, and David Halberstam, 67-92. Gainesville: University of Florida, 2010.
Sunstein, Cass R., Daniel Kahneman, and David Schkade. "Assessing Punitive Damages." *The Yale Law Journal* 107, no. 7 (1998): 2071-153.
Tetlock, P. E., O. V. Kristel, S. B. Elson, M. C. Green, and J. S. Lerner. "The Psychology of the Unthinkable: Taboo Trade-Offs, Forbidden Base Rates, and Heretical Counterfactuals." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78, no. 5 (2000): 853-70.
Thorisdottir, Hulda, John T. Jost, Ido Liviatan, and Patrick E. Shrout. "Psychological Needs and Values Underlying Left-Right Political Orientation: Cross-National Evidence from Eastern and Western Europe." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (2007): 175-203.
Tierney, Dominic. *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War.* New York and London: Little, Brown and Co., 2010.
Toland, John. *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath.* London: Methuen, 1982.

Tomz, Michael, Jessica L. P. Weeks, and Keren Yarhi-Milo. "Public Opinion and Decisions About Military Force in Democracies." *International Organization* 74, no. 1 (2020): 119-43.
Tripp, Thomas, Robert Bies, and Karl Aquino. "A Vigilante Model of Justice: Revenge, Reconciliation, Forgiveness, and Avoidance." *Social Justice Research* 20, no. 1 (2007): 10-34.
Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. "Availability: A Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability." *Cognitive Psychology* 5, no. 2 (1973): 207-32.
———. "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." *Science* 211 (1981): 453.
Twedt, Michael. "The War Rhetoric of Harry S. Truman During the Korean Conflict." University of Kansas, 1969.
Underwood, Bill, and Bert Moore. "Perspective-Taking and Altruism." *Psychological Bulletin* 91, no. 1 (1982): 143-73.
United States, President. "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States." edited by National Archives and Records Service Federal Register Division. District of Columbia, 1990.
———. "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States." edited by National Archives and Records Service Federal Register Division. District of Columbia, 1991.
———. "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: 2001: Vol.2: Bush." District of Columbia: District of Columbia: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O, 2001.
———. "Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: 2002: Vol.2." District of Columbia: District of Columbia: Federal Register Division, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 2002.
Unnever, James D., Francis T. Cullen, and Bonnie S. Fisher. ""A Liberal Is Someone Who Has Not Been Mugged": Criminal Victimization and Political Beliefs." *Justice Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (2007): 309-34.
Valentino, Benjamin A. *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century.* Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. Ithaca, N.Y.
London: Cornell University Press, 2004.
Vidmar, Neil. "Retribution and Revenge." Chap. Six In *Handbook of Justice Research in Law*, edited by Joseph Sanders and V. Lee Hamilton, 31-63. New York and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.
Walker, S. "Personality, Situation, and Cognitive Complexity: A Revisionist Analysis of the Israeli Cases." *Political Psychology* 8, no. 4 (1987): 605-21.
Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations.* New York: Basic Books, 1992.
Warden, John A. "Success in Modern War: A Response to Robert Pape's Bombing to Win." [In eng]. *Security Studies* 7, no. 2 (1997): 172-90.
Warr, Mark, Robert F. Meier, and Maynard L. Erickson. "Norms, Theories of Punishment, and Publicly Preferred Penalties for Crimes." *The Sociological Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1983): 75-91.
Wasik, Martin, and Andrew Hirsch. "Statutory Sentencing Principles: The 1990 White Paper." *Modern Law Review* 53, no. 4 (1990): 508-17.
Watts, Barry D. "Ignoring Reality: Problems of Theory and Evidence in Security Studies." [In eng]. *Security Studies* 7, no. 2 (1997): 115-71.
Wayne, Steven J. "President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance." Chap. 2 In *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War: Leaders, Publics,*

and the Process of Conflict, edited by Stanley A. Renshon, 29-48. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.
Welch, David A. *Justice and the Genesis of War.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
Whitman, James Q. *Harsh Justice: Criminal Punishment and the Widening Divide between America and Europe.* New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
Wicker, Tom. *J.F.K. And L.B.J.: The Influence of Personality Upon Politics.* New York: Morrow, 1968.
Wilson, James Q. *The Moral Sense.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.
Wilson, Timothy D., Yoav Bar-Anan, and Daniel Gilbert. "The Feeling of Uncertainty Intensifies Affective Reactions." *Emotion* 9, no. 1 (2009): 123-27.
Windchy, Eugene G. *Tonkin Gulf.* [in eng] 1st ed. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971.
Windt, Theodore Otto. "The Presidency and Speeches on International Crises: Repeating the Rhetorical Past." In *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric*, edited by Theodore Otto Windt and Beth Ingold. Dubuque, Los Angeles: Kendall/Hunt, 1987.
Winkler, Carol. "Parallels in Preemptive War Rhetoric." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 10, no. 2 (2007): 303-33.
Wise, David. *The Politics of Lying: Government Deception, Secrecy, and Power.* New York: Vintage Books, 1973.
Wittkopf, Eugene R. *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy.* Durham, N.C and London: Duke University Press, 1990.
Witvliet, Charlotte V. O., Everett L. Worthington, Lindsey M. Root, Amy F. Sato, Thomas E. Ludwig, and Julie J. Exline. "Retributive Justice, Restorative Justice, and Forgiveness: An Experimental Psychophysiology Analysis." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 44, no. 1 (2008): 10-25.
Wood, B. "Who Influences Whom? The President and the Public Agenda." [In eng]. *American political science review* 93, no. 2 (1999): 327-44.
Wood, B. Dan, and Jeffrey S. Peake. "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Agenda Setting." *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 1 (1998): 173-84.
Woodward, Bob. *The Commanders.* New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 1991.
Yarhi-Milo, Keren. *Who Fights for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflict.* Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018.
Yetiv, Steven A. *Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making and the Persian Gulf War.* Baltimore Md. and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
Zaller, John. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion.* Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
Zenko, Micah. *Between Threats and War: U.S. Discrete Military Operations in the Post-Cold War World.* Stanford, California: Stanford Security Series, 2010.