ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.17.4(38).715

Unpacking Presidential Decisions to Use Force: Rhetorical Definition of the Enemy in William J. Clinton's Justifications of Military Engagements

Marta Kobylska
0000-0002-0355-790X
University of Rzeszów, Poland

Abstract: This article investigates the rhetoric of the enemy in former President William J. Clinton's justifications for the use of force. It examines the links between two themes from the perspective of David Zarefsky's persuasive definitions. The former President's responses to international conflicts demonstrate that the enemy drives presidential military decisions. Clinton's rhetoric shows that the descriptions of the enemy differ between presidential announcements of airstrikes and presidential statements of commitment of USA ground troops to the fight overseas. Content analysis of Clinton's speeches regarding the use of force in Somalia, Haiti, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, and Kosovo demonstrates these claims and indicates the role of language in the former President's effort to lead the American public on the use of force in post-Cold War foreign policy.

Keywords: enemy definition, threat construction, military engagement, political rhetoric, William J. Clinton

INTRODUCTION

When Bill Clinton entered the presidency, he advocated restraint in foreign policy and indicated a reluctance to military interventions. He came into office committed to domestic goals and convinced that foreign affairs were essential when managed for domestic purposes. Over the course of two terms, however, he actively developed foreign policy initiatives and took a strong military leadership in international conflicts. He strengthened alliances with Europe and Asia and built on the USA's relationships with Russia and China. He revised the USA's security agenda to address new threats posed by technological advances

and open borders and redefined the meaning of peacemaking and peace enforcement to adjust to the changes in the nature of conflicts. He actively used force. In 1993, Clinton continued USA intervention in Somalia. In 1994, he deployed USA ground troops to Haiti. In 1995, he ordered bombing missions in Yugoslavia. In 1993 and 1998, the former President employed a series of airstrikes on Iraq and in 1998 on Afghanistan and Sudan. In 1999 he intervened in Kosovo, using air power and ground troops.

Focusing on Clinton's activism in the area of military power, this study analyzes the rhetoric he employed when arguing for the use of force. The study takes the opportunity to examine the role of the enemy in the former President's language that offers a use-of-force justification to see whether, and if so, how his words drove his military actions. There are three primary aims of the analysis: 1. To search for Clinton's definitions of the enemy. 2. To identify the means used for the construction of the enemy definitions across critical situations. 3. To suggest the implications that enemy definitions had for the role the USA decided to play in international, particularly, military conflicts. The discussion attempts to provide answers to the following research questions: What exigences and constraints led the former President to act the way he did? Were enemy image constructions situationally bound or formatted by the rhetorical resources available to Clinton and used in interaction with the former President's particular approach to the use of force? What were the means of construction across critical situations? How, if at all, did the constructions inform of the decision-making process in the Clinton administration regarding the use of force?

The research questions, that the study asked, have evolved out of disparate arguments in the subject's literature. Research has shown that there is little consensus regarding the characteristics of Clinton's foreign policy. Critics describe the former President's approach to foreign affairs as coherent and multilateral (Schneider, 1997), indecisive and inconsistent (Greenstein, 1994), and some go further, arguing that it was nonexistent (Friedman, 1993). Discussions continue about the development of Clinton's approach to foreign policy. Some analysts argue that the former President started off confusingly but over the years developed a clear policy course (Brinkley, 1997), while others claim that just the opposite is the case. For example, Maynes (1996) suggests Bill Clinton entered the presidency with a well-defined worldview but in office he showed a lack of consistency in political action). A much-debated question is whether Clinton's use of force showed continuity or shifts in presidential war powers. Some critics find the former President's military policy to be similar to that of his predecessors' (Bacevich, 2000), while others see it as radically different from past practice (Yoo, 2000).

Research findings into the rhetoric of Clinton's foreign policy are also contradictory. Some scholars are very critical of the former President's language. For

instance, Linda B. Miller calls Clinton's discourse "rambling," the argument being that his rhetoric failed to "articulate foreign policy objectives clearly or to employ the various foreign policy instruments effectively in order to attain these goals" (1994, p. 625). Keith E. Whittington (2001, p. 201) makes a similar observation, suggesting that "Bill Clinton is unlikely to ever be known as the 'Great Communicator.' His speeches, even on formal occasions, are often of inordinately long duration. His instincts are 'wonkish,' favoring policy details over political vision" (Whittington 2000, p. 201). Harsh criticism comes also from Phillip Henderson who describes "Clinton-era speeches" as "devoid of ordered argument or reasoned analysis" and "heavily weighted in the direction of 'laundry lists' rather than conveying an underlying sense of conviction or direction" (2000, p. 227).

Contrary to the view that the rhetoric of Clinton's foreign policy lacked clarity, vision, and depth is the perspective that assumes that the former President's discourse had a consistent rhetorical perspective. Textual analyses, as exemplified by Kathryn M. Olson's (2004) examination of Clinton's rhetoric, show that the former President offered a unified democratic enlargement foreign policy frame argued to be a set of principles that coordinated the treatment of diverse particular cases in a way that served a unified vision centered on domestic prosperity (p. 313). Research, such as that undertaken by Carol K. Winkler (2006), also produces results that a coherent terrorist narrative was present across Clinton's public rhetoric. Located within the convention of the prophetic tradition, "the rhetorical frame presented terrorism as a crime against God, the community's rejection of it as a test of the faithful, and the government's response as a divine calling" (Winkler 2006, p. 136). Studies carried out, for instance by Jason A. Edwards and Joseph M. Valenzano III (2007), provide additional evidence suggesting that Clinton offered a comprehensive "new partnership" narrative for his foreign policy discourse: "Rhetorically, [it] can be found in a consistent set of themes" which "explained how he understood America's position in the world, the threats the nation faced, and the specific mission for American foreign policy in this new era" (Edwards & Valenzano, pp. 304–305).

Looking into the literature relating specifically to the issue of the enemy in Clinton's foreign policy rhetoric, however, there is again little consistency in findings. Olson (2004), for instance, argues that the former President named chaos as the enemy. Within Clinton's democratic enlargement's foreign policy frame, the author examines the nature of chaos and sets out the ways in which the language of chaos enabled the former President to choose, order, and execute foreign policy in general, and military interventions in particular. Olson's (2004) study of threat in Clinton's rhetoric differs from that of Winkler (2006) who analyzes the conceptualization of the former President's threat through the

notion of terrorism. In her work, Winkler (2006) traces how Clinton redefined the idea of terrorism, disassociating the enemy he faced from the one of his Cold War predecessors, how he reinterpreted its nature, reconsidering the means available to him to confront it, and how he renamed its representation, deinstitutionalizing it as a state actor.

The issue of the enemy, as Winkler (2006) explains, is marked by emphasis on presidential rhetoric that offers a use-of-force justification. It is suggested that Clinton's planning to undertake military action in response to diplomatic, economic, humanitarian, or security threats will define an enemy to justify an intervention, a rhetorical strategy designed to produce a fear of danger and, consequently, rally public support for presidential military policy. The rhetorical forms used to label and characterize an enemy will be case-specific, reflecting the constraints and exigencies of a particular situation and representing individual justifications for the use of force abroad. Still, the forms will repeat across situations with the same characteristics upon which the former President relied. If Clinton's rhetoric regarding Rwanda, where the USA did not intervene, was any guide, the avoidance of naming the enemy will express the former President's reluctance and, consequently, failure to take military action. The use of force in Somalia, Haiti, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, and Kosovo exemplifies that the former President's language that labels and characterizes enemies determine his decision to handle them via military action.

From the study of how Clinton defines enemies we can learn how rhetoric informs of presidential commitment to take military action. Analyzing ways in which the former President gives meaning to political actors and their actions is important for our increased understanding of the means through which presidential language leads public opinion on the issue of the use of force in foreign policy. As military interventions are a potential foreign policy tool, such research is useful to recognize when such a tool is being considered and is likely to be employed.

Studying the rhetoric of Clinton's foreign policy is merited by the frequency of the USA's military engagements during the former President's two terms in office. As Andrew J. Bacevich (2000) observes, "[a] striking characteristic of the Clinton era has been an increased American propensity to employ military power as an adjunct of foreign policy" (p. 375). The analysis is justified given the incidence of USA military uses in the context of the challenges of the 1990s facing the former President determined to manage international conflicts through nonmilitary measures.

METHOD

The study draws from basic assumptions which inform about the nature of presidential definitions and the choice of rhetorical resources available to the former President to fashion the definitions according to the circumstances. First, as J. Robert Cox (1981) explains, definitions are not situationally bound; they are rhetorical constructs. They are never fixed; they are a matter of choice and therefore could always be constructed differently. Second, the choice of definitions is primarily pragmatic. Definitions function to identify the constraints of a given decision, provide appropriate justification for action, and identify the target audience (Cox 1981, pp. 200–202). Third, as Edward Schiappa finds, definitions are political. A pragmatic view of definition highlights its political aspect in two respects, in that "definitions serve particular interest" and in that "definitions involve issues of power and influence" (2003, p. 169). Fourth, as David Zarefsky argues, definitions function persuasively "[n]aming a situation provides the basis for understanding it and determining the appropriate response" (2004, p. 611). Zarefsky links the power of definition to the presidency when he writes: "Because of his prominent political position and his access to the means of communication, the former President, by defining a situation, might be able to shape the context in which events or proposals are viewed by the public" (2004, p. 611).

Discussing different roles of definitions in argumentation, Zarefsky refers to arguments about definition, "in which a proposed definition is the conclusion of the argument," arguments from definition, "in which a stipulated definition is the premise," and arguments by definition, "in which a definition is stated or implied as if it were uncontested fact" (2014, p. 115). Narrowing the discussion to arguments by definition, i.e., to ways in which USA Presidents give meaning to and shape understanding of reality, Zarefsky focuses on the strategies of associations, dissociations, condensation symbols, and frame-shifting. 1. Associations which are formed through linking one term with another and can be approached either through expansion of the meaning of a term which already has a precise meaning in a specific context or through application of connotation of a given term to a different notion. 2. Dissociations which are made by breaking connections between ideas, for instance, through the juxtaposition of concepts that are mutually exclusive in nature. 3. Condensation symbols which draw on a lack of clarity and definiteness of meaning and can be exploited through symbols and terms which unite supporters of seemingly opposite views. 4. Frame-shifting which places a given subject in a different perspective, for instance, by emphasizing one of its aspects over others or narrowing/expanding the scope of the argument (Zarefsky, 2014, pp. 124–126).

Zarefsky's (2014) distinction between the strategies of association and dissociation corresponds to Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's understanding

of the contrast between the argumentative techniques of association and dissociation. By techniques of association the authors understand "schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them…" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, pp. 190). By techniques of dissociation, they mean "techniques of separation which have the purpose of dissociating, separating, disuniting elements which are regarded as forming a whole…" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, pp. 190). As Perelman (1970) explains, establishing liaison between separate elements can be done through quasi-logical arguments, arguments based on the structure of reality, and arguments that aim to establish the structure of reality. Types of quasi-logical arguments include syllogism and incompatibility. Types of arguments based on the structure of reality deal with associations of succession and of coexistence. Types of arguments that aim to establish the structure of reality use example, illustration, model, analogy, and metaphor. Splitting elements, in turn, involves dealing with appearance and reality (Perelman 1970, pp. 290–296).

Application of the strategies to define the enemy will be examined in the following analysis of President Clinton's rhetoric of justification for the use of force. The analysis is based on the former President's statements delivered in response to specific conflict situations. The material for the study includes Clinton's statements in the context of the situations in Iraq in 1993 and 1998, in Somalia in 1993, in Haiti in 1994, in Bosnia in 1995, in Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998, and in Kosovo in 1999. A close reading of the former President's language is followed by a discussion of the implications of his choices for presidential rhetoric that offers a use-of-force justification.

The analysis spans eight military interventions which occurred in different settings and for various reasons. During eight years of the Clinton presidency, the USA intervened forcefully in the Middle East, East Africa, Central America, and Southeast Europe. In Iraq in 1993, it retaliated for an assassination attempt of former President George H. W. Bush. In Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo, it took action to make and keep peace. In Bosnia, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Iraq in 1998, it acted to deter and stop aggression. Force use constituted air power in Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Sudan as opposed to ground troops in Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo. In all of eight cases analyzed, former President Bill Clinton got involved in military conflicts without first seeking congressional authorization for the use of force. While he acknowledged an obligation to keep Congress informed, he did not consider it necessary to obtain legislative authority for military actions. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan, Clinton used force independently of any mandate of the United Nations or support of NATO. By contrast, in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, he undertook operations under the auspices of the UN; in Bosnia and Kosovo, he acted with the assistance of NATO.

RESULTS

In presenting his justification for engaging the country in international military conflicts, the former President focused, predominantly, on pragmatic concerns. In all of cases examined, he justified his decision to use air power or commit troops to conflict areas with an ever-present necessity to protect the USA's national interest. On most occasions, this study finds, the expression national interest was used explicitly. Explaining the deployment of American troops to Haiti, Clinton (1994, September 15) insisted that "the United States must protect our interests." In an address to the nation announcing the strikes on Iraq in 1998, he argued that "Their purpose is to protect the national interest of the United States" (Clinton, 1998, December 16). He spoke in a similar tone when he claimed that the USA had to get involve in the war in Kosovo because "America has a national interest in achieving this peace" (Clinton, 1999, February 13). In other instances, statements of similar nature helped communicate the concept. National interest was made clear, for example, in Clinton's references to the USA taking military steps in Iraq in 1993 "to protect our sovereignty" (Clinton, 1993, June 26), in Somalia "to protect our troops" (Clinton, 1993, October 07), or in Afghanistan and Sudan to defend "our national security" (Clinton, 1998, August 20).

Previously published studies found that the former President's rhetoric did fit the profile of a dramatistic perspective, which Thomas A. Hollihan calls Power Politics (Stuckey, 1995). Under the paradigm, the USA assumes that all international actors are self-interested pragmatists who act to secure their own interests. Engaging in foreign affairs, America chooses cooperation over unilateral action and resolves international conflicts by negotiation so that military action can be avoided (Hollihan, 1986). Consistent with previous research, this study confirms that Clinton's language, which was characterized by an emphasis on pragmatism in international relations, focuses on benefiting the USA. At the same time, in choosing to secure the benefits through military action, as the former President's activism in military power demonstrates, this study suggests that Clinton's rhetoric contradicts the Power Politics drama in two important ways. First, while it promotes international cooperation, it maintains that unilateral action must be exercised to impose international rules of conduct on other nations. Air strikes in Afghanistan, Sudan, and Iraq are illustrative evidence. Second, while the former President's language calls for diplomacy, it communicates that military action is the means that effects real change, as exemplified by the use of air power in Bosnia and ground troops in Kosovo.

Across the cases examined for this study, Clinton consistently designated America's enemy. His representation most commonly finds itself associated with a state actor, as exemplified in an address to the nation announcing military strike on Iraq in which the former President named the enemy as "the Government

of Iraq" (Clinton, 1993, June 26); or in a speech to the nation on Haiti in which he called the enemy "Haiti's dictators" (Clinton, 1994, September 15); or in a letter to congressional leaders reporting on the deployment of the USA's air force to Bosnia in which he identified the enemy as "Bosnian Serb Army" (Clinton, 1995, September 01). At other times, designation of the enemy narrows to an individual. Clinton saw the enemy in the persons of Saddam Hussein, Raoul Cedras, Usama bin Ladin, and Slobodan Milosevic. Only on one occasion—in the case of Somalia—has this study found that the enemy was a non-state actor and was named as "armed Somalis gang" (Clinton, 1993, October 07).

In Clinton's choice of language, this study finds the construction of the enemy situationally bound. It sees the concepts of the enemy state and the adversarial state actor originate with events that had unfolded prior to when the former President addressed them. At the same time, the study argues that in most of cases analyzed the term enemy displayed for the former President a potential for rhetorical exploitation that he decided to develop. A strong example of Clinton's effort to sustain the enemy through his rhetoric is the case of Kosovo. Tracing the development in the former President's narrative from February to May 1999, we can see a shift of focus: rhetoric first driven by ambiguousness regarding the enemy named as Serbian (security) forces was ultimately supplanted by explicit talk about Serbia's leader Slobodan Milosevic.

An important aspect to note regarding the representation of the enemy is the broader threat and the narrow concerns of terror and inaction. Tracking the term enemy through relevant Clinton's statements leads to the perception of it as "anybody that threatens the security and the peace" and "the values that we [Americans] hold important" (Clinton, 1993, June 17). A narrower understanding of the term is found in the former President's talk about terrorists as "the enemies of everything we believe in and fight for: peace and democracy, tolerance and security" (Clinton, 1998, August 08). Clinton also clearly connected the enemy to the idea of inaction when he argued that "We face no imminent threat, but we do have an enemy. The enemy of our time is inaction" (Clinton, 1997, February 04). He spoke in a similar tone when he stated: "the enemy of our time is inaction" (Clinton, 1997, April 11).

Naming the enemy as threat, terror, or inaction, in turn, leads to looking at it as a construct rhetorically formulated by Clinton. Recognizing the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its ideology of communism, he himself suggested that naming the enemy threat, terror, and inaction was a political strategy more than a pragmatic concern dictated by circumstances. In a widely covered interview with *The Washington Post* on October 15, 1993, in which Clinton reexamined his foreign policy, he made a similar suggestion. By acknowledging that the task of defining America's role in the post-Cold War world "could take years" (qtd. in Devroy & Smith, 1993), the former President indirectly admitted the

challenges involved in assigning the roles and responsibilities of other international actors, including those who stand in opposition to the USA. Understanding of the enemy, in Zarefsky's (2014) words, was not a given but was something that Clinton constructed. The former President's references to the enemy actors were not obvious but were constituted by the former President in his communication (p. 121).

Past research which places Clinton's foreign policy rhetoric within the structures of Power Politics argues that the former President conducted foreign affairs in the absence of a clearly defined enemy (Stuckey, 1995), whom the drama describes as anyone who clings to the past world order and opposes change even if their opposition causes tension, stirs conflict, and leads to fights (Hollihan, 1986). While this study admits that, on some occasions, the enemy that Clinton described was weak, because of the difficulty in presenting it clearly, univocally, and consistently throughout time, the analysis finds that, in other instances, the description of the enemy suggested little ambiguity regarding its identity or the nature of its actions. The former President's language may at times have lacked the precision of the Cold War drama, in which the role of the villain indivisibly belonged to the Soviet Union, there are clues in Clinton's rhetoric that indicate that the former President clearly shaped—in one way or another—specific perceptions of the enemy, and that he did so to generate support for preferred—military—ways of confronting it.

This study's analysis assumed that in the process of shaping the view of the enemy Clinton relied on the rhetorical power of the argument. Zarefsky explains the kind of argument as

> non-neutral characterization that conveys a positive or negative attitude about something in the course of naming it. The name is, in effect, an implicit argument that one should view the thing in a particular way. But the argument is never actually advanced. Rather, the definition is put forward as if it was uncontroversial and could be easily stipulated. The argument in behalf of the proposed definition is simply 'smuggled in' through the use of the definition itself (Zarefsky 2014, p. 133)

Understood in this way, presidential argument by definition works to attract the audience's attention, shape their understanding of the subject matter, and form their moral judgments about it (Zarefsky 2014, p. 121).

The present analysis demonstrates how Clinton used this rhetorical power to shape public perceptions of the enemy, thereby soliciting support for the use of military means of confronting and defeating it. Examination of his statements suggests the use of dissociation by way of the Cold War foe and the post-Cold War foe to (re)define the concept of the enemy. Dissociations were most common

across statements regarding Afghanistan and Sudan (10) and Haiti (5). They were less popular across messages regarding Iraq (3), Kosovo (2), and Somalia (1). The former President emphasized that having won the Cold War, the USA no longer had "the great enemy of the Soviet Union" (Clinton, 1994, July 30). "The old enemy, communism [was] not there anymore," he stressed (Clinton, 1995, February 28). Exploiting the dissociative pair the old era enemy-the new era enemy, Clinton argued that Americans were left without an enemy to "define our every move" (Clinton, 1994, July 30) and without "a common way of organizing ourselves and thinking about how we should relate to the rest of the world" (Clinton, 1995, June 27). As a reinforcement of the theme, there was the separation of a clear enemy from enemies with many faces. In contrast to his predecessors' effort to define the enemy through the Soviet Union, Clinton's rhetoric struggled to identify the enemy through anybody and anything that threatened the USA's security, prosperity, and values. As his messages explained, America was no longer facing "a known big enemy" (Clinton, 1994, September 21) or "a single implacable foe" (Clinton, 1997, April 11) but many "different enemies" (Clinton, 1993, June 17), "a host of scattered and dangerous challenges" (Clinton, 1995, July 14).

Clinton described the nature of the enemies and their actions through associations, most of which were found in statements regarding Haiti (20) and Kosovo (9) and some in messages regarding Afghanistan and Sudan (6), Somalia (6), Iraq (5), and Yugoslavia (2). Common were labels of a tyrant (Saddam Hussein), a dictator (Raoul Cedras), a terrorist (Osama bin Laden), and a war criminal (Slobodan Milosevic). Popular was expansion of the meaning of the term enemies to include inaction—the enemy of America's "peace, freedom, and prosperity" (Clinton, 1997, February 04), terror—the enemy "of everything we believe in and fight for" (Clinton, 1998, August 08), and threat—the enemy to the USA's "national security" (Clinton, 1998, August 20). Associations also occurred when Clinton identified armed Somali gangs with "anarchy and mass famine" (Clinton, 1993, October 07). Haiti's dictators with "terror… desperation, and… instability" (Clinton, 1994, September 16), Bosnian Serb Army with forced displacement (Clinton, 1995, September 01), terrorist groups with "war against America" (Clinton, 1998, August 20), and the Iraqi regime with the use of chemical weapons (Clinton, 1998, December 16). Perhaps a more powerful form of association was by way of comparison of former President Milosevich's "ethnic cleansing" of the Bosnian and Kosovar Muslims to Hitlers' "ethnic extermination" of European Jews. As Clinton explained, the two "[were] not the same" but "[were] related, both vicious, premeditated, systematic oppression fueled by religious and ethnic hatred" (Clinton, 1999, May 130).

Continuation of the effort to convey who the enemy was and what it did shows in the use of condensation symbols (Jasinski, 2001, pp. 99–100). These were observed in statements regarding Kosovo (2), Somalia (1), and Iraq (1). The

former President was able to expose the image of the enemy as a "police [thug]" by emphasizing the symbol of the USA as "the world's [policeman]" (Clinton, 1994, September 15). Use of buzzwords related to national security interests (Clinton, 1998, December 16) helped him contrast the enemy's actions with those of the USA to stress the differences in goals and ambitions. References to chemical weapons (Clinton, 1993, June 26) worked to justify a USA response to the enemy's activities. Exploitation of stereotypes, for instance of a migrant and a refugee, warranted any type of response, including military.

Clinton strengthened the military argument using frame-shifting, as noted in statements regarding Haiti (2), Kosovo (2), and Somalia (1). For the use of force in Haiti defined from the perspective of Cedras' dictatorship, two frames of reference were suggested. One that of force as prevention of "a mass exodus of refugees," and a "tide of migrants" at America's door; and the other, which showed a military intervention in the light of USA regional primacy: "Beyond… the immigration problems… the United States also has strong interests in not letting dictators, especially in our own region, break their word to the United States…" (Clinton, 1994, September 15). A similar frame shifting was employed in the case of Somalia. Following the failure of a humanitarian mission there, the former President encouraged to look at the military engagement in view of USA global standing. He justified taking military steps for "aggressors, thugs, and terrorists will conclude that the best way to get us to change our policies is to kill our people." "Our own credibility with friends and allies would be severely damaged," the former President argued. "Our leadership in world affairs would be undermined" (Clinton, 1993, October 07).

DISCUSSION

When analyzing Clinton's rhetoric, we can learn that in responding to the challenges of a post-Cold War world the former President did not seem to offer options beyond using force. While economic and diplomatic measures were considered and taken, as in the cases of Haiti or Kosovo, presidential power turned out to be largely military power. Moreover, acting militarily, Clinton did not offer justifications that fell outside of the argumentation driven by the concept of the enemy. While his rhetoric in many aspects replaced the Cold War narrative of his predecessors, it continued to promote the idea of the enemy as a political exigency necessitating military action. Some elements of the concept of the enemy have changed, but its political and rhetorical functions persisted. Identifying an enemy was more challenging, but doing so for the purpose of rallying people behind the use of force was a continuum of presidential rhetorical practice.

Breaking Clinton's definitions of the enemy we can find a trend in the former President's justificatory rhetoric, which favors naming the adversary. Specifically, we can see a strong preference for personalizing the enemy in the announcements of strikes and deployment of combat troops. It is suggested that the tendency is revealing of how Clinton linked the use of force to the enemy. It is indicative of how he found the names of dictators, terrorists, and war criminals rhetorically effective in justifying his military decisions. These findings are consistent with earlier studies in that the former President lacked a single foe and bounced between different enemies. The results of security research support the view that post-Cold War politics was marked by continuing efforts to rearticulate and reinterpret the meaning of danger. Addressing the difficulties in identifying a threat after 1989, David Campbell (1998) writes about "the varied attempts to replace one enemy with (an)other" (p. 8). The findings differ, however, in that across his formal announcements Clinton was consistent in giving faces to threats against which he decided to act militarily. Attaching the face of Hussein to aggression, the face of bin Ladin to terrorism, or the face of Milosevic to war crimes are representative examples of the approach.

Of the strategies being used for defining the enemy, associations and dissociations were most common, while condensation symbols and frame-shifting were less popular. These observations further support the idea that Clinton's rhetoric had a sense of the enemy, one pertinent to a new political landscape in which language was used with the purpose to change the terms in which people thought about the enemy. Use of dissociations which provide the actual meaning of a concept as opposed to the old and obvious usage (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, 444) and associations which help to build links and establish connections between ideas that, in turn, enable people to relate to new conceptualizations (Jasinski, 2001, p. 65) are evidence for commitment to identify, define, and use a particular concept of the enemy in order to build a persuasive case for a military intervention. This is merely confirmed by the avoidance of condensation symbols which work to multiply meanings, representations, and connotations (Zarefsky, 1986, p. 11) and of frame-shifting which changes points of perspective, expands the scope of argument, and extends the choice of dimensions (Zarefsky, 2014, p. 126).

Characteristically, associations occurred in the announcements of USA deployment of combat troop. Most common were associations of coexistence which united the enemy and their actions (Perelman, 1970, p. 293). That unity was established on three basic levels: political, where the enemy was linked to the abuse of power which led to anarchy, instability, chaos, and disorder; economic, where it was blamed for theft which caused destruction and isolation; and human rights, where it was accused of violence, brutality, and terror, of beating, torture, rape, and mutilation, of slaying, killing, murder, and execution. On each level

the former President's rhetorical choices aimed to define public perceptions of the enemy and evoke particular responses to them. Attaching lawlessness to the enemy served to arouse in the American society, based on the rule of law, the need to restore control and order in the conflict areas. Associating the enemy with economic collapse functioned to trigger in the audience, focused on economic growth and prosperity, the desire to support economic recovery and sustainability in troubled spots. Tying the enemy to horrifying accounts of atrocities meant to deepen in the American public, led by moral order, the understanding for the use of any means of power required to defend and secure human rights throughout the world.

Shifting attention from the enemy as a political actor to the enemy as an idea, Clinton's rhetoric described the post-Cold War enemy in broad terms. The descriptions usually drew on pairing of two opposed ideas, most characteristic of which were dictatorship vs. democracy, terror vs. peace, chaos vs. security. These observations match those made in earlier studies in that Clinton's rhetoric relied on an elastic, pliable, and open definition of the enemy. They complement previous research in adding another pair of terms inaction vs. action, which develops understanding of the enemy to include brutal force, economic instability, and political disorder. Clinton labeled inaction an enemy when he talked about peacekeeping operations in general (Clinton, 1997, March 10) and when he announced USA military strikes on Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and Kosovo in particular. He repeatedly talked about inaction in opposition to acting: "the risks from inaction, to America and the world, would be far greater than action" (Clinton, 1998, August 20), "the costs of action must be weighed against the price of inaction" (Clinton, 1998, December 16), "the dangers of acting must be weighed against the dangers of inaction" (Clinton, 1999, March 23). Reading into the former President's statements reveals that while Clinton favored naming the enemy, he did not underestimate the role and impact of abstract ideas. The choice of the notion of inaction suggests strategic and tactical use of language, aimed at exploiting a popular American expectation to do something in critical situations and appealing to a strong American belief in the agency of the USA to shape international politics.

To conclude, research tends to focus on Clinton's difficulty in defining the enemy and consequently in rallying support for international military interventions. Studies expose the former President for shifts in the rhetoric of the enemy and a lack of rhetorical patterns (Reeves, 1996). Few examinations reveal elements of continuity in Clinton's rhetorical action (Butler, 2002).

This analysis offers an opportunity to demonstrate that despite the absence of a single clear foe in the post-Cold War world order the former President was consistent in the characterization of the enemy. It finds that across different dramatic situations he chose similar strategies to shape understanding of and give

meaning to the enemy and thus explain military measures needed to confront it. The study also suggests that Clinton enjoyed support for his use of force decisions which was similar to that of his post-Cold War successors'. An average of 63 percent of approval for Clinton's military interventions (Newport, 2017) was lower compared with support for George W. Bush's military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, which reached an average of 83 percent approval. However, it was in line with support indicated for military actions undertaken by Obama in Libya, Iraq, and Syria—an average of 52 percent of approval and by Trump in Syria—50 percent of approval. Typical was also lower level of support—averaging at 45 percent (Logan, 1996)—for Clinton's decisions to send troops to combat than for his orders of airstrikes (Potts, 2022).

Implications of the findings are threefold. First, Clinton's rhetorical action reflects continued need for the enemy in presidential use-of-force justifications. This study suggests that when persuading the American public to support military interventions post-Cold War former Presidents find negative argumentation more reliable. Second, Clinton's rhetorical choices reveal the difference in presidential commitment between airstrikes and deployment of USA ground troops. When informing of the decision to send the USA military for combat operations Presidents are more graphic and explicit, exposing the enemy for its evil actions. Third, Clinton's rhetoric of the enemy demonstrates a systematic and sustained effort to lead public opinion on the use of force in foreign policy. This indicates that communicating military decisions in the context of a new world order Presidents consistently use language for translating the American public's fear of a threat into responsiveness on the intervention issue.

REFERENCES

Bacevich, A. J. (2000). The Use of Force in the Clinton Era: Continuity or Discontinuity? *Chicago Journal of International Law*, *1*(2), 375–379.

Brinkley, D. (1997). Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine. *Foreign Policy*, *106,* 111–127.

Butler, J. R. (2002). Somalia and the Imperial Savage: Continuities in the Rhetoric of War. *Western Journal of Communication, 6,* 1–24.

Campbell, D. (1998). *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. University of Minnesota Press.

Clinton, W. J. (1993, June 17). *The President's News Conference*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-1223

Clinton, W. J. (1993, June 26). *Address to the Nation on the Strike on Iraqi Intelligence Headquarters*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-the-strike-iraqi-intelligence-headquarters

Clinton, W. J. (1993, October 07). *Address to the Nation on Somalia*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-somalia

Clinton, W. J. (1994, July 30). *Remarks at a Reception for Joel Hyatt in Mayfield Heights, Ohio*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-reception-for-joel-hyatt-mayfield-heights-ohio

Clinton, W. J. (1994, September 15). *Address to the Nation on Haiti.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-haiti

Clinton, W. J. (1994, September 16). *Remarks at a Meeting of the Multinational Coalition on Haiti.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-meeting-the-multinational-coalition-haiti

Clinton, W. J. (1994, September 21). *Remarks to the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-presidents-committee-the-arts-and-the-humanities

Clinton, W. J. (1995, February 28). The *President's News Conference With Prime Minister Wim Kok of The Netherlands*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-news-conference-with-prime-minister-wim-kok-the-netherlands

Clinton, W. J. (1995, July 14). *Remarks at the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-central-intelligence-agency-langley-virginia

Clinton, W. J. (1995, June 27). *Remarks at the Opening Session of the Pacific Rim Economic Conference in Portland, Oregon*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-opening-session-the-pacific-rim-economic-conference-portland-oregon

Clinton, W. J. (1995, September 01). *Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Aircraft to Bosnia-Herzegovina*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/letter-congressional-leaders-reporting-the-deployment-united-states-aircraft-bosnia

Clinton, W. J. (1997, April 11). *Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the American Society of Newspaper Editors.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-and-question-and-answer-session-with-the-american-society-newspaper-editors-1

Clinton, W. J. (1997, February 04). Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-before-joint-session-the-congress-the-state-the-union-9

Clinton, W. J. (1997, March 10). *Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on Peacekeeping Operations.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/letter-congressional-leaders-transmitting-the-report-peacekeeping-operations-0

Clinton, W. J. (1998, August 08). *The President's Radio Address.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-radio-address-191

Clinton, W. J. (1998, August 20). *Address to the Nation on Military Action Against Terrorist Sites in Afghanistan and Sudan*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-military-action-against-terrorist-sites-afghanistan-and-sudan

Clinton, W. J. (1998, December 16). *Address to the Nation Announcing Military Strikes on Iraq*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-announcing-military-strikes-iraq

Clinton, W. J. (1999, February 13). *The President's Radio Address.* The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/the-presidents-radio-address-87

Clinton, W. J. (1999, March 23). *Remarks at the Legislative Convention of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-legislative-convention-the-american-federation-state-county-and-municipal

Clinton, W. J. (1999, May 13). *Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States at Fort McNair, Maryland*. The American Presidency Project. https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-veterans-foreign-wars-the-united-states-fort-mcnair-maryland

Cox, J. R. (1981). Argument and the 'Definition of the Situation. *Central States Speech Journal*, *32,* 197–205.

Devroy, A., & Smith, J. (1993, October 17). Clinton Reexamines Foreign Policy Under Siege. *Washington Post*, 1.

Friedman, T. (1993, October 1). Theory Versus Practice: Clinton's Stated Policy Turns into More Modest Self Containment. *The New York Times*, A2, 9.

Greenstein, F. (1994). The Presidential Leadership Style of Bill Clinton: An Early Appraisal. *Miller Center Journal*, *1*, 13–23.

Henderson, P. G. (2000). Technocratic Leadership: The Policy Wonk Presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. In P. G. Henderson (Ed.), *The Presidency Then and Now* (pp. 219–248). Rowman & Littlefield.

Hollihan, T. A. (1986). The Public Controversy over the Panama Canal Treaties: An Analysis of American Foreign Policy Rhetoric. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 50*(4), 370–376.

Jasinski, J. (2001). *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Sage.

Jason, E. A., & Valenzano III, J. M. (2007). Bill Clinton's "New Partnership" Anecdote. *Journal of Language and Politics*, *6*(2), 303–325.

Logan, C. J. (1996). U.S. Public Opinion and the Intervention in Somalia: Lessons for the Future of Military-Humanitarian Interventions. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, *20*(2), 155–180.

Maynes, C. W. (1996). Bottom-Up Foreign Policy. *Foreign Policy*, *104*, 35–53.

Miller, L. B. (1994). The Clinton Years: Reinventing US Foreign Policy? *International Affairs*, *70*(4), 621–634.

Newport, F. (2017). *U.S. Support for Syria Strikes Rates Low in Historical Context*. Gallup. https://news.gallup.com/poll/208334/support-syria-strikes-rates-low-historical-context.aspx

Olson, K. M. (2004). Democratic Enlargement's Value Hierarchy and Rhetorical Forms: An Analysis of Clinton's Use of Post-Cold War Symbolic Frame to Justify Military Interventions. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 34*, 307–340.

Perelman, C. (1970). The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning. In *The Great Ideas Today* (pp. 272–312). Encyclopedia Brittanica.

Perelman, C., & Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. (1969). *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Potts, M. (2022). *What Do Americans Think About War*? FiveThirtyEight. https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-americans-are-unlikely-to-support-a-war-in-ukraine/

Reeves, R. (1996). *Running in Place: How Bill Clinton Disappointed America*. Andrews and McMeel.

Schiappa, E. (2003). *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Schneider, W. (1997). The New Isolationism. In R. J. Lieber (Ed.), *Eagle Adrift: American Foreign Policy at the End of the Century* (pp. 26–38). Longman.

Stuckey, M. E. (1995). Competing Foreign Policy Visions: Rhetorical Hybrids after the Cold War. *Western Journal of Communication*, *59*, 214–227.

Whittington, K. E. (2000). The Rhetorical Presidency, Presidential Authority, and Bill Clinton. In P. G. Henderson (Ed.), *The Presidency Then and Now* (pp. 201–218). Rowman & Littlefield.

Winkler, C. K. (2006). *In the Name of Terrorism: Presidents on Political Violence in the Post-World War II Era*. State University of New York Press.

Yoo, J. C. (2000). UN Wars, US War Powers. *Chicago Journal of International Law*, *1*(2), 355–373.

Zarefsky, D. (1986). *President Johnson's War on Poverty: Rhetoric and History*. University of Alabama Press.

Zarefsky, D. (2004). Presidential Rhetoric and the Power of Definition. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *34*(3), 607–619.

Zarefsky, D. (2014). *Rhetorical Perspectives on Argumentation*. Springer.