

The Securitization of the Iraqi Regime in President Bush's Discourse in West Point Speech (2002)

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Abstract:

The article seeks to examine the Bush administration's discursive construction of its military build-up and war against the Iraqi regime. Utilizing a mixture of the securitization framework of the Copenhagen School and the Speech Act theory, the study uncovers how President Bush, in his West Point speech, formulated his claims about the threat posed the Iraqi regime. It specifically shows how he appealed to idiosyncratic, contingent and politicized views and perceptions to achieve his objective. To this end, the study scrutinizes samples of speech acts that President Bush mobilized to securitize the Iraqi regime by persuading public opinion at home and abroad about the existential threat posed by the Iraqi regime. The study emphasized in its results on the broad impacts of this speech and its repercussions like the relinquishment of security doctrines and plans about normal politics and the evading of the laws and rules governing international relations.

Keywords: George W. Bush; West Point speech; securitization framework; Speech Act Theory; Iraqi regime

ملخص: يعني هذا المقال بدراسة البناء الخطابي لحكومة بوش في إطار حشدها العسكري و حربها على العراق. باستعمال مزيج بين نظرية الأمانة لمدرسة كوبنهاغن و نظرية الفعل الخطابي، تسعى الدراسة إلى تبيان كيف استعمل الرئيس بوش خطاب واست بوينت (2002) لصوغ إدعاءاته حول التهديد الذي يشكله النظام العراقي. حيث إستند الرئيس في ذلك إلى رؤى و تصورات شخصية، ظرفية و سياسية. لهذا الغرض قامت هذه الدراسة بفحص مدقق لنماذج من الأفعال الخطابية التي سخرها الرئيس بوش لأمانة النظام العراقي و ذلك بإقناع الرأي العام الأمريكي و العالمي بأن هذا النظام يشكل تهديدا وجوديا يوجب و يرخص الرد بكل الطرق. تركز الدراسة في نتائجها على إظهار التأثيرات الكبرى لهذا الخطاب و ما ترتب عنه كالتخلي عن العقائد والمخططات الأمنية المنبثقة من السياسة العادية و التملص من القواعد و القوانين المنظمة للعلاقات الدولية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جورج دبليو بوش، خطاب واست بوينت، نظرية الأمانة، نظرية الفعل الخطابي، النظام العراقي

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1. Introduction:

**“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty
said, “it means just what
I choose it to mean”
“The question is,” Alice said, “whether you can
make words
mean so many different things.”
“The question is,” Humpty Dumpty said, “which is to be master—
that is all” (Carroll, 2002, p. 204).**

Despite its being as old as humanity itself, the concept of “security” has undergone a series of landmark evolutions and salient adjustments. In its early beginnings, and more specifically since the signing of the Westphalia treaty in 1648, the concept of “security” was exclusively yoked to states. One major implication of this evolution was the catapulting of states to the forefront of the international system as the most pivotal actors in the world arena. The confinement of the concept “security” to states as the only “referent of security” was the centerpiece of the political of traditional theories, like realism, neo-realism, liberalism and neo-liberalism. In other words, despite the existence of slight and major differences in the ways these theories conceived of the so-called “state-centric” security system, they all looked eye to eye as to the idea that the state stood out as the locus of national security concerns.

The abatement of the Cold War, the demise of Communism and the metamorphosing of world organization from Cold War bipolarity to post-Cold War unipolarity occasioned unprecedented shifts. Most importantly, they seriously shook the foundational precepts and the core tenets undergirding the “state-centric” philosophies and theories of the Cold War and the pre-Cold War eras. The creeping shift in the status held by the state in the conception and the perception of security drew a maximum of dividend from the intellectual capital of social constructivists. Under the influence of social constructivist experts like Nicholas Onuf, Peter Katzenstein and Alexander Wendt the scope of security concerns and manifestations was broadened beyond the bounds of “statism.”

By so doing, they emphasized the social constructed-ness of the fundamental structures of international politics. The achievements of social constructivists the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union, which “state-centric” philosophies of traditional theories fell short of anticipating, set the stage for further shifts. One major consequence was the rise of salient experts in security studies like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde to challenge the long-lasting and the deeply anchored belief that security was “an objective condition.” For them, security was rather the product of the contingent, situated and culture-bound social processes and intra-state gestation (Buzan et al., 1998).

These unprecedented evolutions about the nature, the origins and the ramifying implications of security sanctioned by social constructivists were further energized by the September 11, 2001 attacks. These last stood out as a new watershed in the history of the US and that of the world in general. Among

the novelties ushered in by these events was the radical shift in the ways threats were perceived by the US political elite. This was paralleled by a corresponding change like political discourse cultivated by this elite and ultimately its relentless impact. A hallmark feature of this change was the relegation of state security to a back seat in comparison with the security of both societies and individuals. This new trend in perceiving and conceptualizing security was further invigorated by revelations pointing to the fact that state security is not necessarily tantamount to people's and individuals' security. On the contrary, in a miscellany of cases, peoples could be more threatened by their own states than by foreign and international threats and foes.

This mounting concern about the importance of prioritizing human security to the detriment of state security was paralleled by the prioritization of addressing issues about political repression, power abuses and human rights violations. This shift hinged on the belief that the latter entailed far higher human tolls than inter-state or international conflicts. An immediate implication of this recalibration was a shift in the gravity center of the focus of specialists in international relations away from the state as being the unique referent. In addition, this noteworthy shift underpinned the soar in the importance of language in the manufacturing of security.

The utilization and the manipulation of linguistic structures and lexical choices are instrumental for selling the ideas of political and security elites. As a direct result of this, language gained momentum to become a vital tool and a strategic site where political and security choices and agendas are debated and disputed. Political elites draw heavily on their being privileged claim makers and truth tellers to overwhelm the marketplace of ideas. To that end, they furnish their arguments with a "hegemonic" status from a social viewpoint even when these arguments have too little, if any, objective and realistic grounding or designed for opportunistic and self-serving objectives (Cramer & Trevor, 2009). Hence, political leaders often seek to bolster their stance and rationalize decision-making through persuasive speeches. In so doing, they capitalize on getting the approbation of the audience and enlisting its support for launching different kinds of initiatives and enterprises.

This study seeks to decode and unpack President Bush's discourse more specifically in his West Point speech (2002) to display the impact of discursive maneuvers on the construction of threats. Most importantly, the study emphasizes the discrepancy between rhetoric attempting to sell the legitimacy of the war and the hard evidence that often points to the opposite. It is not, however, the concern of this article to investigate the whys and hows of the Bush administration's political and security rationales and agendas. In other words, the concern of this article is not to dig out the underlying intellectual capital undergirding the Bush administration's political and security leanings.

However, the study concedes the importance of providing a slight reference to the possible origins of these political and security choices. It also admits the relevance of a cursory allusion to the most frequent discursive techniques and strategies. The merit of these accounts lies in the concern to

ensure a smooth flow in the interpretations and the analyses of the impact of language manipulation and linguistic choices operated by President Bush.

The dispositive of securitizing issues related to almost all walks of people's lives. However, since a recent history, it gained more traction as speakers, in the quest for consent and validation for their actions, showed an unprecedented interest in honing their linguistic skills. As a reaction to this growth in speakers' diversified techniques to persuade and enlist the support for their target audience(s), the securitization theory has grown to address these issues. In so doing, it provided insightful and illuminating results about the hidden maneuvers and intentions infused in political discourse. Most importantly, the securitization framework showed how language could take ordinary issues beyond the realm of normalcy by elevating them to the levels of extreme urgency to justify resort to extraordinary measures. The utilization of the securitization framework to unveil the securitizing thrust in the discourse of outstanding speakers has, therefore, extended to almost all issues of people's life.

Speakers about issues related to the environment, economy, health, immigration, technology ...etc tend to act as "securitizing agents." Jackson and Parkes (2008), Jin and Karackattu (2011), Lombardi (2015), Maria and Trombetta (2017) and Koukos (2019) conducted empirical studies to reveal how the manipulation of language served for securitizing issues. They dwelt on disclosing how this manipulation aimed at mobilizing "target audience(s)" to subscribe to the ways of thinking of the "securitizing actors" and identify with their sources of. The realm of politics was not an exception in this respect. Sandhu (2003), Mabee (2007), Vuori (2008), Walker and Seegers (2012), Herta (2017) and Odolczyk (2020) voiced similar claims. According to them, the manipulation of the "grammar of security" and "cognitive constructions" was highly instrumental for salient speakers at the helmet of authoritative institutions. In this venue, acting as "securitizers," political actors persuaded their "target audience(s)" of the wisdom and the inevitability of perceiving and handling issues beyond the bounds of normalcy (Vuori, 2011; Buzan et al., 1998).

In his article, Hughes (2007) provided a tour de force in the appraisal of the effectiveness of securitization as an analytical and interpretive framework for the analysis of the US war on Iraq in 2003. The thrust of the article consisted in juxtaposing President Bush's discursive performances with the concrete evidence that underpinned US security presumptions. In a similar vein, Shamlawi (2015) published an article in which she pierced the inner maneuverings of the Bush administration mainly with respect to its discursive endeavors to amass advocacy for its decision to go war against the Iraqi regime. The article emphasized the three levels of analysis (i.e. the international system, state and individual levels. Along similar lines, Oren and Solomon (2015) published an article that stressed the fact that security is a mere speech act. For them, the transmutation of Iraq into a daunting threat rested on "chanting" of grandiose and ambiguous phrases like WMD, evil, rogue states...etc.

Likewise, in his Ph.D. thesis (2020), Akpan Ndueso provided a meticulous scrutiny of the general security atmosphere that surrounded the Bush administration's decision to war on Iraq. The central contention of the study was to demonstrate that the legitimization and the conventionalization of the war were deeply rooted in the successful securitization of Iraq. To that end, the US government capitalized on the portrayal of the Iraqi regime as an existential threat to world peace and hence requiring immediate and energetic reactions. The source of the empirical data for the study consisted in documentary sources including, among others, official pronouncements of senior US government officials as securitizing actors. However, the study only substantiated its claim by using quotes from officials in the Bush administration. It, thus, fell short of displaying how US officials mobilized the linguistic choices and the discursive strategies to securitize Iraq.

Similarly, in his 2014 Ph.D. thesis, Masoumi conducted an empirical study of how the Bush administration capitalized on his status as a storyteller-in-chief to construct Iraq as an existential threat to the US security. Indeed by dint of his firm grip on the power to construct social realities, the Bush administration managed to transmute the Iraqi identity into the incarnation of evil and hence rationalized and legitimized its invasion. The results obtained by the study centered on elucidating the impact of official discourse on the securitization of the Iraqi regime by media outlets like the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

The current study, however, handles the issue of the Bush administration's securitization of the Iraqi regime differently. This study analyzes President Bush's securitizing move by unpacking and scrutinizing speech acts encoded by the US president in the clauses of his West Point speech. Besides, the study builds on the conclusions yielded by operationalizing the Speech Act Theory (SAT henceforth) not only to ascertain the securitizing initiative undertaken by the Bush administration but also to dwell on the all-pervading influence and far-reaching implications of the utilization of the language of security. This manifested itself, *inter alia*, in the appeal of the Bush administration to security language to usher in radical and revolutionary shifts in its foreign and security policies.

The core purport of this study, thus, lies at providing explications and interpretations to how political language, as it was utilized in President Bush's West Point speech (2002), served for securitizing the Iraqi regime. By so doing, it seeks to pluralize explanations to how and why the US invaded Iraq. The study neither aims to criticize US rationale nor to defend Iraqi posture. The study rather critically analyze speech acts utilized in the speech to uncover and demystify hidden motives, intentions and plans that could help in providing alternative accounts to the US version.

2. Methods:

The study is conducted through the lens of the securitization framework of the Copenhagen School (CS henceforth). The central claim of CS's securitization theory underscores the importance of widening the scope of the conception and the perception of the security phenomenon. According to the

advocates of the securitization theory, security cannot by any means be confined to the state as the sole “referent” and that it does not necessarily refer to a pre-given, objective and material state. A central implication of this assumption is that any aspect of the life of a society or an individual can be transmuted into a security issue when a salient political figure (i.e. a securitizing actor in CS’s lexicon) succeeds in framing it as a security issue and persuading the “target audience” of the stakes involved in securing a particular “referent object” (Balzacq, 2005). The securitizing actor centers his efforts on wooing the adherence and enlisting the endorsement of his audience for any undertaking designed to curb the purported threat outside the precincts of normal politics and the binding rules to safeguard some referent object (s). The acquiescence and the subscription of the “target audience” to the securitizing move spearheaded by the securitizing actor entails the legitimization and the rationalization of the state’s resort to exceptional and extraordinary measures or “emergency measures” in addressing the securitized issue (Buzan et al., 1998).

The SAT, which constitutes the bedrock of the securitization framework, is more specifically predicated on the core premise that language is a performance and an action rather than a simple means for the conveyance and the expression of abstract ideas. A central implication of this claim is that the proponents of the SAT conceived of language not merely a “system of signs,” but, more importantly, as “a concrete social practice” for the execution of actions that culminate in the constitution of reality (Searle, 1984; Austin, 1990). Hinged on this pivotal assumption, SAT emphasizes that the study of language has to be conceived of as outstripping the bounds of the mere examination of its abstract form (i.e. language as a locutionary act) to delve into and sift through the crisscrossed and tangled social and cultural network within which language is utilized by speakers to convey an entire palette of meanings (i.e. language as an illocutionary act). Furthermore, the advocates of SAT expound that the study of language should pay special attention to the effects and consequences entailed by linguistic choices made by speakers (i.e. language as a perlocutionary act) (Austin, 1962; Balzacq, 2005).

Along these lines, this paper seeks to examine the issue of President Bush’s discursive construction of the Iraqi WMD and its elevation to the level of an existential threat through the lens of the theory of securitization of the Copenhagen School (CS henceforth). According to the advocates of the CS, the threatening nature of security issues is not a pre-given phenomenon, but issues rather morph out from mere political questions into lethal, urgent and even existential threats by the rhetorical maneuvers of a securitizing actor who is endowed with appropriate credentials to take a particular issue beyond the purview of normal politics to heights of security dilemmas by manipulating linguistic choices.

Being the linchpin of the decision-and-policy-making process by dint of his being the chief of the Executive Branch, head of the state and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, the US president stands out as a securitizing actor by excellence. The analyses in this study are, thus centered on scrutinizing and discussing a select number of the most frequent illocutionary acts in West Point speech (i.e. assertive, commissive and

directive) to reveal how President Bush (i.e. the securitizing actor) mobilized these choices to characterize and depict the Iraqi regime as a lethal and existential threat to US national security and international peace and security. In other words, after classifying illocutionary speech acts, the study proceeds to construing and discussing how each of these illocutionary acts served for securitizing the Iraqi regime. In so doing, they discursively re-invented the image of the Iraqi regime as a threat that disobeyed to the logic of Cold War and post-Cold War security doctrines and that spilt out of the ambit of normal politics. The analyses place a premium on the interpretation of the intentions of President Bush (i.e. the "securitizing actor") which were embedded in his choices and formulations of illocutionary acts. Of equal importance in this study is the explication and the interpretation of the expected effects (i.e. perlocutionary acts) of the president's choices of speech acts on the "target audience(s)." The consent to the president's securitizing move constitutes an indispensable condition for the validation and the success of the securitization of the Iraqi regime. More importantly, this consent is the foundation of the rationalization and the legitimization of the ensuing political and security undertakings of the Bush administration whatever extraordinary and unorthodox they would be.

3. Results:

President Bush's West Point speech (1 June 2002) is characterized by his utilization of the five types of illocutionary speech acts (i.e. assertive, commissive, directive, expressive and declarative). However, the results point to the fact that President Bush drew heavily upon assertive, commissive and directive illocutionary acts. This is largely due to the high performative value of these acts in terms of encoding the intentions of the speaker (i.e. "securitizing actor") and triggering the coveted effect on the "target audience(s)." This involves, among others, enlisting the unconditional consent and support of his audience(s) for his securitizing move against the Iraqi regime.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of illocutionary acts

| Type of Speech Acts | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Assertive | 68 | 54.83% |
| Commissive | 30 | 24.19% |
| Directive | 18 | 14.51% |
| Expressive | 7 | 05.64% |
| Declarative | 1 | 0.80% |
| Total | 124 | 100% |

Locution 1: "History has also issued its call to your generation."

Illocutionary act: Assertive (stating and reporting).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): encouragement and mobilization

Locution 2: "In your last year, America was attacked by a ruthless and resourceful enemy."

Illocutionary act: Assertive (stating and reporting).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): mobilization and support.

Locution 3: “Our war on terror is only begun, but in Afghanistan it was begun well.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (claiming).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): patriotic sentiment and zeal.

Locution 4: “I am proud of the men and women who have fought on my orders.”

Illocutionary act: Expressive (thanking and acknowledgement).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): excitement and patriotism.

Locution 5: “America is profoundly grateful for all who serve the cause of freedom, and for all who have given their lives in its defense.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (claiming).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): feeling of honor and pride.

Locution 6: “This war will take many turns we cannot predict.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (promising and warning).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): patience and trust.

Locution 7: “We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace — a peace that favors human liberty.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (claiming and stating).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): allegiance and confidence.

Locution 8: “We will defend the peace against threats from terrorists and tyrants.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (pledging and promising).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): confidence and support.

Locution 9: America has no empire to extend or utopia to establish

Illocutionary act: Assertive (claiming).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): confidence and mobilization.

Locution 10: “We wish for others only what we wish for ourselves — safety from violence, the rewards of liberty, and the hope for a better life.”

Illocutionary act (expected effect): Expressive (best wishes).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): hopefulness and confidence

Locution 11: “In defending the peace, we face a threat with no precedent.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (stating and describing).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): enlightenment and confidence.

Locution 12: “The attacks of September the 11th required a few hundred thousand dollars in the hands of a few dozen evil and deluded men.”

Illocutionary act (expected effect): Assertive (claiming and reporting).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): feelings of awe and cautiousness

Locution 13: “The dangers have not passed.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (claiming)

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): awareness and mobilization

Locution 14: This government and the American people are on watch, we are ready, because we know the terrorists have more money and more men and more plans.

Illocutionary act: Assertive (claiming).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): Sympathy and mobilization.

Locution 15: “When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology — when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (reporting and stating).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): Caution and perspicacity.

Locution 16: “Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (claiming).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): awareness and support.

Locution 17: “They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends — and we will oppose them with all our power.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (threat and promise).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): confidence and support

Locution 18: “But new threats also require new thinking.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (warning and advising).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): awareness and endorsement.

Locution 19: “Deterrence — the promise of massive retaliation against nations — means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (claiming).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): new strategic thought and mobilization.

Locution 20: “Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (stating).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): awareness and support

Locution 21: “We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systemically break them.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (refusal and threat).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): suspicion and vigilance

Locution 22: “If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (warning and advising).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): prudence and vigilance.

Locution 23: “Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (advising).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): confidence and mobilization

Locution 24: “We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (advising and directing).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): mobilization and commitment.

Locution 25: “In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (encouraging and urging).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): encouragement and mobilization.

Locution 26: “And our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (appealing).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): vigilance and support.

Locution 27: “Along with our friends and allies, we must oppose proliferation and confront regimes that sponsor terror, as each case requires.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (promising and pledging).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): encouragement and mobilization.

Locution 28: “We will not leave the safety of America and the peace of the planet at the mercy of a few mad terrorists and tyrants.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (promising).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): confidence and hopefulness.

Locution 29: “Because the war on terror will require resolve and patience, it will also require a firm moral purpose.”

Illocutionary act: Directive (recommending and urging).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): far-sightedness and stamina.

Locution 30: “Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (stating and advising).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): mobilization and encouragement

Locution 31: “We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (pledging).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): Determination and commitment.

Locution 32: “We will work for a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror.”

Illocutionary act: Commissive (promising and pledging).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): hopefulness, confidence and support.

Locution 33: “The peoples of the Islamic nations want and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities as people in every nation.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (declaring and certifying).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): encouragement and confidence.

Locution 34: “America has a greater objective than controlling threats and containing resentment.”

Illocutionary act: Assertive (reminding and certifying).

Perlocutionary act (expected effect): sympathy and support.

4. Discussion:

The language that President Bush deployed in West Point speech to convey his ideas, intentions and plans about the purported threat posed by the Iraqi regime was, from the perspective of the speech act theory, a series of acts or performances. These last were instrumental in eliciting a particular effect with his audience(s). Hence, the dismantling of different types of illocutionary acts is a crucial tool to dig out and unlock the embedded or the hidden intentions of the US president as regards the Iraqi regime.

President Bush’s appeal to assertive illocutionary acts, as it is shown in locutions 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 30, 33 and 34, were instrumental

in cloaking his idiosyncratic and contingent views about post-9/11 political and security affairs under the garb of commonsensical truths. To that end, he appealed to his “bully pulpit” and his being unrivalled and privileged claim maker (Colás and Richard, 2006; Domke, 2004; Swanson, 2008; Feith, 2008). Examined on this backdrop, assertive speech acts, were, thus, highly instrumental in conveying President Bush's idiosyncratic and contingent characterizations to post-September 11, 2001 security atmosphere and the allegedly unique and urgent threats incarnated by “terrorists” with easy access to WMD. Posing as a “securitizing agent,” President Bush capitalized on his solid credentials as an unrivalled “truth teller” and “claim maker” as he emphasized the ostensible specificities of the new breed of threats unleashed by the 9/11 attacks. Indeed, President Bush drew heavily on the choice of assertive illocutionary acts to make claims, assertions and propositions about what he deemed it to be the lethal and the existential threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and its alleged WMD program.

The choice of assertive illocutionary acts by President Bush to inculcate into the minds of his audience (s) at home and beyond, which was destined to construct the image of Iraq as a threat that could not be curbed or contained through the use of Cold War or post-Cold War doctrines of containment of deterrence, was *inter alia*, geared towards the rationalization and the institutionalization of the perception of Iraq as an unruly, unwieldy, evil and “rogue” regime that could only be reacted to with massive military force. This type of claim was deployed by President Bush to cover for the absence of substantial and conclusive hard evidence to foster and bolster his administration's presumptions and allegations About Iraqi purported involvement in terrorism and clandestine WMD programs.

Indeed, contrary to President Bush's claims about the unique gravity and the urgency about the ostensible Iraqi threat, hard evidence culled and announced by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM), United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), President insisted that Iraq still constituted a dire threat for world peace. The result was that President Bush would decide to go into a war against a sovereign state on basis of arguments that were questionable in the light of just war norms. The way President Bush conceptualized the Iraqi threat gave ample evidence that he elevated his “hunches” and “instincts” to a “new benchmark” for his policies and he acted on basis of “guesswork” (Woodward, 2002; Keen, 2006).

Being the second most used type of fact, commissive illocutionary acts encoded President Bush's commitments, promises and pledges to his audience as regards his intentions and his plans as part of the US-led global war on terror and its military build-up against the Iraqi regime. In locutions 6, 8, 17, 21, 27, 28, 31 and 32, the US president appealed to commissive acts to convey to his audience his government's determination to stand firmly and vigilantly against “terrorists” and “tyrants.” The utilization of commissive acts was particularly

crucial for President Bush to win the good will of his audience inside and outside the US.

Commissive illocutionary acts in West Point speech were highly instrumental in conveying President Bush's pledges and promises to combat the enemies of the US and all peace-loving states in the world. As it is stated in locutions 8, 17, 21, 27, 28, 31 and 32, President Bush equated the enemies of the US—with a special emphasis placed on Iraq—with “evil.” To that end, he underscored the elusive, unpredictable, illegal, immoral and untrustworthy nature of these enemies. He equally stressed their alleged proclivity for “violence,” “blackmailing,” “terror sponsorship” and “tyranny” as their *modus operandi* in the international arena. However, President Bush's claims in this venue were largely unfounded. He did not provide any conclusive and hard evidence to bolster his presumptions and indictments. This resulted especially in putting to question the legitimacy of US military build-up against the Iraqi regime and hence its ultimate resort to extreme actions against this last. Indeed, in the absence of any compelling evidence to indict the Iraqi regime, President Bush simply appealed to “circumstantial evidence,” “coherence by contemporaneity” and “*imposed adequation*” and “*post-hoc ergo propter hoc*” fallacy (Hodges, 2011, pp. 58-76; Bucholtz and Hall, 2017, p. 383). Drawing the maximum of dividend from these linguistic maneuvers, President Bush managed to enmesh the Iraqi regime with international terrorism. By so doing, he managed to impugn the rationality of its political and security practices, to securitize its nuclear activities and, most importantly, to adequate it with Al Qaeda organization.

Although he acted on basis of loose and flimsy claims, President Bush nevertheless pledged to counter the alleged threat with massive force and extreme actions. This implied a thinly veiled US intention to do away with the binding rules, war norms and security doctrines of the Cold War and the post-Cold War era. It equally reflected US intention to usher in a paradigmatic shift in the ways security and threats were perceived and dealt with. In fact, by having re-casted US-led war against Iraq through the prism of the binary “Manicheism” of “good against evil” (locution 31), President Bush made a *tabula rasa* of all US commitments under international law (Tardieu, 1981). By centering the conceptualization of the new security threat on elusive concept of “evil,” President Bush arrogated for himself the right to re-invent international treaties and alliances and to re-write rules and norms that had until then governed and directed international relations.

For the sake of courting the support of public opinion within and outside the US, President Bush deployed artillery of directive illocutionary acts. By so doing, he sought to reshape the perceptions and redirect the behaviors of his audience (s) as regards the nature of post-9/11 world politics in general and the threat ostensibly posed by “rogue states” like Iraq in particular. To this end, President Bush mobilized a host of directive acts as it is shown in locutions 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 29 to exhort and urge his audience to embrace ideas, principles and behaviors. The president's stance was depicted as being the most germane to curb the new breed of threats bequeathed by the 9/11 attacks.

In locutions 19, 20 and 23, President Bush provided unrelenting and unequivocal directions to his audience to relinquish Cold War and post-Cold War strategic culture and reasoning. For him, the new threats were unique and hence required more efficient substitutes to containment, nonproliferation, traditional pre-emption and multilateralism. This signaled a thinly veiled insinuation to the need legitimize and institutionalize “preventive” wars, counter-proliferation and revolutionary versions of multilateralism. It can, thus, be inferred from President Bush's appeal to directive acts that he capitalized on reconfiguring the strategic culture of his audience. This was deemed crucial to make it more amenable to his administration's global designs and more supportive of its political and security undertakings in the war on terror and the military build-up against Iraq. This involved, *inter alia*, the portrayal of the Iraqi regime as the quintessential embodiment of post-9/11 grave “terrorist” and WMD-armed threat.

In sum, by deploying directive acts in his West Point speech, President Bush went to great lengths in emphasizing the malevolence and evilness of post-9/11 threats. He placed a special focus on raising the awareness of his audience as regards the menace posed the intertwining of terrorism and WMD. President Bush equally drew upon directive acts mainly in locutions 18, 25, 26 and 29 to advise and urge his audience to jump into the bandwagon of US-led war on the Iraqi regime. Furthermore, the US president harnessed directive acts especially in locutions 19, 22, 23, 26 and 29 to exhort and goad his audience to subscribe to the Bush administration's ideological stance and to adhere to its political and security undertakings. This comprised, among others, the right to act proactively and offensively and the total obliteration of the distinction between preemptive and preventive wars.

5. Conclusion:

The overarching goal of this study has been to reveal the undeniable merits of examining security issues through the lens of the theory of securitization of the CS. The study has more specifically shown how President Bush appealed to a compilation of speech acts to cover for the absence of conclusive evidence to legitimize the US-led war against the Iraqi regime. Indeed, President Bush managed to securitize Iraq almost exclusively by mobilizing a collection of assertive, commissive and directive illocutionary acts. These last were instrumental in stitching up a litany of idiosyncratic and contingent accounts about the Iraqi regime's presumably hostile security intentions and plans to recast it into an existential and lethal threat. Most importantly, the study has emphasized that the re-invention of Iraq as an exceptional threat that could not be curbed through the use of Cold War and post-Cold War security doctrines culminated in endowing President Bush with an imprimatur to resort to extraordinary measures. This involved especially the institutionalization of counter-proliferation to obliterate a long history of nonproliferation, the blurring of the boundaries between pre-emption and prevention. Moreover, this discursive maneuvering entailed the conventionalization of the unilateral re-conceptualization of war norms from the exclusive viewpoint of US political and security elites.

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