

Introduction and Overview Cross-Cultural Rhetoric and the Gulf Crisis

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Hosts of studies demonstrate the importance of political rhetoric in many diverse cultural and cross-cultural contexts; some of these include Burke (1982), Bennett (1980), Ellul (1973), Lakoff (1990), Grillo (1988), Bailey (1981), Cohen (1987), and McLeod and Abe (1994). The genesis for the anthropological study of political rhetoric can be traced to Bloch's (1975) essay on political language and oratory in traditional societies. Whether traditional, modern, or even post-modern, however, the power of political rhetoric has not abated with cultural change. Furthermore it continues to relate intimately to political rituals (Kertzer 1987; Herzog 1987; McLeod 1991a; Abeles 1988, 1992) political symbols (Cohen 1975, Grillo 1988), and political propaganda (Marlin 1988). As David Kertzer argues, "Ritual can be seen as a form of rhetoric, the propagation of a message through culturally prescribed forms whose built-in logic makes the course of the argument predictable at the same time that it lends credence to the thesis advanced" (1987: 101).

Historically and culturally, such political beliefs in modern societies continue to function as a kind of mythology. In particular, they help to structure various bonds between speakers and audiences. These bonds take many forms, even within politics: governmental, legal, economic, religious, or even familial. Across all forms of political rhetoric, however, the goal of the rhetorician is to create emotionally charged and effectively efficient beliefs between the speaker and the audience. As Bilmes (1986: 105) notes: "Belief, it may seem, is the bedrock of cultural anthropology. In fact, though, we can move from belief to discourse without the loss of anything essential..... There must be a place for representations (held to be true) of information; of knowledge of past, present, and future states of the world; of contingent relationships among phenomena;

and of our own and others' mental states and processes—in short, of any conceivable factual matter. These are what people call beliefs."

F. G. Bailey (1981) divides the rhetoric of political beliefs in contemporary cultures into two discrete classes: (1) *hortatory rhetoric* moves groups of people into direct action and (2) *deliberative rhetoric* which endeavors to influence specific processes of decision-making. And he portrays both classes as implicitly but traditionally mythic. "Both kinds of rhetoric (hortatory and deliberative) are opposed to decision making by (modern) reasoning," he explains, for it instead "proceeds by logic and offers propositions for empirical validation" (Bailey 1981:27).

Both George Bush and Saddam Hussein utilized the rhetoric of beliefs to mobilize support and to persuade their people that war was necessary. Consider this quote from Saddam Hussein: "And this is a recitation from the Holy Koran calling for holy Jihad....if we know that the number of Iraqi volunteers who have offered themselves and sacrificed themselves for the sake of the principles of their nations is more than five million Iraqi, who are all willing to participate—and this is in addition to the one million Iraqi armed forces" (NYT, Aug. 5, 1990; hereafter NYT). Through the medium of international newspapers, satellite television, and CNN, both leaders endeavored to persuade not only their home audiences, but also the global community. Appealing to the world of Muslims, for example, Hussein invoked the holy places of Islam, the struggle between the material and the spiritual, and the call for the blood of martyrs. Even in calling the gulf conflict "the war of right against wrong and a crisis between Allah's teachings and the devil," Hussein made international appeals for support through the powerful channels of satellite television, newspapers, and short-wave radio. His symbolism invoking the Koran, the holy war, or his comparison of the conflict in the Middle East to Vietnam traveled across the planet from Baghdad to Singapore. Hussein's invocation of the colonial history of the Middle East spoke powerfully and emotionally to the worldviews of diverse groups of Muslims throughout the world.

The Gulf Conflict thus became a symbolic confrontation between the West and Islam for many in Islamic culture. Unlike Hussein, Bush's political mythology, gave us visions of a new world order, with the United States as the natural leader of the world. Thus, he declared on February 6, 1991, "We are the nation that can change the future." He also insisted that America must reestablish "its role as the world's leading diplomatic, cultural, and economic power" (BBC World Service, February 6, 1991).

From this point of view, the entire world was caught in the seamless web of global media (McLeod 1991d: 69-77) and the duel of political rhetoric between Hussein and Bush became the central aspect of communication throughout the global village (McLuhan

1964). In the same way that transnational advertising agencies use persuasive symbolism to sell the western world view (McLeod and DiPuccio 1991), the rhetorical combat between Bush and Hussein was an extremely important cross-cultural exercise in persuasion. Competing worldview, divergent visions of the past and future of humanity, and symbolic justifications for the actions of both men permeated the communications channels of the world. The audiences for these cross-cultural exchanges were worldwide, and the stakes were nothing less than war or peace.

As Marc Swartz, Victor Turner, and Arthur Tuden argue, "Despite its undeniable importance, insuperable difficulties confront the view that force is the sole, or even the major, basis of political behavior. These difficulties arise from the fact that force is a crude and expensive technique for the implementation of decisions. More importantly, force itself has to depend on interpersonal relationships that are based on something else" (1966, p. 10). Ideological rhetoric is an important aspect of persuasion in most societies—traditional, modern, and (potentially) post-modern. But understanding the power of persuasive rhetoric is especially critical in comprehending the Gulf Crisis of 1990-91.

Hussein and Cross-Cultural Persuasion: Arab Destiny and the Gulf Conflict

For example, in his "open letter" to Bush on September 5, 1990, Saddam Hussein used religious rhetoric to take George Bush to task for defiling the sacred shrines of Islam: "I have seen your infuriated statements and comments to officials at the American Defense Department, in which you affirmed your determination to continue following a policy of defiling Arab and Muslim holy shrines in the Hejaz and Nejd. So my strong belief in the just course chosen by the people of Iraq, whom I lead and serve, has greatly increased. My belief also increased in the correct stand of every eager Arab and Muslim who chooses the path of holy war against the invading forces." Hussein thus summarized his personal destiny of leading the Islamic masses to their rightful place in the world community, by fulfilling the spiritually ordained mission of Islam. About his opponent in this great struggle, Hussein minced no words: "This is the war of right against wrong, an is a crisis between Allah's teachings and the devil" (NYT, September 5, 1990). Throughout the conflict Hussein's public statements make him the mythic man of destiny for the Iraqi, Arab, and Islamic masses. The people of Islam are the instruments entrusted to him by God to accomplish the mission of restoring the Muslim world to its rightful place in the family of nations.

Paralleling the posture of Bush, Hussein's discourse puts him forward as the instrument of destiny. However, while Bush talked in terms of historical analogy, Hussein framed his rhetoric in terms of Koranic prophecy. "Allah the almighty has made his choice—the choice for the fighters and the strugglers who are in favor of principles. God has chosen the arena for this crisis to be the Arab world, and has put the Arabs in a progressive position in which the Iraqis are the foremost. And to confirm once more the meaning that God taught us ever since the first light of faith and belief, which is the arena of the Arab World." (NYT, Aug. 5, 1990).

The rhetoric forthcoming from Baghdad during the Gulf Crisis portrayed Iraq as the new leader, not just of the Gulf Region, or even the region of the Middle East, but of the whole Islamic world. Hussein hinted insistently that he might even be the new Mahdi of Islam, in whom must rest the hopes of Arabs to reach their proper place in the larger world. Accordingly the American troops in the Middle East become the new colonialists, seeking to divide and conquer the world of Islam; they are the eternal infidels, desecrating the shrines of the Prophet Mohammed. In his "open letter to Bush" on August 5, 1990, Hussein states: "While the ruler of Saudi Arabia calls himself the custodian of the holy shrines....he has given them away to foreigners." The United States and their allies are colonialists in Arab lands in this rhetoric, and Hussein is fighting the last colonial war. For him, the Gulf conflict was a battle between the imperialists and the Arabs, and the central issue was Western imperialism against Islam and the Arabs, not the invasion of Kuwait. A central theme of official Iraqi rhetoric was that Iraq had done nothing of great relevance to the Great Powers. Concerns of Iraq and Kuwait are Arab matters, exclusively, and therefore the West must learn to mind its own business: "the question that has to be posed by all of us together to Mrs. Thatcher and to Mr. Bush—{is} what has Iraq taken away from them which has made them bring along their armies, their forces to the region, threatening the people of the area and threatening Iraq with an attack and with destruction> What has Iraq done? If Iraq has taken anything away from them, and Iraq doesn't know which—tell us what we have taken away from them so that we may be able to return it to them" (NYT, August 5, 1990 p. A4). So far as the world at large might notice events in the Gulf region, moreover, it simply "should forget that there had ever been an Emirate called Kuwait" (Official Iraqi statement, *Swiss Radio International*, November 4, 1990).

In this connection, the Iraqi rhetoric portrayed the conflict in the Gulf as a battle between the Arabs and the last of the great colonial powers: the United States of America and the allied forces in the Gulf. Consider the following statement issued by the Revolutionary Command Council of Iraq in honor of the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait;

One of the most egregious criminal acts of colonialism was its partition of the homeland the day Baghdad was the capital of all Arabs.

In all cases, while drawing up geographic and sovereignty boundaries for all states, weak and to insure that partition, with the passage of time, would prevent these states from closing ranks and demonstrating a unified stance.

Thus, wherever possible, it (colonialism) separated civilization with its high, strong state of preparedness due to the right culture and demographic density from the resources of the new wealth, petroleum and other minerals where there is a small population. Thus colonialism achieved its objectives. The strongest evidence to show its success is that it turned the Arab homeland into 22 states before the launching of blessed Yemen unity in May.

What has befallen other states in the Arab lands befell Iraq when colonialism divested it of a dear part of it, namely Kuwait, and kept Iraq away from the waters to prevent it from acquiring part of its tactical and strategic abilities.....

The blood of our martyrs will burn you—so that Iraq will remain glorious and will establish through its glory and the glory of other countries of lofty glory for all the Arabs.

After seeking God's forgiveness and help, we will demolish blasphemy with faith. A new dawn has broken in the lives of the Arabs... God is Great, God is Great, God is Great; let the lowly be accursed and God's peace and mercy be upon you, honorable brothers (NYT, August 9, 1990, p. 10A: our emphasis).

The difficulties of cross-cultural persuasion are well illustrated by the rhetoric which flowed from both Washington and Baghdad. Consider how strange the types of rhetoric forthcoming from Baghdad Radio, Saddam Hussein, and the Iraqi Revolutionary Council sounded to many western ears; terms such as "holy war," "many heads will be lost," "fire will burn in every direction," "the blood of martyrs" and so on. However, we might consider Peter Mansfield's description in *The Arabs* of various rhetorical features of political language in Arab countries: (Mansfield, 1980: 536-537).

Classical Arabic, the language of the Holy Koran, is the living proof of the past glory of the Arabs and Islam. In contemporary Arabs it represents the "idea;" of "higher self"—something we aspire to be but manifestly do not succeed for most of our lives. But this is the language in which most political speeches, radio commentaries, and newspaper editorials are spoken and written. At their

best, they are magnificent in sound and color. They achieve their effect through the use of all the vast linguistic resources of the language; emphasis, exaggeration, elaborate metaphor, and even a form of saj, a classical type of rhymed prose for which Arabic is ideally suited.

In similar ways, George Bush and Saddam Hussein used ideological rhetoric to mobilize cultural symbols and potential supporters during the confrontation leading up to the Gulf War. In consequence, two culturally divergent rhetorical systems came into conflict on television and throughout the media. In response, both Bush and Hussein worked hard to rhetorically justify their military and political actions through persuasive principles and symbols. Hussein's language sounds flowery, overstated, and hyperbolic to Western ears. but he was following a set of rules for rhetorical interaction which lie at the heart of Arab culture, rules central to effective rhetoric in the Middle East. Materially, the fight in the Middle East may indeed have been about oil; but each leader cultivated the military and political confrontation through rhetoric, giving his policies the imprimatur of lofty cultural goals and symbols.

Each leader manipulated important mythical symbolism, both symbols evoking the dominant American worldview (McLeod and Abe 1992) and the Iraqi worldview (McLeod 1990b). While Hussein plainly lost the military war, he may have raised the rhetorical ante for Middle-East relations in a way that few Arab leaders have been able to accomplish in the 20th century. It was significant in this regard that so much of the rhetoric of both Hussein and Bush was aimed at the international as well as their domestic audiences. Perhaps neither leader actually expected to persuade a significant part of the other's prime audiences. Even so, when the two did direct presentations to the other's arenas, each displayed a spectacular misunderstanding of how political oratory works in the other culture. Moreover their misunderstandings reveal much about the mythic aspects of political rhetoric in the two cultures. However, we would hardly be wise to infer that Hussein lost the Gulf War because he failed to win the war o the words. But the same token, we cannot assume that Hussein lost the political struggle of persuasion simply because the later war of bombs and bullets did not go his way. From the outcome of the Gulf conflict, and from what we know about their respective symbol systems, we may reasonably conclude that each man proved relatively persuasive to his own audiences. Only when each attempted to persuade alien audiences was there an obvious failure of rhetoric, and then it extended to both Bush and Hussein. Rhetoric which was powerful in Iraq was a dismal failure in the United States and vice-versa. While appeals to colonialism, holy struggles and the shrines of Islam were effective for

many Muslims, Bush's appeals based on the rule of law and America's role as guardian of world civilization were just as effective for many Americans.

A summary of the dominant rhetorical justifications for the Gulf War of 1990-91 shows that the two leaders manipulated divergent symbolic systems which invoked two extremely disparate perceptions of the world. What happened rhetorically after August 2, 1990 was a confrontation of two men with opposed worldviews, expressed in strongly emotional symbols. As Kearney says, "The worldview of the people is their way of looking at reality. It consists of basic assumptions and images that provide a more or less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world" (1984, p. 41).

A cogent statement of Hussein's worldview was put forward by him in his statements reported in the NYT on September 5, 1990. Hussein equates colonialism and the Gulf Conflict with the Vietnam war, and makes the analogy between America's involvement in the Gulf Crisis and the occupation of holy Islamic Shrines.

[T]he last power that fought this were the people of Vietnam and the Americans have transferred southern Vietnam into a U.S. base for their own good to fight in North Vietnam. They turned it into a comfortable base for their soldiers and they are doing the same things in the holy lands of Naid and Hejaz in Saudi Arabia...the people of Vietnam, like the people of Iraq, have a strong will and can live up to any of these battles...

Hussein's call for the Holy War or jihad was seriously debated by Muslims as far away from Baghdad as Singapore and Malaysia. It also caused serious riots in Algeria which had to be put down by force of arms, as well as making him a cult hero in both Lebanon Jordan, and the Sudan. Once again, the analogy to foreign occupation and colonialism underpinned Hussein's rhetoric.

We call...all Arabs...to the Muslim holy war of Jihad, to fight the stance taken by the Arab agents who have followed these foreigners...[to] revolt against their traitors, their rulers, and to fight foreign presence in the holy lands...we support them, and more important, God is with them. While the ruler of Saudi Arabia calls himself the custodian of the holy shrines...he has given away his land to the foreigners.

A summary of the dominant rhetorical justifications for the Gulf War of 1990-91 shows that the two leaders were manipulating divergent symbolic systems which proceed from two extremely divergent perceptions of the world. What happened in the

Middle East was no less than the confrontation of two men with diametrically opposed worldviews, expressed rhetorically to their audiences through emotionally loaded political rhetoric. Accordingly, each man attempted to manipulate dominant configurations of symbolic importance to their home audiences, and then to translate them into images which impelled the remaining nations of the world to see the correctness of a particular worldview.

A specific example of aiming an emotionally loaded symbol at the wrong audience was Saddam Hussein's early references to milk in his speeches and pronouncements. In Hussein's declaration of "A War of Right against Wrong" (NYT, Sept. 6, 1990) milk was specified as a potent and emotionally charged symbol. Hussein said: "...the deprived children of Iraq will prove, I repeat that the deprived children of Iraq—they are deprived of their milk—And those who have betrayed their people and their land and their religion, they will be embarrassed to find the children of Iraq struggling and resisting the deprivation of milk...". These references placed milk on a symbolic par with his references to the Holy places of Islam, the struggle between the material and the spiritual in the Gulf conflict, and his call for the Holy Jihad. He even called the Gulf conflict "...the war of right against wrong and is a crisis between Allah's teachings and the devil." Milk was as important in this discourse as the Koran, holy war, or his comparison of the conflict in the Middle East to Vietnam. Hussein stated:

The children of Iraq are dying because they are being deprived of their milk, and their food and their medicine. And this was adopted by the United States of America and they were always backed by the Zionists...

When all humanity will wake up from its deep sleep and know where the truth lies. The children of Iraq before its people—I repeat, the children of Iraq before its people refuse that we borrow milk for them from the non believers and the evil and the girls of Iraq will suffer and sacrifice for their case.

Milk was a multi-vocal symbol of Hussein for all of the deprivation which Iraq was experiencing from the American blockade. And when used within Iraq to symbolize the deprivation, it must have had considerable appeal to the world-views of most Iraqis. However, when Hussein attempted to use milk in the world arena as a symbol of Iraqi hospitality on a previous occasion, the world reaction was one of horror. On August 23rd, when Saddam Hussein interviewed a young British boy/hostage/guest, he asked "Are you getting your milk, Stewart, and your cornflakes too?" The worldwide revulsion to this use of children as tools of propaganda was significant. The British press was

enraged, as were the British people. Hussein was trying to show that he was providing milk for foreigners even at the expense of his own children, and he was proud of that attempt at humanitarianism. But, the symbolic provision of milk remained an important rhetorical tool in his arsenal, for two weeks later, milk emerged triumphant as a dominant symbol of the deprivation of the Iraqi people. However, what worked at home did not work abroad; and Hussein had committed a substantial violation of the rules of the rhetorical arena by generalizing the Iraqi world-view to the rest of the world audience.

The rhetorical use of the milk reference was later to be repeated albeit on a different set of events. On January 21, 1991, Allied bombers destroyed a large Iraqi factory. On the *Cable News Network* the Pentagon spokesman specified that the plant was "...clearly of a military nature." Other spokespersons for the U. S. government claimed that it was biological weapons plant. For their part, the Iraqis released photos of the factory with a sign outside reading "Baby Milk Factory" in English on their backs. Hussein was obviously hoping that the image of a bombed baby milk would appeal to the world-views of Americans and members of the coalition forces.

As an unnamed White House spokesman pointed out to CBS News on September 3, 1990, "Symbolism outweighs the facts." Both sides in the Gulf conflict recognized the critical importance of words in the struggle for domestic and international opinion. *BBC World Service* reported on November 4, 1990 that the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Assiz had accused George Bush of using "...hostile language" in the crisis to prevent a settlement. On November 4, 1990 *Swiss Radio International* reported that an Iraq statement had been issued to the effect that "The world should forget that there had ever been an Emirate called Kuwait." George Bush accused Saddam Hussein of being "...even worse than Hitler," while Saddam Hussein claimed that the "Arabs will teach Bush how to be closer to God."

Bush and the Worldview of "The New World Order"

In this very significant cross-cultural battle of rhetoric, the American President had a radically different view of the conflict. The worldview of George Bush was clearly reflected in his early speeches about the Gulf. He said that "I took this action not out of some national hunger for conflict, but out of the moral responsibility shared by so many committed nations around the world, to protect our world, from fundamental evil" (NYT, August 19, 1990). Bush portrayed himself as the leader of a "new world order," a

multinational crusade under United Nations auspices to enforce peace and justice throughout the world. In a speech to the Joint Session of Congress on September 11, 1990, Bush tried to spell out his worldview: "We stand today at a unique and historic moment.... Out of these troubled times ... a new world order—can emerge; and new era freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the pursuit of peace. An era in which the nations of the world, east and west, north and south, can prosper and live in harmony" (NYT, September 12, 1990).

Clearly Bush was clearly concerned about history's verdict, and he wanted it to feature his efforts in international relations, especially his vision of the global task to lead his own land and others to "the new world order." This could be achieved, Bush maintained, only after the elimination of its chief obstacle: Saddam Hussein. Thus Bush placed the President of the United States at the head of a historical process of higher civilization for the world. Bush depicted himself as a man with a mission on a mission to fulfill the call of destiny. In speaking to Congress on September 11, 1990, Bush delivered this soaring rhetoric: "A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today, that new world is struggling to be born. A world quite different from the one we've known. A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle." Bush acknowledged no linkage between the Iraqi posture and colonialism, Viet Nam, the West Bank of the Jordan River, the Intifada, Israel, displaced Palestinians, U. N. Resolution 242, or U. N. Resolution 660. Instead he maintained simply that Saddam Hussein was an "international outlaw" who embodied the "law of the jungle." From this point of view, political rhetoric in the Gulf conflict was similar in many respects to the invocations of myth in traditional societies. Thus political speech in the Gulf Conflict manifests (1) redundancies, (2) binary oppositions, and (3) pervasive emotional themes (McLeod 1990, pp. 1-6). As Claude Levi Strauss has noted, "what gives myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timeless; it explains the present and the past as well as the future. This can be made clear through a comparison between myth and what appears to have replaced it in modern societies, namely, politics" (1968, p. 205).

The cross-cultural importance of political persuasion was clear to leaders on both sides of the Gulf Conflict. Both Bush and Hussein played this transcultural rhetorical game. The cultural importance of powerful rhetoric in this kind of political persuasion can be summarized as follows:

- (1) The ability to influence the will of another must always be expressed symbolically, even if we conceive the ability itself to remain completely

separate from rhetoric and discourse. Whatever the political system, as Keesing has observed, "Cultures are webs of mystification as well as legitimation. We need to ask who creates and defines cultural meanings and to what ends" (1987, pp. 161-2). Always, therefore, power needs symbolical as well as coercive in form. In the Gulf Conflict, cultural symbolism was crucial, and both sides mobilized symbolic as well as military resources.

- (2) Power based primarily on force is extremely expensive. Even if we imagine a formula for rulership arising from pure coercion or physical force, without the need for rhetorical resources, we should recognize that it is bound to prove too costly to sustain for any extended period. Granting that the threat of coercive force is an essential element for maintaining any socioculturally complex system of politics, continual use of the threat-let alone of the force itself-becomes an extremely expensive tool for the elites who wield it. Persuasion is far cheaper and more effective in the long run. As Joseph Goebbels noted in *Triumph of the Will*, "Power from guns may be good; but it is much better to win the hearts of the people and keep them." Thus persuasive rhetoric more than pays for itself over time in politics. In the Gulf Conflict, such persuasion was essential for both sides, and both sides used rhetoric to marshal support and solidarity.

Many commentators suggest simply that Bush succeeded and Hussein failed in the Gulf Conflict, but this is a vast oversimplification. The Bush forces won the war of aircrafts, tanks, and machine guns: Kuwait was "liberated," and Iraqis suffered far greater damage than the forces of coalition countries. The USA was the major partner in the international coalition of Allied Forces, and is a nation of 250 million people. In the Gulf Conflict, it worked in concert with other rich nations of some 500 million people. On the other hand, Iraq is a relatively poor nation of 17 million individuals. Once the coalition countries united against Iraq, perhaps military defeat was inevitable for Saddam Hussein.

But the inter-cultural war of words was another matter, and the same goes for possible ties between the military and rhetorical battles. The uniting of coalition countries was far from a foregone conclusion, and surely it depended significantly on political rhetoric. Yet the coalition remained so precarious throughout the conflict that

Bush evidently felt impelled to bomb and then invade Iraq quickly, before the alliance could unravel.

- (3) Coercion directed at members of a cultural in-group creates division for it (Simmel 1955), and probably reduces the effectiveness of rhetoric in many cases. By contrast, force directed at a cultural out-group produces in-group solidarity and increases rhetorical effectiveness there (McLeod 1991b). This differential relationship between force and rhetoric seems crucial for both. Since persuasion which result in corporate activity strengthens social bonds, both applications of force need to rely heavily on rhetoric to mobilize the populace in cohesive ways. Even where modern force takes center stage, therefore, we can expect modern persuasion through political rhetoric to perform a crucial role.

As guardian of world civilization and upholder of international law, Bush claimed that he had no choice but to have the American and the Allied forces intervene in the Gulf. This course of action was forced upon him by Hussein's "naked aggression" and American's high calling as world leader. As he explained to the Joint Session of Congress on Sept. 11, 1990, "For Americans to lead, America must remain strong and vital. Our world leadership and domestic strength are mutual and reinforcing, a woven piece as strongly bound as Old Glory." Therefore it is no surprise that Bush continually invoked the blessings of God in connection with his deployment for war; almost every one of his speeches during the conflict ended ritually with "God Bless America."

In Bush's rhetorical world-view, Saddam Hussein was the reincarnation of Hitler (or even worse) and Bush saw himself as a man who had the chance to stop Hitler before he started. Bush was not to be Neville Chamberlain, waving as impotent piece of paper and declaring "Peace in our time." Quite the reverse, Bush stated on August 19, 1990 to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, "Half a century ago, the world had a chance to stop a ruthless aggressor and missed it... I pledge to you; we will not make that mistake again."

From Bush's perspective on the world, the 500,000 American troops and their allies in the Gulf were "invited forces" who were there to stop "naked aggression" and not primarily because the entire gulf region accounts for over 44% of all global oil exports (*Washington Post* in the *Guardian Weekly*, p. 17: Sept. 30, 1990). In a major news conference, Bush even claimed "You just don't get it, do you? This is not about oil. This

is about naked aggression." For Bush, initially there was no linkage between the West Bank, the Intifada, Israel, Palestinians, U. N. 242 or U. N. 660. Saddam Hussein was an "international outlaw" who represented the "law of the jungle." In fact, Bush has mirrored his predecessor's "evil empire" speech by claiming "I took this action not out of some national hunger for conflict, but out of the moral responsibility shared by so many committed nations around the world, to protect our world from fundamental evil" (NYT, Aug. 19, 1990). Bush saw himself at the head of a "new world order", a multi-national force under United Nations auspices which can create peace and justice through force under United Nations auspices which can create peace and justice through force and/or the threat of force.

Each leader drew on specific cultural resources of myth and symbol to persuade potential allies, especially by projecting a world of hope should his side prevail and a world of disaster should it fail. In military terms, the Bush forces succeeded spectacularly and the Hussein forces failed miserably. In political terms, of course, the situation remains much less clear. Still we might say that Saddam's political rhetoric enjoyed some successes: at least temporarily, discourse about issues of the Middle East changed markedly in his direction. (The point is not that this was Hussein's goal in trying to annex Kuwait but that this consequence has flowed nevertheless from this later rhetoric). Whatever the outcome personally for Hussein, world audiences have turned with renewed vigor to discussion of conflicts between the rich and poor Arab nations, as well as their linkage with the Palestinian question. One might even argue that the rhetoric over the Gulf War was an indirect cause of the present settlements of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government-and that the return of Yassir Arafat to the Palestinian homeland is due in no small measure to the rhetoric of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War.

In addition, both Hussein and Bush tried to exploit their symbolic potentialities, and each played by their own rules. Their discourses were aimed at the "already converted" (their own political elites which surrounded them directly), those who "needed to be converted" (their national audiences), and the "ought to be converted" (the world community as a whole). Rhetoric which works in one arena may not work in another, and the idea of Hussein's rhetoric working effectively in the United States or Bush's rhetoric working effectively in Iraq was a rhetorical fantasy. The fact that both leaders tried this through satellite television and the fact that they both failed in this rhetorical challenge, revealed a thorough misunderstanding of how political oratory works within culture.

The best audience for any rhetorician is the "already converted", they know the symbols and they feel the affective dimension of each symbolic appeal. They also respond to the emotional appeals in a predictable way, reinforcing the message of the speaker through affirmation and reaction, political persuasion. Notions of political economy, symbolic appeals, ritual reaffirmation, and cultural symbolism are generalized by the speaker into world-views which are then accepted or rejected by the members of the culture. This takes place through the process of interaction between rhetorician and audience. As a part of cultural process, political symbolism lies at the juncture of political economy, logical decision making, and political propaganda and persuasion (Abe and McLeod, 1992), (Abe, 1994).

Conclusion: Intercultural Rhetoric and the Gulf Conflict

As we have pointed out, it is highly significant that Muslims in diverse nations as far afield as Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Singapore seriously debated whether to regard the Gulf War as a "jihad" (Radio Australia, January 28, 1991), and hence, whether to become involved in the Conflict. In fact, from Algeria (which backed Hussein) to Tunisia (which did the same) to Jordan (where Saddam has become a cult icon), the character of Arab rhetoric has shifted significantly. At least for a while, Hussein seems to have succeeded in moving Arab self-conceptions, Arab places in history, Arab conflicts with the West, and Arab destinies in the larger family of nations to a completely different rhetorical plane. To judge from the mass media, indeed, more people around the world are conscious of the powerful potential of pan-Arabism than ever before.

On February 5, 1991, the American President proclaimed that, "From the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates where civilization began, we can begin anew" (BBC World Service, February 5, 1991). The Iraqi leader issued calls for a new world as well, but one opposed in symbol and substance to Bush's view of the world. George Bush and Saddam Hussein stayed relatively true to the rhetorical courses they laid down in the early stages of the conflict. From the start, each sought to mobilize internal support by using every symbolic resource at his disposal. Each also sought to sway the other's people and international audiences.

No rhetoric and discourse can take place in a cultural vacuum. No matter how modern its rationality or how traditional its mythology, the power of any rhetoric depends greatly on additional factors. Political economy, availability of resources, use of force, and numerous other sociocultural factors condition the occurrence and effects of talk in politics (Lincoln 1989, pp. 1-12). It is fair to say, however, that a major condition

of powerful rhetoric in politics is the ability of a speaker to enhance the audience sense of personal power in relationship to some larger social group. In this sense, both Bush and Hussein experienced successes and failures in the war of intercultural persuasion.

The Gulf Crisis of 1990-91 became a war of cross-cultural rhetoric as well as a war of military forces. Like the military combat, the rhetorical battles soon developed intercultural dynamics that deserve careful scrutiny, not only in their own right, but also for their relevance to political discourses of the past and future. Especially impressive are the mythical dimensions of the political pronouncements of both sides, Islamic and American, dimensions long known for their rhetorical power. These suggest the importance and difficulty of cross-cultural persuasion in world of trans-global communication.

The mythic resources of cultures differ, making cross-cultural persuasion in politics an extremely arduous task. Even the degree of rhetorical success can diverge in surprising ways. As international trade, travel, and technology produce more intense and frequent interactions across cultural boundaries, however, international understanding and the power of intercultural political rhetoric stands to become more important, not less.

The analysis we have presented shows that both Bush and Hussein were extremely conscious of the importance of intercultural persuasion during the Gulf Crisis of 1990-91. Communications technology which spans the globe has made the power of political rhetoric a greater factor in the quest for power than ever before in human history. The hard truth is that the Gulf conflict in 1990-91 involved a major cross-cultural duel in discourses between these two leaders. Both Hussein and Bush needed to persuade diverse audiences of their justice, humanity, and prospects for success in the confrontation. And each leader approached this task primarily by utilizing symbolic rhetoric to identify what the world would become should his plans, values and worldviews succeed. Comprehending the power of this kind political rhetoric between national leaders in this new era of intercultural communications technology must be one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary cultural studies.

Hussein envisioned a "new dawn for the Arabs" while Bush foresaw "a new world order." Saddam's discourses concerned the defilement of holy shrines of Islam by infidels, while Bush invoked the perils of letting naked aggression go unchecked. Neither man spoke very often about the political economy of oil, but both knew that oil was the central issue in terms of the world economy. Saddam based his arguments on faith in Islam, the legacies of colonialism, prophecy and the Koran. On the other hand, Bush compared Hussein to Adolf Hitler, and made analogies between the love of

country, beliefs in the American flag, and World War II. Saddam claimed that the Arab people are "the people of the region God has privileged...the Arab nation in one which God has honored to be the cradle of divine messages and prophecy throughout the ages." Bush countered by contending that "Americans have stepped forward to share a tearful good-bye with their families before leaving for a strange and distant and distant shore...they serve together with Arabs, Europeans, Asians, and Africans in defense of principle and the new world order." One declared "Allah Akhbar" (God is Great) and the other "God Bless America." And both men had the entire world as the audience for their rhetoric. The intercultural global village of communications came of age with the Gulf Conflict of 1990-91.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Prof. John Nelson of the POROI Project at the University of Iowa for support and editing of this paper. Thanks also to the Speech Communications Fellowship which helped support presentation of portions this paper to POROI in 1991. Thanks also to Marna Utz and the staff at OSU Mansfield for their help in preparing the final manuscript.

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