



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

American national identity at the start and end of the war in Afghanistan

A comparative narrative analysis of presidential speeches

Tilde Olausson

University of Gothenburg, School of Global Studies

Bachelor thesis in Global Studies, 15 credits

Spring semester 2022

Supervisor: Kilian Spandler

Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to investigate the production of American national identity at the start and end of America's warfare in Afghanistan, and to reach an understanding how the identity-construction legitimized America's actions at those moments. Based on a post-structural understanding of identity as constructed and reproduced through action and speech, this study examines and compares speeches held by presidents George Bush and Joe Biden in relation to the start and end of the war. With a multimodal approach and with the method narrative analysis, the identity-construction done by Bush and Biden has been investigated. Drawing upon theories of national identity, foreign policy and danger formulated by Rodney Barker and David Campbell, this study suggests that the presidents constructed an American national identity in relation to threats and hostile enemies. The results show that the same strategies were used at the start and the end of the warfare, but in different ways. The location of hostile threats in Afghanistan legitimized the start of the warfare. At the end of the warfare however, the threats are narrated as located elsewhere. Thus, even though the same strategies were used, they legitimized both starting and ending the warfare, while reproducing American national identity.

Table of content

- Introduction..... 4
 - Limitations 5
 - Relevance and academic contribution..... 5
- Background..... 6
 - The attacks of 9/11 6
 - A brief background of the war in Afghanistan..... 6
- Previous research 7
 - National identity, narratives and warfare 7
- Theoretical framework..... 9
 - National identity, foreign policy and the notion of danger 9
- Method..... 13
 - Research design..... 13
 - Method for data collection 13
 - Method for data analysis 14
- Material..... 17
- Results and analysis..... 18
 - Bush’s speech September 20th 2001 18
 - Narrative 1: entry and exit speech 18
 - Narrative 1: narrative table 19
 - Narrative 2: entry and exit speech 20
 - Narrative 2: narrative table 21
 - History and discourse..... 24
 - Bush’s speech October 7th 2001 27
 - Entry and exit speech..... 27
 - Narrative table..... 27
 - History and discourse..... 32
 - American national identity at the start of the war in Afghanistan..... 33
 - Biden’s speech August 31st 2021 37
 - Entry and exit speech..... 37
 - Narrative table..... 37
 - History and discourse..... 40
 - American national identity at the end of the war in Afghanistan..... 42
- Concluding discussion 44
- List of references 48

Introduction

In the year of 2001 American president George Bush declared the Global War on Terrorism (GWOt) as a response to the terrorist attacks al-Qaida committed in the USA on September 11th. Since the terrorist group was based in Afghanistan, American military were sent there. Twenty years later, in August 2021, current president Joe Biden completed the withdrawal of their troops and announced the end of the war in Afghanistan (Council of Foreign Relations, 2022a). In relation to these events, the two presidents addressed the nation in televised speeches (PBS NewsHour, 2021, The Associated Press, 2015, CSBC, 2021).

By constructing *narratives* of the past, present and future in speeches, actors can impact the understanding of how the system of international relations functions, how actors should behave, what the conflict is and how it needs to be handled in order to be resolved (Miskimmon et. al., 2017, p. 7-8, 57). Through these mechanisms, actors have made sense of and justified political actions (Miskimmon, et. al., 2013, p. x). Narratives can also function to reinforce or impose identities (Miskimmon et. al., 2017, p. 57). In turn, national identity can be used as a political tool and enable conflicts and warfare (Beasley, 2004, p. 4-5). Since actors can reinforce national identity by employing narratives, which also function to legitimize behavior in the international system, it raises the question: how did narratives of ‘self’ and ‘other’ employed by the American presidents legitimize starting and ending the war in Afghanistan? This is the matter which will be investigated in this essay. Additionally, during periods of transition, such as at the initiation of a war or conflict, actors are particularly willing to adopt new narratives (Miskimmon et. al., 2017, p. 57-58), which makes the start and the end of America’s warfare in Afghanistan of particular interest.

Furthermore, according to post-structural understandings, national identity is constructed and performed through action and speech (Campbell, 1992, p. 6) as well as in relation to *difference* (Barker, 2007, Campbell, 1992). More specifically, this study will investigate the presidential speeches with Rodger Barker’s (2007) and David Campbell’s (1992) theories of how national identity is constructed by the narration of threats and enemies. By investigating how this was done by Bush and Biden, an understanding will be reached of how national identity has been narrated and constructed in order to legitimize the starting and ending of America’s warfare in Afghanistan.

Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this essay is to reach an understanding of how American national identity was constructed at the start and end of the nation's warfare in Afghanistan. Additionally, it will explore if (and how) the construction of national identity was done differently at those moments. More specifically, the study will investigate how this was done by George Bush and Joe Biden in presidential speeches by examining the narratives employed by them. The research questions the study aims at answering are:

- What narratives did the presidents employ?
- What constructions of 'self' and 'other' is done in the narratives?
- How did these constructions contribute to legitimize the start and the end of the warfare in Afghanistan?

Limitations

The study will not include all speeches given by the presidents in relation to the start and end of the warfare in Afghanistan, a choice that has partly been made due to the limited timeframe. Also, since the start and the end of the warfare is two significant and limited events, and because of actors' willingness to adopt new narratives during periods of transition (Miskimmon, et. al., 2017, p. 57-58), only a limited amount of material is required to investigate this particular focus area. Still, this matter will be taken into careful consideration during the selection of material, in order to achieve validity.

Relevance and academic contribution

Within global studies there is an aspiration to expose global power patterns and investigate the mechanisms of global conflicts. There is also an interest in the nation-state system and how it is maintained (Campbell et. al., 2019, p. 16-17, 310-311). As it has been described above, national identity and narratives have a significant impact on international relations. Thus, this study contributes to these matters by investigating the narration of national identity in relation to warfare, and is relevant within the realm of global studies.

Background

The attacks of 9/11

On the 11th of September 2001 four commercial airliners were hijacked and crashed in the United States. Two crashed into the World Trade Center in New York, one in the Pentagon in Washington, DC and the fourth crashed in a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The terrorist group al-Qaeda were responsible for the attack, which killed almost three thousand people. None of the nineteen hijackers were Afghan nationals, but Afghanistan was the base for the terrorist network (Council of Foreign Relations, 2022a).

The events were a traumatic surprise for the United States and produced a new understanding of terrorism as a threat to the nation (Malkasian, 2021, p. 115-116). As a response to the attack, the then-president George Bush declared the “Global War on Terrorism” (GWOt) and issued demands on the Taliban government controlling Afghanistan. On September 20th he announced that they must hand over all al-Qaeda members currently in their country, including the leader Osama bin Laden (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022b).

A brief background of the war in Afghanistan

On the 7th of October 2001 American military entered Afghanistan with “Operation Enduring Freedom” after the Taliban government failed to comply with their demands (Malkasian, 2021, p. 125, 129). The first attacks included air and cruise missile strikes, which were targeted at Taliban airfields, radars, anti-aircraft weapons and communication systems. Headquarters, ministries and the home of the Taliban leader were also hit (Malkasian, 2021, p. 27, 129) as well as al-Qaeda forces (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022b).

By December 9th the Taliban had lost control of the country. A few days later, bin Laden managed to escape, presumably to Pakistan. In April 2002 president Bush declared that the United States would partake in the building of a free Afghanistan (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022a). As time passed and al-Qaeda was meeting increased defeats, the terrorist threat that had caused US military action become less apparent. Why the US still remained in

the nation until as late as 2021 is a contested matter (Malkasian, 2021, p. 25-26) which will not be answered within the scope of this essay. Still, it is of relevance to outline some key events as well as how US intervention came to an end.

The invasion of Afghanistan marked the first military action in the GWoT (Malkasian, 2021, p. 17). In 2003 the US started “Operation Iraqi Freedom” (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022b). The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq became the main regions of the GWoT, but the US also conducted military interventions in other regions, such as the Philippines, the Horn of Africa, Georgia and the Caspian region, Mali and Niger, among others (Ryan, 2011, p. 364-365).

Al-Qaeda leader bin Laden, the primary target in “Operation Enduring Freedom” and the main person responsible for the attacks of 9/11, was killed by US forces in Pakistan 2011. Violence and resistance from the Taliban prevailed in Afghanistan and in 2014 president Barack Obama presented a plan of the withdrawal of most US forces, which would be completed by 2016. During Donald Trump’s presidency (2017-2021) new negotiations were made and in late 2020, May 1st 2021 was declared as the deadline for American military presence in Afghanistan. When Joe Biden took over the presidency he released a new plan for full withdrawal by September 11, 2021. By mid-August the Taliban took control over the capital and by August 30th the withdrawal was completed (Council of Foreign Relations, 2022a).

The 20-year war cost the US more than \$1 trillion dollars (Malkasian, 2021, p. 939) and 2,488 US troops lost their life. More than 120.000 civilians were killed and wounded and more than a million Afghans became refugees. (Malkasian, 2021, p. 935). As for May 2022, the Taliban remain in control of the nation (Teichmann & Boticiu, 2022).

Previous research

National identity, narratives and warfare

In his article on culture, identity and hegemony (2011), Richard Jackson explores identity in relation to narrative and discourse regarding the GWoT. Jackson argues that political leaders use language and narratives in order to make sense of and legitimize political decisions, and that language and material practices both enable and constrain each other. For this reason, the

GWoT would not have been possible if language did not provide the logic and rationale for its launching. Identity is a key tool when establishing a ‘problem’ and an ‘inevitable solution’, thereby making sense of and justifying warfare. Through these mechanisms, American identity enabled warfare. Moreover, the discourse on the GWoT had at the time of Jackson’s article become a powerful social structure and an intrinsic part of American identity (Jackson, 2011, p. 391-393). Ceremonies, medals and public rituals in relation to the GWoT and the remembrance of 9/11 withheld this notion of the national identity (Jackson, 2011, p. 392, 396). Another aspect of the GWoT which constructed American identity is the notion of terrorism. By embodying values deemed contrary to those of America, it reaffirmed American values and identity: terrorists hate freedom, liberty, democracy, peace, unity, etcetera – everything America stands for (Jackson, 2011, p. 398).

In addition, the discourse and narrative of GWoT have been influenced by the notion of America as a superior nation, also referred to as ‘American exceptionalism’ and ‘Manifest Destiny’. Other elements of American culture that have been infused in the discourse of GWoT is ‘innocence’, ‘heroism’, ‘unity’, good versus evil, divine calling, universal values, ‘justice’ and historical myths of America’s role during the Cold War and World War II. Jackson states that the rejection or questioning of these narratives, which are accepted as self-evident truths, is understood as disloyalty to and betrayal of the community and its values (Jackson, 2011, p. 398-399).

The notion of exceptionalism is undoubtedly a cornerstone of American national identity (Gilmore, 2015, Beasley, 2004, McCartney, 2004, Jackson, 2011) and has had a formidable impact on their position within global politics. Since the USA is a unique and superior nation, chosen by God (Gilmore, 2015, p. 301-302, 307) the discourse has legitimized foreign politics which is intended to improve or ‘save’ other nations; it is even their *duty* as a superior nation to do so (McCartney, 2004, p. 403). According to Paul T. McCartney American nationalism affected how the nation reacted to and understood the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Also, the attacks made possible a sense of national community, that had not existed since the Cold War (McCartney, 2004, p. 399-400). Vanessa B. Beasley discusses how Bush created an American “we” after the terrorists attacks. She also presents other research, which clarify that nations are ‘imagined communities’ and that ‘the people’ only are symbols without any substantial content. Yet, national identities can function as political tools; by creating a positive sense of belonging, but also by enabling terrible events and function as a fuel for violence (Beasley, 2004, p. 4-5).

Lastly, the study of *images* is highly important when it comes to narrative analysis and security, according to Rhys Crilley (2015). Nathan Rodgers writes about images in war and also state them to be of great concern (2013, p. 1). A presidential speech is an example of such a display of an image. Since the introduction of television, not only the speech matters, but also body language and other visual aspects. Specific symbols and places reappear during these official statements (Rodgers, 2013, p. 57-58). American presidential speeches are often given at the White House. Rodgers argues that the consistency of place is important during a crisis, since it reassures the leadership of the president and confirms the security of the nation's place of power. The most important symbol during the speeches is the American flag (Rodgers, 2013, p. 59-60). Rodgers highlights that the speeches always are given in relation to an event, such as a crisis, and have a message and a specific audience "[...] and therefore, as with traditional weapons, they are deployed with a specific target in mind" (Rodgers, 2013, p. 59).

As evident in this section, previous research has mainly explored identity in relation to the initiation of warfare. Hence, this study will contribute with another perspective by also investigating how these identity mechanisms function in relation to the disengagement of a conflict.

Theoretical framework

National identity, foreign policy and the notion of danger

This study is based on a post-structural understanding of national identity as produced and constructed (Campbell, 1992, p. 6), more specifically in relation to the notion of *danger* and *enemies*. This understanding derives from theories by Rodney Baker (2007) and David Campbell (1992). Campbell argues that a state identity emerges as the 'inside' takes shape in relation to a discourse on danger and threats that are located on the 'outside'. He writes: "The outcome of this is that boundaries are constructed, spaces demarcated, standards of legitimacy incorporated, interpretations of history privileged, and alternatives marginalized" (Campbell, 1992, p. 75).

Campbell understands identity as not being fixed by nature, given by God or planned by intentional behavior. Instead, it is under constant performative constitution in relation to

difference. A sovereign state's identity, its role and presence in world politics, is under constant construction through action and speech. Furthermore, Campbell clarifies that he is interested in the identity of the *national state* and not the *nation-state*. The latter is the term for when the state's territory is aligned with the identity of the people who inhabit it, such as language, religion or symbolic sense of self. In today's world, countries rarely are nation-states. The study of national states on the other hand, does not take a particular interest in the identity of the 'people', but rather how nationalism constructs and legitimatizes the state (Campbell, 1992, p. 8-11).

A state is in need of an identity, in order to be legitimized, to exist. Since a state does not have an inherent identity, it is under constant reproduction, constituted through practices. Neither is it ever finished as an entity, but in a process of constant change. Campbell concludes this reasoning by suggesting that states are, and must always be, in a process of becoming; if this stops, their lack of prediscursive foundations would be exposed – “stasis would be death” (Campbell, 1992, p. 11).

The production of identity, the creation of the 'inside' and 'outside' of a state, is depended on a constant articulation of danger through foreign policy, according to Campbell. Even though the threats may change over time, the techniques by which the objects of concern are produced do not (Campbell, 1992, p. 12). The reason why danger has a central role in the process of identity-creation, is because all meaning is constituted through difference. A positive characteristic cannot exist without one which is negative in comparison. Still, a contrast between two groups does not automatically make them violent enemies, but “the potential for the transformation of difference into otherness always exists” (Campbell, 1992, p. 76-77). Furthermore, the reason why foreign policy continue to use discourses of danger is not because the state exists in a world endangered by nature. Instead, it is a mechanism of identity-construction that is made possible through an overarching paradigm of modernity (Campbell, 1992, p. 72).

For Campbell, these are the mechanisms that explain why danger and foreign policy is central to the production and reproduction of national states. Without the possibility to contrast one state to another through the discourses of danger, the opportunity for the creation of identity cease to exist (Campbell, 1992, p. 75, 77). Similarly, Barker argues that the notion of danger, specifically *enemies*, are vital for the existence of the government. This is because narratives of enemies function to sustain identity, which in turn is needed to sustain the state. Moreover, if

there was not a source of threat, the institutions of security provided by the government, would not be needed (Barker, 2007, p. 8). In fact, Barker claims that it is not institutions, values or culture that unites a society, but shared enemies, which are portrayed as lurking in the periphery, able to surprise at any time. This makes the existence of enemies one of the principal justifications of government (Barker, 2007, p. 1-2, 4).

Barker understands that there is never a 'true' social identity, but that it is constructed through narratives (Barker, 2007, p. 8). The production of 'self' (Campbell's 'inside') is always done in relation to the 'other' (Campbell's 'outside'). When the 'other' is ascribed characteristics, the 'self' takes shape, by establishing what it is not (2007, p. 11-13). Barker claims: "The greater the demonisation of the foe, the greater the virtue attributed to the narrator" (2007, p. 118). Still, although enemies are narrated entities, their existence would not be possible without a person to ascribe this role to. Enmity is a response to something 'outside', or 'other', but it is also *constructed* and *cultivated* through the production of narratives; without enmity narratives, there would be no awareness of threat (Barker, 2007, p. 11, 39). Thus, enemies are simultaneously "both real and fabricated" (Barker, 2007, p. 11). In addition, Barker writes of the "narrator" as being the actor cultivating the narrative (2007) and argues that they are abundant within politics (2007, p. 2).

Barker presents a scale with four stages on which an enmity narrative can be created: competition, antagonism, enmity and demonisation. The first stage, *competition*, is when the competencies and policies of an opponent is attacked. It does not necessary involve any antagonism between the actors. The next step on the scale, *antagonism*, involves describing the 'other' as wicked and morally flawed, thus posing a damaging threat towards the institutions of society. Still, these types of narratives does not lead to violence. *Enmity*, on the other hand, is the point on the scale where the opponent is not only seen as a damaging threat, but a threat of complete destruction. Because of the hostility of the enemy, violence is needed to counterforce them. Barker writes that the turn from antagonism to enmity characterizes the turn from politics to coup or civil war. For example, these mechanisms were present during the closing years of the Roman Republic (Barker, 2007, p. 35-38).

The last step on the scale, *demonisation*, is when the enmity narrative is taken to its extreme. The opponent is not only an enemy, but a foe, whose mere existence poses a threat to the 'self'. Demonisation does not only justify violence – it demands it. The 'other' needs to be exterminated; not only their bodies, but also their ideas, which for example caused the burning

of Jewish books in Germany during World War II. While enmity can lead to a limited physical conflict, demonisation legitimizes genocides. Moreover, since demonisation offers such a strong build of the 'self', these narratives invent new foes when some have vanished, in order to sustain one's identity. One example Barker offers is the historical witch hunting. Initially, the witch needed to be convicted due to a proven spell, but later on less and less evidence was needed. Eventually, a simple facial twitch or a manner of dressing could be enough for conviction (Barker, 2007, p. 38, 118-124).

Barker argues that enmity narratives were used in order to justify the initiation of the GWOt. The very first sentence of the first chapter in his book *Making Enemies* (2007) is even a quotation of George Bush. Here cited from Barker (2007, p. 1): "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists". Barker presents this as an example of a political leader cultivating an enmity narrative, where the world is divided into friends and enemies (Barker, 2007, p. 1). Another exemplification including the USA is made, when Barker refers to a previous study which states that the Cold War frame offered an understanding of international conflict. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, this understanding got replaced by the GWOt frame, through which friends and enemies were reinterpreted and narratives of international security and global conflict were constructed (Barker, 2007, p. 13-14).

Campbell also writes specifically of America. As it has earlier been discussed, national states have no prediscursive essence, but are constructed. According to Campbell, this is particularly true for America. Unlike the foundation of many other national states, there has never been a country called America, or a collective identity of Americans, upon which the national state identity was built. Instead, "'America' only exists by virtue of people coming to live in a particular place" (Campbell, 1992, p. 105). For this reason, the ritualized performances and formalized practices that constitutes the state's identity (the process of becoming) is particularly vital for the United States of America (Campbell, 1992, p. 143).

Method

Research design

The overarching methodological approach in this study is comparative, which enable observations of how patterns function within a specific context. It is recommended to choose cases where the contrasting data can provide an understanding of different consequences (Bryman, 2016, p. 105). As for this study, Bush and Biden's speeches were given in similar contexts, but took place 20 years apart and were given in relation to the *start* and the *end* of America's warfare in Afghanistan. A comparative approach is therefore relevant and provides a tool for understanding if (and how) the creation of national identity was different at the start and the of end of the war in Afghanistan.

The study is of a qualitative nature. In general, this research strategy takes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, with social reality considered to be something that is both created and malleable. The focus is on analyzing words and their meanings, as well as how individuals experience, interpret and perceive reality (Bryman, 2018, p. 61). This is also the starting point of this study.

Method for data collection

Video recordings of speeches given by George Bush and Joe Biden have been collected for analysis in order to provide answers to this study's research questions. Since images are also an important aspect when studying narratives (Miskimmon, 2017, p. 5), transcribed versions are not sufficient. Both body language and audio aspects are relevant for the analysis (Robertson, 2018, p. 237-239). For this reason the analysis is *multimodal*, meaning that the audio and image from the speeches will be included in the analysis (Robertson, 2018, p. 235).

According to J. Scott there are four criteria when assessing a document: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaningfulness (Bryman, 2016, p. 657). Initially the aspects of authenticity and credibility have been taken into consideration in order to determine that the video recordings of the speeches are portraying the actual speeches that were given. Moreover,

the criteria representativeness is of great importance for this study, since the speeches are representing two events. As it was described under the headline “Limitations” these events have presumably been mentioned in a considerable amount of speeches addressed to the nation. However, *the start* and *the end* of the warfare in Afghanistan are two *delimited* and *significant* events, wherefor they have assumably been *the main topic* in a limited amount of speeches. This aspect have been taken into careful consideration during the selection of the material, since ensuring the representativeness is of upmost importance for the validity of the study. Lastly, the aspect meaningfulness have been taken into consideration when ensuring that the main topic in the speeches is the start or the end of warfare in Afghanistan, which it has to be in order for them to be meaningful for the research.

Method for data analysis

The method that has been used in order to analyze the data is *narrative analysis*, which is a tool to investigate how events and actions are given meaning in a certain context (Robertson, 2018, p. 221). For political actors and international relations in particular, the formation of narratives are of great importance. By narrating and giving meaning to occurrences of the past, present and the future, political objectives can be achieved. Narratives also structure expectations about behavior in the international system (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 5-6) and shape national identities (Miskimmon et al., 2013, p. 48-49). Thereby the method is a tool to investigate the production of such understandings (Robertson, 2018, p. 221) and a suitable method for this study. This is because the purpose of this essay is to reach an understanding of how national identity was produced in the presidential speeches and how this contributed to the legitimization of their political actions.

There are several ways to conduct a narrative analysis (Bryman, 2016, p. 741; Robertson, 2018, p.224; Miskimmon, 2017) and according to Robertson there is no ideal way, but should be adapted to function in accordance with the research questions (2018, p. 225). Alexa Robertson (2018) presents an operationalization which this study has followed, with one change made according to Miskimmon et. al.’s (2017) suggestion. Firstly, Robertson highlights the importance of being able to recognize the start and the ending of a narrative, marked by what she calls ‘entry and exit speech’ (my translation). The entry speech is marking that a history is

about to be told, whereas the exit speech takes the listener back to the beginning of the story and signalizes that the chain of events has reached its end (Robertson, 2018, p. 227).

My analysis has also used Robertson's understanding of narrative as a combination of *history* and *discourse*, which is originally Seymour Chatman's definition of the term. The history is the narrative's content or chain of events; in other words, the narrative's 'what'. The discourse on the other hand is the 'how' of the narrative; that is "[...] the means by which the content is communicated" (my translation) (Robertson, 2016, p. 224). Robertson presents a set of questions in order to analyze the discourse:

- What role does the speaker have?
- Is one side of the conflict quiet or not represented?
- Where is the viewer?
- How is the audience addressed?
- Does the language that the speaker use indicate that the actors should be perceived in a certain way?
- How should the story be perceived? What meanings can be given to the events, given the way that they have been reported? (my translation) (Robertson, 2016, p. 239)

Depending on the research question and the material, the researcher can give particular attention to the history or the discourse (Robertson, 2016, p. 230). The discourse of the narrative has received more focus in the analysis, since the aim of this essay is to reach an understanding of the *production* of national identity. Hence, the 'how' of the narrative is more interesting, since it provides a tool to investigate this matter. Furthermore, Robertson offers two useful terms when analyzing the aspect of discourse: denotive and connotative content. The former is when something can be understood explicitly, whereas the latter is expressed through associations or secondary inner meanings (Robertson, 2016, p. 236).

Robertson's operationalization contains one more component, which I have deviated from. She suggests using William Labov and Joshua Weltzyky's six narrative-elements (Robertson, 2018, p. 223). Instead I have relied on the components Miskimmon et. al. present (2017, p. 7). Firstly, Miskimmon et. al. understand narratives as being *strategic* and are mainly interested by those formed by political actors (2017) whereas Robertson is also interested in other types of narratives (2018). This aspect of Miskimmon et. al.'s definition is reflected in the components they have identified and will be more suitable for this study. Furthermore, the aspect of

temporality distinguishes their definitions. Throughout, Robertson's understanding of narratives is that they are concerned with events of *the past* and how they have affected *the current time* (2018). Miskimmon et. al.'s definition on the other hand, has another view on temporality, where they also highlight *the future* (2017, p. 7). This is a more suitable approach for this study, in particular because of the analysis of Bush's speech at the start of the war. Undoubtedly, he will have touched upon events of the future when he spoke of the impending war.

The elements Miskimmon et. al. present are the following:

- Agent/s: character or actors
- Scene: setting/environment/space
- Act: conflict or action
- Agency: tools/behavior
- Purpose: resolution or suggested resolution/goal (Miskimmon et. al., 2017, p. 7):

With this narrative structure, the researcher is allowed to:

[I]dentify actors and actions while recognizing the importance of temporality. This suggests that the past (history), the present, and the future (where "we" are going) are tied together through explication of the setting, action and goal or purpose (Miskimmon et. al., 2017, p. 7).

Robertson presents a table in which the narrative elements can be reported (2018, p. 233). I have followed this suggestion of presentation of the results, with Miskimmon et. al.'s elements. Although with one limitation; due to the limited scope of this essay, only the central agents in the narratives have been included. The final step in my analysis consists of relating the narrative elements to Campbell's (1992) and Barker's (2007) theories on national identity and danger, as well as the previous research that has been done within my area of focus (national identity in relation to narratives and warfare). Furthermore, the speeches have been transcribed, which Robertson claims is absolutely essential (2018, p. 246). Numerous quotes supporting the analysis have been presented, accordingly with Robertson's recommendations, in order to assure reliability. Robertson emphasizes the importance of transparency when the results are presented, otherwise there is a risk that the researcher creates a *narrative of a narrative* as a large amount of material needs to be summarized (2018, p. 243-244).

Material

Two speeches given by George Bush regarding the start of America's warfare in Afghanistan have been identified as relevant for this study. The first speech was given on September 20th 2001 at a joint session of Congress in the Capitol and lasts for 34 minutes and 30 seconds and consists of 2985 words when transcribed. As it will be presented below, in this speech Bush establishes that freedom and evil are at war, and that America will win the war against terrorism. Importantly, he issues a set of demands on the Taliban regime controlling Afghanistan, stating that there will be consequences if they are not met (PBS NewsHour, 2021, The White House, 2001a). The second speech was held on October 7th, in the Treaty Room of the White House. This speech is 6 minutes and 35 seconds long, contains 973 amount of words. Bush states that American military operations have begun in Afghanistan, since the Taliban regime failed to comply with the demands stated in the previous speech (The Associated Press, 2015).

Both speeches meet the criteria meaningfulness (Bryman, 2016, p. 657) since the main topic is the start of the warfare in Afghanistan. As it has been explained under the headline "Background" the invasion of Afghanistan was the first military action in the GWoT (Malkasian, 2021, p. 17), which is why Bush's September-speech, in spite of also being more broadly about the GWoT, is meaningful for the study. The criteria of representativeness (Bryman, 2016, p. 657) is met mainly due to the demands issued on the Taliban regime. In the October-speech, Bush declares that the war is initiated since the demands declared in the September-speech were not met (The Associated Press, 2015), which is why the speeches are representative for the start of the warfare.

One speech given by Joe Biden on August 31st 2021 has been identified as representative for the end of America's warfare in Afghanistan. The speech is 26 minutes and 35 seconds long and consists of 3193 words when transcribed. It was given the day after the nation evacuated their military and personnel, the main topic is the end of the warfare (CSBC, 2021) and it is given in the State Dining room of the White House (The White House, 2021). Thereby it meets J. Scott's criteria of representativeness and meaningfulness (Bryman, 2016, p. 657). Noteworthy is that the section of this essay which addresses the results and analysis of Biden's speech is shorter than the section treating Bush's speeches. This is because two speeches were identified as relevant at the start of the warfare, while only one at the end, and due to the space

needed to conduct the narrative analyses. This does not affect the validity or the quality of the findings at the end of the war, since it has been ensured that this section is extensive enough to include all necessary components.

Lastly, the credibility and authenticity (Bryman, 2016, p. 657) of the video-recordings of the speeches have been established by comparing them with official published transcriptions of the speeches (The White house, 2001a, The White House, 2001b, The White House, 2021). This has been done in order to ensure the video recordings have not been edited or in other ways manipulated.

Results and analysis

Bush's speech September 20th 2001

In the speech given by George Bush on September 20th 2001 I have distinguished two narratives. The speech begins with a narrative in which Bush presents the story of 'the state of the union'. This part of the speech lasts for 6 minutes and 7 seconds and consists of 168 words transcribed. Directly after, the second narrative begins, in which Bush describes the course of events in a 'war between good and evil'. It lasts for the remaining time of the speech (28 minutes and 23 seconds) and consists of 2817 words.

Narrative 1: entry and exit speech

Initially, it is of relevance to establish the entry and exit speech, which indicate the start and the end of a narrative (Robertson, 2018, p. 227). Bush begins the speech with the following words:

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tempore, members of Congress, and fellow Americans, in the normal course of events, presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the union. Tonight, no such report is needed; it has already been delivered by the American people.

Accordingly with Robertson's definition of entry speech (2018, p. 227), the last clause of the last sentence indicate the start of a story: how the American people have demonstrated the state of the union. Through Robertson's definition of denotive and connotative content, I understand that it is implied connotatively that it is the state of the union since the terrorist attacks on the

11th of September, that Bush is specifically addressing. By the end of the narrative Bush concludes with the words: “My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our union, and it is strong.” This is the exit speech; it refers to the beginning of the story and signalizes that the chain of events has reached its end (Robertson, 2018, p. 227)

Narrative 1: narrative table

Narrative elements	Result	Quote
Agent/s <i>Characters or actors</i>	Americans, including: - Passengers - Rescuers - Bush	“[...] the courage of passengers who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground.” “[...] the endurance of rescuers working past exhaustion.” “My fellow citizens [...]”
Scene <i>Setting/environment/space</i>	United States of America	“[...] in the normal course of events, presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the union. Tonight, no such report is needed; it has already been delivered by the American people.”
Act <i>Conflict or action</i>	How the report of the state of the union has been delivered by the American people.	“[...] in the normal course of events, presidents come to this chamber to report on the state of the union. Tonight, no such report is needed; it has already been delivered by the American people.”
Agency <i>Tools/behavior</i>	Americans are described as being loving, grieving, courageous and strong in their acts. They have	“[...] the courage of passengers who rushed terrorists to save others on the ground.”

	behaved self-sacrificing and acted with endurance.	“[...] the endurance of rescuers working past exhaustion.” “[...] the decency of a loving and giving people who have made the grief of strangers their own.”
Purpose <i>Resolution or suggested resolution/goal</i>	The resolution is that the state of the union is strong.	“My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our union, and it is strong.”

Narrative 2: entry and exit speech

The second narrative of Bush’s speech on September 20th 2001 begins with the following words:

Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done.

Bush establishes that due to the events of 9/11 (which are not mentioned denotatively, but it is understood that he refers to them connotatively (Robertson, 2018, p. 236)) America must now defend freedom. The narrator indicates that a story will be told of how that will be done, as well as how justice will be done to their enemies. Thus, the paragraph achieve Robertson’s criteria of entry speech (2018, p. 227).

The narrative ends with these words:

The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them. Fellow citizens, we will meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom and may he watch over the United States of America. Thank you.

Bush expresses that the chain of events has reached its end and ties back to the beginning, by mentioning that they will defend freedom and justice. Thereby the paragraph meets the criteria of exit speech (Robertson, 2018, p. 227).

Narrative 2: narrative table

Narrative elements	Result	Quote
<p>Agent/s</p> <p><i>Characters or actors</i></p>	<p>United States of America</p> <p>Americans</p> <p>George Bush</p> <p>Friends, including Great Britain</p> <p>Terrorists</p> <p>Al Qaida</p> <p>Taliban regime</p> <p>Afghanistan</p> <p>Muslims</p>	<p>“As long as the United States of America is determined and strong [...]”</p> <p>“Americans are asking [...]”</p> <p>“I will not forget the wound to our country and those who inflicted it. I will not yield, I will not rest, I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.”</p> <p>“America has no truer friend than Great Britain.”</p> <p>“There are thousands of these terrorists in more than 60 countries.”</p> <p>“[...] a collection of loosely affiliated terrorist organizations known as al Qaeda”</p> <p>“[...] we condemn the Taliban regime.”</p> <p>“In Afghanistan we see Al Qaeda's vision for the world.”</p> <p>“The terrorists practice a fringe form of Islamic extremism that has been rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics;</p>

		a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teachings of Islam.”
<p>Scene</p> <p><i>Setting/ environment/ space</i></p>	<p>The main setting is the American homeland. A free, democratic, just, civilized place, that has been disrupted by evil and an attack of war on 9/11.</p> <p>Hostile places where terrorists are lurking and plotting evil are described at several occasions. Afghanistan is one of those places.</p>	<p>“Americans are asking: Who attacked our country?”</p> <p>“They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government [...] They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”</p> <p>“[The terrorists] are sent back to their homes or sent to hide in countries around the world to plot evil and destruction.”</p> <p>“In Afghanistan we see Al Qaeda's vision for the world [...] Women are not allowed to attend school. You can be jailed for owning a television. Religion can be practiced only as their leaders dictate. A man can be jailed in Afghanistan if his beard is not long enough.”</p>
<p>Act</p> <p><i>Conflict or action</i></p>	<p>America has been attacked by enemies of freedom. So has everything they, and the civilized world, stand for. Now, America will respond to that act of war.</p> <p>The main conflict of the narrative is good (freedom, justice, civilization) versus evil (cruelty, fear, uncivilization).</p>	<p>“On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country [...] and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack.”</p> <p>“Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”</p> <p>“This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.”</p>

		<p>“Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.”</p>
<p>Agency</p> <p><i>Tools/behavior</i></p>	<p>America and Americans have acted and will act with courage, strength and resolution. They are civilized, good, just and free.</p> <p>Bush will also act in the fight for freedom.</p> <p>America will act in defense.</p> <p>America has the tools to defeat terrorism and will use them.</p> <p>The terrorists are evil, murderers, radical, extremists and merciless.</p> <p>Since the Taliban are aiding the terrorists, they are also responsible for the murders they commit.</p>	<p>“Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail.”</p> <p>“I will not yield, I will not rest, I will not relent in waging this struggle for freedom and security for the American people.”</p> <p>“We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans.”</p> <p>“We will direct every resource at our command – every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war – to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network.”</p> <p>“[The terrorists] are sent back to their homes or sent to hide in countries around the world to plot evil and destruction.”</p> <p>“These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life.”</p> <p>“By aiding and abetting murder, the Taliban regime is committing murder.”</p>

	<p>God supports America’s cause.</p> <p>The civilized world is supporting America.</p>	<p>“Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.”</p> <p>“The civilized world is rallying to America's side.”</p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p><i>Resolution or suggested resolution/goal</i></p>	<p>America will respond to the attack of war, protect freedom and defeat evil.</p> <p>The resolution of the conflict is already determined, that freedom and good will win against evil and fear. All terrorists will be defeated.</p>	<p>“As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror. This will be an age of liberty here and across the world.”</p> <p>“Our nation, this generation, will lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter and we will not fail.”</p> <p>“The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.”</p> <p>“Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”</p>

History and discourse

As stated under the headline “Method”, the history is the ‘what’ of the narrative, while the discourse is the narrative’s ‘how’ (Robertson, 2018, p. 224). In the first narrative Bush tells the history of how Americans have proved that the state of the union is strong. In the second narrative, the story is longer and more elaborate. Initially it is stated that America now must defend themselves and freedom. Bush goes on with thanking the Congress and the world for

their support, mentioning places such as Paris, Berlin, Seoul, Great Britain, Latin America, Australia and Africa. After this section, the narrator returns to the events on 11th of September and states: “enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country”. Thereafter, Bush tells the story of the ongoing war between evil and freedom, as well as how America shall defend themselves. America will defeat all terrorist groups around the world, bring justice and protect freedom. They will emerge victorious from the war and they are supported by the civilized world and God.

The questions Robertson presents in order to analyze the narrative’s discourse (2018, p. 239), which have been presented under the headline “Method”, shall be answered here. The focus in this section will be on the second narrative, as it is more extensive and rich of data. Firstly, the narrator is George Bush, president of the country. He is addressing a joint session of Congress, the nation and the world. Thus, he inhabits the role as the leader of the nation. He is speaking from a podium and repeatedly the audience present applause at him. The viewers are in the audience around him, as well as watching it as a televised version, apart from two men that are visible on the screen. They are sitting down behind Bush, applauding and standing up occasionally during the speech. Bush addresses the audience by turning around the room. Especially during the times when they applaud, he is often nodding back to the crowd, sometimes with a hint of a smile. At four occasions during the speech, he addresses specific people in the audience.

It is mainly the American perspective that is accounted for in the conflict. Occasionally, that perspective is being generalized as applying for the rest of the civilized world. For example when Bush states:

This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.

The voice of the other side of the conflict, the terrorists, is not heard, although Bush claims to know their motives. He describes them as hateful towards America and all it stands for, and that they want to impose their radical beliefs on all people. One quote supporting this argument is:

These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life. With every atrocity, they hope that America grows fearful, retreating from the world and forsaking our friends. They stand against us because we stand in their way.

According to Bush, the terrorists should be perceived as evil, cruel, merciless and radical. America on the other hand, is described as democratic, free, good, courageous and strong, as well as being the victim of an unprovoked attack. Thus, they shall act to protect their nation and freedom. As stated earlier, Bush is the sole speaker and he has the attention of the room and the nation. On several occasions he also addresses the world, suggesting that everyone is his audience. The way he is filmed contributes to the role he takes on: as the leader of the nation and a man capable of putting demands on nations all around the globe. His body language, appearance and clothing also construct his role. He is dressed in suit and tie and stands tall behind his podium. The facial expression contributes to his stoic and resolute appearance. Not much emotions are shown and there is no trembling in his voice, or shake of his hands, which he occasionally use to reinforce a statement. Similarly, he raises his voice a few times, which convey determination. For example during this section, where I have added italics to the words spoken in a raised voice:

We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions, by abandoning every value except the will to power, they follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way to where it ends *in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies*.

The meaning of the story presented in the second narrative, is that the attacks of 9/11 was an act of war against America, freedom and civilization. It was done by evil enemies and it is a conflict between good and evil. There is no way to be neutral in the conflict: "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." What will happen is that the Taliban must comply with America's demands, nations need to take a side and America will remain strong and courageous. The outcome of the conflict has already been settled:

The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them. Fellow citizens, we will meet violence with patient justice, assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come.

Bush's speech October 7th 2001

Entry and exit speech

Bush begins his speech on October 7th with the following words:

Good afternoon. On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. These carefully targeted actions are designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime.

In this paragraph, the narrator signals that the story of how the military actions in Afghanistan is taking place will be told. Thus, it constitutes the entry speech of a narrative (Robertson, 2018, p. 227). The speech, and the narrative, end with these sentences:

The battle is now joined on many fronts. We will not waver; we will not tire; we will not falter; and we will not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail. Thank you. May God continue to bless America.

In the first sentence, the narrator ties back to the beginning, when referring to the conflict. Thereafter he turns to the future, concluding that the conflict will end with freedom and peace and signaling that the chain of events has reached its end. Therefore, this is the exit speech of the narrative (Robertson, 2018, p. 227).

Narrative table

Narrative elements	Result	Quote
Agent/s <i>Characters or actors</i>	The United States of America George Bush The American military	“On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.”

	<p>Great Britain (among other friends)</p> <p>Afghanistan</p> <p>Al Qaeda</p> <p>Terrorists</p> <p>The Taliban Regime</p>	<p>“Today, those sacrifices are being made by members of our Armed Forces.”</p> <p>“We are joined in this operation by our staunch friend, Great Britain.”</p> <p>“[...] the terrorists may burrow deeper into caves [...]”</p>
<p>Scene</p> <p><i>Setting/environment/space</i></p>	<p>The main setting is Afghanistan, where the USA has begun military operations. There, the Afghanistan people are oppressed and the terrorists hide in caves.</p> <p>Bush clarifies from where he is holding the speech, the Treaty Room of the White House, a place of peace.</p>	<p>“By destroying camps and disrupting communications, we will make it more difficult for the terror network to train new recruits and coordinate their evil plans.”</p> <p>“[...] the oppressed people of Afghanistan [...]”</p> <p>“[...] the terrorists may burrow deeper into caves and other entrenched hiding places.”</p> <p>“I am speaking to you today from the Treaty Room of the White House, a place where American Presidents have worked for peace.”</p>

<p>Act</p> <p><i>Conflict or action</i></p>	<p>The Operation Enduring freedom has begun and American military has entered Afghanistan.</p> <p>This has begun because of the war for freedom; the war on terrorism. America is acting in defense and to protect peace.</p> <p>The operation has also begun since the Taliban failed to meet the demands previously stated by Bush.</p>	<p>“[...] the United States military has begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.”</p> <p>“[...] our Armed Forces who now defend us [...]”</p> <p>“[...] as we have learned, so suddenly and so tragically, there can be no peace in a world of sudden terror. In the face of today's new threat, the only way to pursue peace is to pursue those who threaten it.”</p> <p>“The name of today's military operation is Enduring Freedom. We defend not only our precious freedoms, but also the freedom of people everywhere”</p> <p>“This military action is a part of our campaign against terrorism”</p> <p>“More than two weeks ago, I gave Taliban leaders a series of clear and specific demands [...] None of these</p>
---	---	---

		demands were met. And now the Taliban will pay a price.”
Agency <i>Tools/behavior</i>	<p>America is courageous, just, generous, patient and peaceful.</p> <p>The terrorists are evil, murderers and barbaric criminals.</p> <p>The Taliban is murderers and outlaws since they aid terrorists.</p> <p>The world supports America in this cause.</p> <p>The Afghanistan people are oppressed and a friend of America.</p>	<p>“We are a peaceful nation.”</p> <p>“[...] the generosity of America [...]”</p> <p>“In the months ahead, our patience will be one of our strengths [...]”</p> <p>“[W]e will make it more difficult for the terror network to train new recruits and coordinate their evil plans.”</p> <p>“If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents, they have become outlaws and murderers, themselves.”</p> <p>“We are supported by the collective will of the world.”</p> <p>“The United States of America is a friend to the Afghan people [...]”</p> <p>“[...] the oppressed people of Afghanistan [...].”</p>

	<p>The military is honorable, brave and self-sacrificing.</p> <p>George Bush is responsible, determined and thoughtful of his nation.</p>	<p>“We ask a lot of those who wear our uniform. We ask them to leave their loved ones, to travel great distances, to risk injury, even to be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. They are dedicated, they are honorable; they represent the best of our country. And we are grateful.”</p> <p>“I know many Americans feel fear today. And our government is taking strong precautions. [...] At my request, many governors have activated the National Guard to strengthen airport security.”</p> <p>“On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al Qaeda terrorist training camps [...]”</p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p><i>Resolution or suggested resolution/goal</i></p>	<p>The outcome of the conflict is clear: America will win. So will freedom and peace.</p>	<p>“The battle is now joined on many fronts. We will not waver; we will not tire; we will not falter; and we will</p>

		not fail. Peace and freedom will prevail.”
--	--	--

History and discourse

In this speech, the story is told of how American military has entered Afghanistan in order to defend America, freedom and peace. President Bush, America and its military is acting for a just and righteous cause and it is described how they will act, and that they will be victorious.

In order to analyze the discourse of the speech, Robertson’s questions (2018, p. 239) will be answered. The speaker is George Bush, the president of the country. His eyes are fixed on the camera lens, which is filming him sitting alone behind a desk. He starts his speech with “Good afternoon” but does, apart from this, only address the audience once, when he turns to the military with the following words:

To all the men and women in our military – every sailor, every soldier, every airman, every coastguardsman, every Marine – I say this: Your mission is defined; your objectives are clear; your goal is just. You have my full confidence, and you will have every tool you need to carry out your duty.

The viewers are watching the speech via a screen. With this statement to the military, along with other statements which have been presented in the table above, Bush portrays the American military as being courageous and acting righteous. Moreover, this quote implicates that the narrator, Bush, is a man that should be perceived as authoritarian and respected, since his confidence in them is valued greatly. Other actors that are presented as being respected is the friends of America, such as Great Britain and Germany. Afghanistan is also stated as a friend, although not with the same agency as the formerly mentioned actors. They are oppressed and in need of Americas help, an argument supported by the quotes previously presented.

Lastly, the story is narrated to be perceived as a story of how America will defend themselves and freedom against evil terrorists, as well as how they will emerge victorious from the conflict. They are peaceful and supported by the world and God.

American national identity at the start of the war in Afghanistan

In the first narrative of the speech in September, the narrator constructs what Campbell refers to as the ‘inside’, or ‘self,’ as Barker names it (Campbell, 1992, p. 75, Barker, 2007, p. 11-13), when he is describing Americans. They are portrayed as virtuous and as embodying the ‘self’ of the national state. The latter is established by the remark: “My fellow citizens, for the last nine days, the entire world has seen for itself the state of our union, and it is strong.” Here it is concluded that the characteristics of the Americans represent the identity of the state. This sentence also establishes that George Bush is an American himself, since he is addressing the viewers as “fellow citizens”. By this, it is implied that his characteristics embody the American identity as well. As it has previously been described, Bush is presented as stoic, resolute and reflective; his and America’s decisions have not been done rashly.

I would also like to discuss the president as a *symbol* among other symbols during the speeches. As Rodger argues, symbols reappear during televised official statements, the most important being the American flag (2013, p. 57-60). In both of Bush’s speeches, a large American flag is seen behind him. In the October-speech he also has a flag of the seal of the president hanging next to the national flag. I would argue that the president is a symbol in himself, as the leader of the nation. This becomes especially apparent during the September-speech when Bush declares:

[The terrorists] hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

The American president is in himself a symbol of American identity, since Bush is speaking to them as an elected leader: he is a symbol of their freedom. The fact that the September speech took place during a joint session of Congress is also an interesting aspect in this regard. Firstly, it reaffirms Bush’s first narrative, of how the state of the union is strong. This is because everyone in the Congress are supportive of Bush and applaud to his speech. Secondly, it also constitutes a symbol. Both of America’s freedom, but also of the nation, since the Congress is a cornerstone of American democracy. Thus, by including this symbol in the speech, it reproduces American national identity as being strong, united, just and free.

Similarly, the place of the October speech is of importance in this aspect. Official statements often take place at the White House, which is important during a crisis since it reaffirms that the place of power is safe (Rodgers, 2013, p. 59-60). This is the case during this speech, since it takes place in the Treaty Room of the White House. The portraying of him behind a desk reinforces the notion of the president as thoughtful and decisive. Bush states that the Treaty Room is a place of peace, and by making that remark, the narrator cultivates the notion of America being a peaceful nation.

Both of Bush's speeches is also interesting to discuss in relation to what Campbell calls ritualized performances and formalized practices (1992, p. 143). According to Jackson, public rituals in relation to the GWoT reproduced an American identity (2011, p. 392, 396). I interpret the speeches as being public rituals, or ritualized performances, and that they, in themselves, reproduce American identity. The very act of the president giving the speeches is a way of constructing America.

Another aspect of the speeches as a ritualized performance is the ending remarks. In the September-speech Bush ends with saying: "In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom and may he watch over the United States of America. Thank you". The October-speech is ended with this sentence: "May God continue to bless America". Also due to the notion of exceptionalism, that the USA is a unique and superior nation chosen by God (Gilmore, 2015, p. 301-302, 307), I interpret the inclusion of this statement as being an important aspect of the presidential speech as a ritualized performance, thereby reproducing American identity and exceptionalism.

Furthermore, McCartney argues that the discourse of exceptionalism has legitimized foreign politics which is intended to improve or 'save' other nations (2004, p. 403), which is the case for Bush's speeches. For example, in the October-speech, the narrator states: "[T]he oppressed people of Afghanistan will know the generosity of America and our allies. As we strike military targets, we will also drop food, medicine and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan". By making this statement, the narrator justifies entering Afghanistan with the pretenses of helping the Afghan people.

How the American identity is constructed in the speech in October, as well as in the second narrative of the speech in September, is interesting to discuss in relation to Barker's theory of enmity narratives (2007). The terrorists and the Taliban are named *enemies*, while several other

nations are described as *friends*, with Great Britain being held in special regard (for example, it is said in the October-speech: “our staunch friend, Great Britain”). My argument is that the Taliban and the terrorists are placed on two different places in Barker’s scale for enmity narratives (2007, p. 35-38), where the Taliban are *enemies* and the terrorists *demons*.

As previously stated, the terrorists are described as extremists, murderers, evil, radical, and merciless. The terrorists are great in numbers and lurking in places around the globe, plotting evil, ready to surprise at any time, a behavior ascribed to enemies (Barker, 2007, p. 2). But it is not only their actions that are dangerous, but their ideas, which is a trait of a demon (Barker, 2007, p. 118-124): “[Al Qaeda’s] goal is remaking the world and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.” (Bush, September). Bush also states: “Terror unanswered can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments” (Bush, September), thereby establishing that they pose a threat to the *existence* of the ‘self’, the American national state, another characteristic of a demon (Barker, 2007, p. 118-124). “The only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it and destroy it where it grows” declares the narrator in the September-speech. Since the terrorists embody such evil, their existence need to be completely eliminated, another characteristic of a demon (Barker, 2007, p. 118-124).

The Taliban is declared an enemy mainly because of them supporting terrorists, but also because they oppress the people of Afghanistan. The latter becomes apparent in the beginning of Bush’s October-speech, as he declares that they are not only entering Afghanistan in order to prevent the country from being a base for terrorists, but also to “attack the military capability of the Taliban regime”. In the September-speech, Bush makes several demands to the Taliban:

Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan. And hand over every terrorist and every person and their support structure to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating.

The demands strengthen the argument that the Taliban are *enemies* because they support the *demons*, which is their main evil characteristic. Also noteworthy is that no demands are being made towards the terrorists. I interpret this being because of their status as demons; they need to be eliminated, therefore it is not an option issuing demands on them, unlike with the Taliban. Because of the enmity narrative of the Taliban, and since they fail to comply with the demands

and thus prove their status as enemies, violence is needed to counterforce them, which is a required action in order to defeat an enemy (Barker, 2007, p. 118-124).

Both Campbell and Barker argue that not only a *difference* between actors is enough, but a narrative of danger is needed to create an *otherness* and an awareness of threat (Campbell, 1992, p. 76-77, Barker, 2007, p. 11, 39). The Taliban was not involved in the attacks on September 11th (Council of Foreign Relations, 2022a). In spite of this, the Taliban's status as an enemy is cultivated in the narratives, a process explained by Barker's and Campbell's ideas on the awareness of threat. Through these mechanisms, America's identity is reinforced. As theorized by Barker (2007) and Campbell (1992), the 'inside'/'self' takes shape in relation to the 'outside'/'other'; by attributing them characteristics, oneself is defined, by establishing what one is *not*. The more evil the 'other' is, the more virtue can be ascribed to the 'self', according to Barker (2007, p. 118). The virtuous characteristics Bush attributes to America in the speech (such as just, free, democratic and strong) are reinforced by the evilness of the enemies.

Jackson argues that references to America's role during World War II is common in the discourse of the GWoT (2011, p. 398-399). In the speech in September, Bush makes two such references, the first one being when he is presenting Great Britain: "America has no truer friend than Great Britain. Once again, we are joined together in a great cause". He also claims that the terrorists are "the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century" and that they "follow in the path of fascism, Nazism and totalitarianism". I understand this as an attempt to reinforce the evilness of the demons of today, by equating them with enemies of the past.

To conclude this discussion, I turn to Jackson's argument, that identity is a key tool when establishing a 'problem' and an 'inevitable solution' (Jackson, 2001, p. 391-393). As it has been presented above, the analysis of identity in Bush's narratives gives an understanding of how Bush narrates the problem, how freedom is under attack, which justifies the inevitable solution, that America must start warfare in Afghanistan as an part of the GWoT.

Biden’s speech August 31st 2021

Entry and exit speech

Accordingly with Robertson’s definition (2018, p. 227), the entry speech occurs at the first sentence, as Biden introduces the history he will tell of how the United States ended their warfare in Afghanistan: “Last night in Kabul, the United States ended 20 years of war in Afghanistan, the longest war in American history”.

At the end of the speech Biden turns towards the future and declares that it was the right decision for America to leave Afghanistan. Thereby he is connecting to the start of the story, as well as signaling that the chain of events has reached its end, which characterizes the exit speech (Robertson, 2018, p. 227).

As we close 20 years of war and strife and pain and sacrifice, it is time to look to the future, not the past. To a future that is safer, to a future that is more secure, to a future that honors those who serve and all those who gave what President Lincoln called their last full measure of devotion. I gave my word with all of my heart. I believe this is the right decision, a wise decision and the best decision for America. Thank you. Thank you, and may God bless you all and may God protect our troops.

Narrative table

Narrative elements	Results	Quotes
Agent/s <i>Characters or actors</i>	United States of America Joe Biden Afghanistan The Taliban	“Last night in Kabul, the United States ended 20 years of war in Afghanistan” “In April, I made a decision to end this war.” “By the time I came to office, the Taliban was in the strongest military position since 2001, controlling or contesting nearly half of the country.”
Scene	The setting of the narrative is mainly Afghanistan, which in	“In the 17 days that we operated in Kabul after the Taliban seized power, we engaged in an

<p><i>Setting/ environment /space</i></p>	<p>spite of being a war zone, was an environment that could be handled with control by the USA.</p> <p>American homeland is also a recurring space.</p> <p>Biden describes to a threatful and competitive world on several occasions.</p>	<p>around-the-clock effort to provide every American the opportunity to leave.”</p> <p>“[...] this is the way the mission was designed: it was designed to operate under severe stress and attack. And that’s what it did.”</p> <p>“[...] to make sure Afghanistan can never be used again to launch an attack on our homeland.”</p> <p>“[...] the threat from terrorism continues in its pernicious and evil nature. But it’s changed, expanded to other countries.”</p> <p>“We are engaged in a serious competition with China. We are dealing with the challenges on multiple fronts with Russia. We are confronted with cyberattacks and nuclear proliferation.”</p>
<p><i>Act Conflict or action</i></p>	<p>The main conflict is whether or not America should have continued with their warfare in Afghanistan. Biden argues that USA had accomplished admirable actions in Afghanistan and helped their military as well as they could. Also, they had already achieved their goal when bin Laden was executed a decade ago, and veterans had experienced enough trauma. Thus, he argues that the only possible action was to end this</p>	<p>“We faced one of two choices: Follow the agreement of the previous administration and extend more time for people to get out; or send in thousands more troops and escalate the war.”</p> <p>“The assumption was that more than 300,000 Afghan national security forces that we had trained over the past two decades, and equipped, would be a strong adversary in their civil war with the Taliban. That assumption that the Afghan government would be able to hold on for a period of time beyond military drawdown turned out not to be accurate.”</p> <p>“We succeeded in what we set out to do in Afghanistan over a decade ago. And we stayed</p>

	<p>war by withdrawing their troops.</p>	<p>for another decade. It was time to end this war.”</p> <p>“A lot of our veterans and their families have gone through hell. Deployment after deployment. Months and years away from their families. Missed birthdays, anniversaries, empty chairs at holidays, financial struggles, divorces, loss of limbs, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress.”</p>
<p>Agency <i>Tools/behavior</i></p>	<p>USA deliberately <i>ended</i> the war. Meanwhile, Afghanistan failed to secure <i>their</i> country and <i>their</i> security, which lead to the Taliban taking control.</p> <p>USA has acted with intention and in control while completing the evacuation in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The USA completed actions no other nation could have done.</p>	<p>“Last night in Kabul, the United States ended 20 years of war in Afghanistan”</p> <p>“When the Afghan security forces – after two decades of fighting for their country, and losing thousands of their own – did not hold on as long as anyone expected, we were ready when they, the people of Afghanistan, watched their own government collapse, and the president flee, amid the corruption and malfeasance, handing over the country to their enemy, the Taliban and significantly increasing the risk to US personnel and our allies.”</p> <p>“[T]his is the way the mission was designed: it was designed to operate under severe stress and attack. And that’s what it did.”</p> <p>“No nation, no nation has ever done anything like it in all of history. Only the United States had the capacity and the will and the ability to do it, and we did it today.”</p>

	Biden is resolute and has acted according to America's interests.	<p>"In April, I made a decision to end this war."</p> <p>"I refuse to continue a war that was no longer in the service of the vital national interests of our people."</p>
<p>Purpose</p> <p><i>Resolution or suggested resolution/goal</i></p>	The resolution is that it was a wise and necessary decision to end America's warfare in Afghanistan. There was no longer a threat towards their country there, why they needed to leave and safeguard their homeland against threats from elsewhere.	<p>"I was not going to extend this forever war, and I was not extending a forever exit."</p> <p>"We succeeded in what we set out to do in Afghanistan over a decade ago. And we stayed for another decade. It was time to end this war."</p>

History and discourse

The history, or the 'what' of Biden's narrative (Robertson, 2018, p. 224) is the story of how and why the USA ended their warfare in Afghanistan. As it is described in the chart above, it is presented as a wise choice made by Biden and America. The discourse is instead the 'how' of the narrative (Robertson, 2018, p. 224). The questions Roberson presents in order to analyze the narrative's discourse (2018, p. 239) shall be answered here.

The speaker has the role of the president and he is holding a speech addressed to the nation. He is constantly focusing his gaze on the camera lens. Even though there is other people in the room, he never moves his eye sight around to acknowledge the audience present, which enhances the total attention he has towards the viewer watching the televised version of the speech. On a few occasions he appeals directly to the viewers. For example, he states: "My fellow Americans, the war in Afghanistan is now over". One time he urges Americans to join him in prayer for the personnel who participated in the evacuation, and he finishes the speech with thanking his audience and saying "[...] may God bless you all".

Before the speech begins, Biden is not present in the room. There is a podium standing, with the seal of the president attached to it. Behind the podium is a hallway. At the end of the hallway American flags, and flags with the seal of the president are hanging. Biden enters the hallway, walks up to the podium, and begins the speech without a pause or a look around the room. Sounds of cameras taking photographs is heard during his walk up to the podium. At the end of the speech, he turns around to walk away, and as he is doing this, the sound of cameras taking photographs is heard once again. Also, several of the people present in the room begin to ask questions, starting with “Mr. President”. Biden does not acknowledge these attempts, and walks out the same way he entered the room.

During the speech, Biden, as well as the actor America, are described as being reasonable, determined, wise, powerful, good and helpful. They are undoubtedly the actors with most capability and strength. Moreover, they are portrayed as having made the right choice and as having acted in an excellent manner and achieved what no other nation could have done: “No nation, no nation has ever done anything like it in all of history. Only the United States had the capacity and the will and the ability to do it, and we did it today.”

Biden’s appearance and action partake in the construction of this role. He is dressed in a suit and tie and raises his voice occasionally to demonstrate his resolve, for example when stating “No nation, no nation” in the quote above. At other times he taps his finger on the podium, in order to underline his statements. Attached on his jacket lapel is a brooch depicting the American flag.

As the story is being told, only the American perspective of the events is extensively accounted for. Afghanistan’s point of view is briefly referred to, when Biden states that the USA has trained and equipped their military during the last two decades. He describes Afghanistan’s side of the conflict, claiming it was *their* government which collapsed and *they* who handed over their country to the Taliban, which is *their* enemy. I interpret these statements as not being Afghanistan’s *actual* side of the conflict; rather it is the American point of view of Afghanistan’s perspective.

The Taliban’s perspective is not accounted for. Through Robertson’s explanation of denotive and connotative content (Robertson, 2016, p. 236)), I interpret the complete dismissal of their understanding of the conflict, as a dismissal towards the idea of them acting fair and reasonable. Although this is not said denotatively, I understand this as being said connotatively. Apart from

pointing out lurking terrorists as a threat located around the globe (although not in Afghanistan), China and Russia are spoken of as threats. Quotes supporting this interpretation has been presented in the chart above.

Lastly, the story Biden tells should be perceived as a story of a successful mission that took place due to a wise choice. Instead of continuing a “forever war” or “forever exit” America needs to look towards their homeland and their future, since the vital national interest is to protect them against threats that are now elsewhere. The war in Afghanistan is a conflict of the past and it was time to end it.

American national identity at the end of the war in Afghanistan

The notion of *exceptionalism* (Gilmore 2015, p. 301-302) is present during Biden’s speech, as he declares: “No nation, no nation has ever done anything like it in all of history. Only the United States had the capacity and the will and the ability to do it, and we did it today”. Although, unlike in Bush’s speeches, Biden makes the conclusion that America does not need to help Afghanistan any longer, even though the discourse of exceptionalism motivated such action at the start of the warfare. I understand this outcome through Barker’s ideas of enmity narratives (2007), because in Biden’s speeches, the Taliban is not portrayed as *America’s* enemy, but *Afghanistan’s*. As it has been demonstrated in the narrative table, Biden argues that America has done their best with supporting Afghanistan’s army, but that *they* failed to protect themselves against *their* enemy, the Taliban – thereby putting US personnel at risk. The narrator also names it their *civil war*, thus establishing that the fight against the Taliban is Afghanistan’s task, and not a part of the GWoT. Biden even argues that if for example Yemen would have been the base of the terrorist network, he believes that America would have started the warfare there, even though the Taliban was in control of Afghanistan:

I respectfully suggest you ask yourself this question: “If we had been attacked on September 11, 2001 from Yemen instead of Afghanistan, would we have ever gone to war in Afghanistan even though the Taliban controlled Afghanistan in the year 2001?” I believe the honest answer is no. That is because we have no vital interest in Afghanistan other than to prevent an attack on America’s homeland and our friends. And that is true today.

The terrorists on the other hand, are still narrated demons: “the threat from terrorism continues in its pernicious and evil nature”. The terrorists are described as lurking, and that they have “metastasized” and spread to other places. Like the threat from a demon, which are everywhere, plotting evil and able to surprise at any moment (Barker, 2007, p. 2). America is still ready and able to bring complete destruction upon them, which is needed to counterforce demons (Barker, 2007, p. 118-124):

[T]o those who wish America harm, to those who engage in terrorism against us or our allies, know this: the United States will never rest. We will not forgive; we will not forget. We will hunt you down to the ends of the Earth and you will pay the ultimate price.

Biden argues that the terrorist threat now is elsewhere:

We face threats from al-Shabab in Somalia, al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria in the Arabian Peninsula, and ISIS attempting to create a caliphate in Syria and Iraq, and establishing affiliates across Africa and Asia.

Moreover, they are facing threats from China and Russia, and also from cyberattacks and nuclear proliferation. Deriving from Campbell’s understanding of the national state as created in relation to threats on the ‘outside’ (1992), I would argue it is of importance for Biden to cultivate the notion of threats from elsewhere, as the nation has ended their warfare in Afghanistan. As it has been described earlier in this essay, the GWOt has been central in American foreign policy and identity during the last two decades (Jackson, 2011, p. 391-393) and the warfare in Afghanistan was one of the most central components of the GWOt (Ryan, 2011, p. 364-365). According to Campbell, the existence of the state is dependent on the notion of danger and threats (1992, p. 75) and that they are always in a process of ‘becoming’. If the process of reproduction stop, the state would cease to exist (1992, p. 11). Thus, the narrator essentially must declare other threats and dangers, as the threats generated through the warfare in Afghanistan wane, in order to maintain the identity – the existence – of the American national state. Similarly, Barker argues that since demonisation narratives offer such a strong creation of the ‘self’, the narratives invent new foes when some have vanished, in order to sustain one’s identity (Barker, 2007, p. 38, 118-124). This reasoning also contribute to explain Biden’s assurance of the prevalence of the terrorist threat.

Similarly to Bush’s speeches, symbols appear that reproduce American national identity. American flags are hanging behind Biden, which is the most important symbol which reappear in presidential speeches (Rodgers, 2013, p. 59-60). It is also visible on the narrator’s jacket

lapel. The speech is situated in the White House, which, according to Rodgers, confirms the security of the nation's place of power, as well as reassures the leadership of the president (2013, p. 59-60). Also the presidential role of the narrator function as a symbol in Biden's speech, as it does in Bush's speeches. The seal of the president appears, which contributes to the symbolization.

Throughout the speech, Biden reports that America has *ended* the warfare, which was a decision that was well-thought-through, wise and necessary. He states: "Last night in Kabul, the United States ended 20 years of war in Afghanistan" and "It was time to end this war". Moreover, America completed the evacuation successfully and with control. Noteworthy is the emphasis Biden gives his responsibility for the decision to end the war. For example he states: "In April, I made a decision to end this war" and "I refuse to continue a war that was no longer in the service of the vital national interests of our people". I interpret this as an attempt at reinforcing the symbolism of his presidency, that he is the leader of America, similarly to how Bush's role of the president functions as a symbol in his speeches.

Furthermore, the very act of giving the speech function to reproduce American identity. As it was discussed in relation to Bush's speeches, Jackson argues that public rituals in relation to the GWoT reproduced American identity (2011, p. 392, 396). Campbell also writes about ritualized performances and formalized practices that maintain national identity (1992, p. 143). I understand Biden's speech as a public ritual, or a ritualized performance, that in itself reinforces American national identity, in conjunction with the symbols present. Similarly to Bush, Biden also ends his speech referring to God: "Thank you, and may God bless you all and may God protect our troops". Thus, he also cultivates the notion of exceptionalism, that America is a country chosen and protected by God (Gilmore, 2015, p. 301-302, 307) and maintains the same structure of a presidential speech as Bush does.

Concluding discussion

As it has been described above, there are similarities in how the two presidents constructed American national identity at the start and the end of the war in Afghanistan. In all speeches symbols such as the American flag appeared and both presidents established their role as the nation's leader. Also the symbolism of place was present, since all speeches took place in settings which confirms the security of the nation's place of power (Rodgers, 2013, p. 59-60).

The presidents were both dressed in a suit and tie and maintained a similar body language and overall appearance. The notion of exceptionalism was present during both occurrences, as the presidents referred to America as a unique, superior nation chosen and protected by God (Gilmore, 2015, p. 301-302, 307). At the start of the war, this discourse was used to justify a military intervention, as Bush stated that they shall help the oppressed people of Afghanistan, by targeting the Taliban regime. By the end of the war however, Biden did not make the conclusion that America should help Afghanistan. This is because the war against the Taliban is *their* civil war and that *they* have failed with protecting *their* country, even though America had helped them for the past two decades.

With Barker's understanding of enmity narratives (2007) it has been discussed above how the Taliban was portrayed as an enemy at the start of the war, but not at the end, which explains Biden's conclusion that America should not help Afghanistan any longer. In the October-speech 2001, Bush clearly stated that the military intervention had begun in order to prevent Afghanistan of being a base for terrorist operations *and* to attack the Taliban regime's military capability. As it was described under the headline "Background", that is also what happened; homes of Taliban leaders, headquarters and ministries were hit with air and cruise missile strikes, as well as Taliban airfields and communications systems (Malkasian, 2021, p. 27, 129).

At the end of the warfare, Biden instead argued that the sole reason for military interference was to prevent any other terrorist attack to be launched against America from Afghanistan. In fact, he even claimed that even if the Taliban was in control of Afghanistan in 2001, but the terrorist base of al-Qaeda would have been elsewhere, he believed there would have not been any military operations in Afghanistan. I understand this statement as exposing the construction of enmity narratives that Bush conducted at the start of the war. Barker claims that enemies are both real and fabricated and that there would be no awareness of threat without the narration of enemies (Barker, 2007, p. 11, 39). At the start of the war, the notion of the Taliban as hostile and dangerous was cultivated, which legitimized American military intervention in Afghanistan. At the end of the war however, the actor was rendered as non-concerning for America, which motivated the ending of America's military presence in Afghanistan.

The terrorists were on the other hand portrayed as demons at both the start and the end of the warfare, as it has been explained through Barker's theory of enmity narratives (2007). Although, at the start of the warfare, Bush engaged in this narration to a greater extent than Biden did at the end. As it has been previously presented, Bush elaborately explained the evil

nature of the terrorists, how their vision of the world is demonstrated in Afghanistan, that they hate America and their freedoms etcetera. Biden on the other hand, did not elaborate to the same extent and only reported that the threat from evil terrorists remains, that America will act to defeat them and names a number of places from where the threat is now deriving from. I understand this difference as being explained by Miskimmon et. al.'s argument that actors are willing to adopt new narratives during periods of transition, such as during the initiation of a war or conflict (2017, p. 57-58). As Malkasin argues, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 were a traumatic surprise for America and caused a new understanding of terrorism as a threat to the nation (2021, p. 115-116). Thus, Bush's more elaborate attempt at portraying the terrorists as evil and threatening, can be explained by the fact that he was adopting a new enmity narrative, whereas the notion of terrorism had already been established at the end of America's warfare in Afghanistan.

Biden employed the settled narrative of terrorists as threatening demons, but claimed (unlike Bush) that they are not located in Afghanistan, but elsewhere. He named specific locations such as Somalia, Syria and Iraq, but also that terrorist groups are spreading across Africa and Asia. Threats were also claimed to be deriving from China and Russia. According to Campbell, the national identity (the 'inside') takes shape in relation to threats located 'outside', a mechanism which impacts foreign policy (1992). I understand the different notions of threats at the start and the end of the warfare in Afghanistan, as functioning to legitimize America's action in this way; the 'outside' was fabricated differently, which prompted different responses of the 'inside'. Because apart from arguing that America did a wise choice ending their warfare in Afghanistan, Biden did not argue that any other immediate action needed to be taken by America. This, together with the fact that he was employing the settled narrative of terrorism, explains why he, unlike Bush, did not elaborately explain the deriving threats from around the globe. Bush on the other hand sought to legitimize the countering of the enemy by force (accordingly with Barker's theory of enmity narratives (2007)) and was therefore in greater need of establishing American national identity and the evilness of their enemies.

The discussion above exposes how the presidents have employed different narratives which constructed American national identity in order to legitimize the start and the end of the warfare in Afghanistan. Bush attempted to justify the initiation of the GWoT and the invasion of Afghanistan, by narrating the terrorists as demons which threatened America's existence. He also considered the Taliban to an enemy, which prompted the military action targeting them. Biden on the other hand, did not narrate the Taliban as enemies, but instead referred to threats

located elsewhere, thereby motivating the ending of the warfare in Afghanistan. In combination with the previously presented “Result and analysis”, the research questions have thereby been answered.

Lastly, I would like to make a suggestion for future research. As it has previously been stated , it is a contested matter why America remained in Afghanistan for as long as 20 years (Malkasian, 2021, p. 25-26), something which Biden also highlighted in his speech. I believe that further investigation of the construction of narratives and national identity could bring understanding of why American military intervention was legitimized for the whole duration of the war.

List of references

The Associated Press [AP Archive]. (2015, July 21). *Bush address on military action in Afghanistan* [Video]. Downloaded 15/4-2022 from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osXkym5GHXI>

Barker, R. (2007). *Making Enemies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Beasley, V. (2004). *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric*.

Texas: Texas A&M University Press

Bryman, A. (2018). *Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder* (3rd ed.) Stockholm: Liber.

Campbell, D. (1992). *Writing security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Campbell, P., MacKinnon, A., Stevens, C. (2010). *An Introduction to Global Studies*.

Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.

CNBC Television [CNBC Television]. (2021, August 31). *President Biden delivers remarks on ending the war in Afghanistan – 8/31/2021* [Video]. Downloaded 15/4-2022 from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abVP2BZtHd0>

Council of Foreign Relations. (2022a). *The U.S war in Afghanistan*. Downloaded 12/04-2022 from: <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-war-afghanistan>

Council of Foreign Relations. (2022b). *How 9/11 Reshaped Foreign Policy*. Downloaded 12/04-2022 from: <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/how-911-reshaped-foreign-policy>

Crilley, R. (2015). Seeing strategic narratives? *Critical Studies on Security*, 3(3), 331-333.

Gilmore, J. (2015). American Exceptionalism in the American Mind: Presidential Discourse, National Identity, and U.S. Public Opinion. *Communication Studies*, 66(3), 301-320.

Jackson, R. (2011). Culture, identity and hegemony: Continuity and (the lack of) change in US counterterrorism policy from Bush to Obama. *International Politics (Hague, Netherlands)*, 48(2-3), 390-411).

- Malkasian, C. (2021). *The American war in Afghanistan: A history*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McCartney, P. (2004). American Nationalism and U.S. Foreign Policy from September 11 to the Iraq War. *Political Science Quarterly*, 119(3), 399-423.
- Miskimmon, A., O'Loughlin, B., & Roselle, L. (2013). *Strategic narratives : Communication power and the new world order*. London: Routledge.
- Miskimmon, A., Roselle, L., & O'Loughlin, B. (2017). *Forging the World : Strategic Narratives and International Relations*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- PBS NewsHour [PBS NewsHour]. (2021, September 3). *President George W. Bush's address to a joint session of Congress following 9/11 – Sept. 20, 2001* [Video]. Downloaded 15/4-2021 from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZF7cPvaKFXM>
- Robertson, A. (2018). Narrativanalys. In G. Bergström & K. Boréus (Eds.). *Textens mening och makt: Metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys* (3rd ed., s. 219-249). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Rodgers, N. (2013) *Image Warfare in the War on Terror*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ryan, M. (2011). 'War in countries we are not at war with': The 'war on terror' on the periphery from Bush to Obama. *International Politics*, 48(2-3), 364-389.
- Teichmann, F., Boticiu, S. F. (2022) Combating terrorist financing in Switzerland in the light of current changes in Afghanistan. *Journal of Financial Crime* 29(3).
- The White House. (2001a). *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*. Downloaded 15/4-2022 from: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>
- The White House. (2001b). *Presidential Address to the Nation*. Downloaded 15/4-2022 from: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html>

The White House. (2021). *Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan*.
Downloaded 15/4-2022 from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/31/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-end-of-the-war-in-afghanistan/>