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**The Elusive Essence of Evil:
Constructing Otherness in the Coalition of the Willing**

Abstract

This chapter considers the construction of the terrorist Other, in relation to the fractured Self of the Coalition of the Willing. Despite mutual appeals to the essential evil-ness of enemies during the War on Terror, analyzing the discursive construction of threat and Otherness reveals that divergent understandings of Self-identity inevitably impacted upon a heterogeneous construction of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda and Mullah Omar's Taliban, as well as Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party. In making this argument the chapter analyzes speeches from political leaders in the United States, Britain and Australia shortly after the events of September 11th, 2001.

Introduction

Following the end of the Cold War and making use of the intellectual space its demise created, the role of discourse, including its importance in foreign policy, has increasingly been seen as central to the study of international relations (e.g. Der Derian and Shaprio 1989; Campbell 1992; Doty 1993; Weldes 1996; Milliken

1999). And, frequently, poststructural and critical constructivist contributions have shown that discourse and foreign policy are intimately linked to questions of identity (e.g. Larsen 2007). Constructivist work in International Relations has shown how particular discourses have underpinned the possibility of realizing specific policies (Holland 2012a), including intervention (Western 2005) and enhanced interrogation (Jackson 2005b). And, most recently, discourse analytic approaches have argued, once again, that language has been central to realizing the policies of the War on Terror (e.g. Collins and Glover 2002; Holland 2012b; Jackson 2005a; Silberstein 2002). This chapter builds upon and adds to this literature.

Since 9/11, critical constructivist and poststructural research themes have been fruitfully applied to the War on Terror, analyzing the ways in which foreign policy discourse co-constitutes the national identity. Perhaps most notoriously, these analyses have focused upon the peculiar proclivity for Manichean binaries that the War on Terror has re-awakened (Coleman 2003; Jackson 2005a). Not since the Cold War have appeals to good Selves and evil Others received such a high degree of discursive emphases and dizzying repetition (McCrisken 2003). However, then as now, the construction of Otherness has not been a matter of straightforward binary opposition. While dichotomy and juxtaposition have certainly served useful political functions, the argument made here is that, during the War on Terror, the enemy has been constructed in more nuanced terms than pure opposition. After 9/11, the construction of the enemy's Otherness has been intimately tied to the particular and distinct self-

understandings and self-identities of individual states, as pursued by their leaders.

This chapter considers the construction of the terrorist Other, in relation to the fractured Self of the Coalition of the Willing. Despite shared appeals to the essential evil-ness of enemies during the War on Terror, analyzing discursive constructions of threat and Otherness reveal that divergent understandings of Self-identity inspired a heterogeneous construction of Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda and Mullah Omar's Taliban after 9/11, as well as Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party from 2002. In making this argument the chapter analyzes speeches from political leaders in the United States, Britain and Australia between September 11th 2001 and mid 2003. However, there is a logical focus on language in the days and weeks after 9/11, as new discourses were established, amplified and solidified. All of the speeches and statements of Bush, Blair and Howard, during this period and with a foreign policy dimension (however small), were analyzed; producing over one hundred and fifty thousand words of coded material. Speeches were coded inductively with hierarchical nodes using Nvivo software. All of the speeches are, or were, freely available online from official government and party websites.

The chapter is structured around three main sections. First, the chapter begins by outlining a theoretical understanding of Self, Other and how they relate, within a discourse analytic approach. Second, the chapter considers those mutual constructions of Otherness that were so politically important for the possibility of an international military intervention, conducted by a coalition of

culturally similar states. Third, the chapter turns to consider the most interesting and often overlooked issue of divergent representations of otherness. American, British and Australian constructions of the enemy Other reveal the heterogeneity that laid at the heart of foreign policy discourse during the War on Terror and which was central to ensuring its political possibility. Finally, the chapter reflects upon what these differences mean for the possibility and nature of intervention, as well as its alternatives.

Discourse and Identity in the War on Terror

The importance of language in the realm of foreign policy has long been understood, but has not always been adequately theorized. While politicians are certainly instrumental and deliberate in their uses of language, terms such as rhetoric often fail to fully grasp the role that language plays in constituting that which it claims to dispassionately describe. Language is more than strategy and style; rather, it brings into being that which it claims to deal with but actually constructs. Foreign policy is in fact a way in which the world is carved up and divided out into different zones and areas: friendly neighbors, dangerous regions and distant allies, for example. Foreign policy conducts a mapping – a literal geographing – of friends and enemies. It is a cartographic enterprise, which involves the mapping of world politics for particular audiences, as well as filling that map with meaning. Perhaps, better than anywhere, this construction of both the ‘geo’ and ‘politics’ of foreign policy has been most fully theorized on the borderlands

of International Relations and Geography, in the subdiscipline of Critical Geopolitics (e.g. Toal 1994, 1996; Toal et al 2006).

What Critical Geopolitics, as well as poststructural and thicker constructivist accounts in International Relations, has realized is that ideas lay at the heart of a human's interaction with the world. Whether concerning particular values, understandings of identity or a belief in a particular ideology, ideas are seen to sit at that intersection where the material and ideational worlds become irrevocably intertwined. From this starting point of subjectivity, it is a question of considering how some ideas become shared and widespread, perhaps to the extent that they are agreed upon, tacitly and without question, acting as a bedrock upon which more complex mental formulations can be developed. Language is the principal medium through which humans come to share ideas, as they move from the subjective to the intersubjective and back again. Very simply, where language becomes relatively stable, producing meaning in a fairly systematic way, it is possible to observe a discourse. While this systematicity is inevitably partial and incomplete, without the possibility of fixity, it is relatively regular and predictable in its production of meaning. Foreign policy, in large part, is about the production, maintenance and eventual disruption of particular discourses, which serve to generate meanings – about ideas and identities – in a relatively predictable manner.

Consider, for example, the 2003 American-led intervention in Iraq. The meaning of this intervention varies depending upon the discursive field within which one is located when attempting to make sense of it. Was the intervention an act of

war or humanitarian assistance? Did the events constitute an invasion and occupation or act of liberation? Alternatively, was this a war for humanity's freedom or easier access to vital resources? In 2003, as now and always, competing discourses serve to produce different answers and different meanings of the apparently mutually acknowledged 'acts' of foreign policy. The 'acts' and 'events' of international affairs are inseparable from the discourses – from the language, ideas and identities – that national leaders put forward as foreign policy.

Understandings of identity, in particular, lay at the heart of foreign policy discourse (e.g. Larsen 1997). The two are, in fact, co-constitutive (e.g. Campbell 1992; Hansen 2007; Jackson 2005a). A policy of 'democracy promotion', for example, helps to construct, whilst being similarly enabled by, a particular American identity, comprising of democratic, benevolent and exceptional traits. A policy to increase contributions of overseas aid and development funding relies upon and simultaneously can help to establish the national identity of the contributing state as wealthy, altruistic and ethical. At the same time, a pre-existing identity, founded upon notions of altruism and democracy, helps to enable policies such as higher development spending and the promotion of democracy overseas. National identity and foreign policy build upon each other in these moments. They are seamlessly stitched together, as what the state 'does', through its foreign policy, becomes what the state 'is', in terms of its national identity. It is when foreign policy and national identity are seen to de-align and contradict that difficulties can emerge for a state and its leadership (e.g. Holland 2012b). Consider, for instance, accusations of American torture,

which appear to work against a long-established identity of benevolence and a crusading Wilsonian desire to protect and promote human rights. Opposition was vocal, at home and especially abroad.

During the War on Terror, the construction of identity within foreign policy, as well as foreign policy's reliance upon the construction of particular identities, has been a remarkably central feature of international relations. While foreign policy is always about the national identity and national identity is always influenced and constituted by foreign policy, the War on Terror was unusual in the centrality of foreign policy discourse and appeals to particularly strong constructions of national identity. Analyses of the Manichean binaries that have underpinned much American foreign policy after 9/11 pay testament to this fact (e.g. Coleman 2003). Here, the important point to note is that the identity of the state is always and inevitably constructed vis-à-vis (the) Other(s). As Rob Walker (1993) has shown, the identity of the inside is reliant upon and often defined in opposition to that of the outside. Self and Other relate directly to each other, frequently but not always in juxtaposition.

This binary process of identity formation through foreign policy is perhaps most explicitly recorded in the work of Jacques Derrida, who urged its deconstruction. For Derrida (1997) and many contemporary Derridean analysts (e.g. Bulley 2008), Self and Other are formed in diametric opposition; as the Self constructs its Other the Self in turn comes to be the Other's antithesis. This particular understanding of the role of identity is useful as a starting point for the analysis of foreign policy discourse, but does not necessarily give us a complete picture of

the nuanced empirical reality of identity formation. Suggesting that identity forms antithetically, through a fullness, in contrast to its complete and total lack, is problematic when considering the spectral nature of contemporary national identities. Analysts of EU foreign policy have made this point effectively, as it is possible to witness a 'fading gradation' of Europeanness, away from a total core, to a more partial periphery, that is not fully European but neither comprises its total opposite (e.g. Waever 1993; Diez 2007). This is certainly also true of coalitions, such as during the Cold War and also the War on Terror.

During the War on Terror, the Coalition of the Willing was both united in certain appeals to mutual values, but divided in the diversity of national identities that comprised it. These self-understandings were embedded in long histories of foreign policy and the distinct cultural composition of Coalition states. The events of September 11th 2001 did not wholly wipe the slate clean; rather, the foreign policies of the War on Terror were built upon the foundations of what had gone before in the US, UK and Australia. Appeals to national identity and constructions of Otherness were conditioned by widely accepted, pre-existing understandings of self-identity in respective states. This fractured coalition self – comprising the distinct national identities of America, Britain and Australia – inevitably therefore articulated and constituted a fractured enemy Other. Each state emphasized different themes and qualities in the enemy that worked in harmony with particular and divergent understandings of the national Self.

One Self, One Other?

The Coalition of the Willing during the War on Terror comprised principally of three states – America, Britain and Australia – which spearheaded interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, in terms of troop numbers and dates of deployment.¹ All three state leaders – George W. Bush, Tony Blair and John Howard – were required to justify these interventions to both international and domestic audiences. They converged around a number of narratives and found common ground in several mutual appeals to a Coalition identity, which counterposed important shared constructions of their enemy Other. Often, however, even within mutual appeals to constructions of Otherness, differing slants and degrees of emphasis were evident between coalition states. Here, seven of the most important points of convergence are discussed.

First, all three states made mutual appeals to the notion of a ‘barbaric’ enemy within their respective foreign policy discourses. This began in the United States, with Bush (2001a,b) hailing the ‘civilized world’, which he argued denounced the ‘barbaric’ new enemy. On the eve of Operation Enduring Freedom, Bush (2001c) painted the civilized-barbaric dichotomy in stark terms, with severe political and military consequences:

‘The United States is presenting a clear choice to every nation: Stand with the civilized world, or stand with the terrorists. And for those nations that stand with the terrorists, there will be a heavy price’.

¹ For instance, the Polish contribution to intervention in Iraq, at less than two hundred troops, was ten times smaller than that of Australia, which in turn was over twenty times smaller than that of the UK, and which in turn was about one fifth that of the US. And, in Iraq and Afghanistan, American, British and Australian forces were committed from the early stages of intervention.

He insisted, in dramatic terms, that faced with these ‘uncivilized acts’, the ‘civilized world’ must unite, because this was indeed a ‘war for civilization’ (Bush 2001d, e). Gradually, this theme became increasingly existential and fundamental, as, rather than justifying a single intervention, it was used to underpin a global war effort. Bush (2001f) argued that ‘no civilized nation’ was secure in a ‘world threatened by terror’. And when faced with the insecurity of this threat, ‘every civilized nation’ would ultimately resolve to ‘keep the most basic commitment of civilization’ (Bush 2001g).

In the United Kingdom and Australia, barbarism was also a key early feature of coalition language, as Blair and Howard set about constructing the identity of the enemy. In Britain, Blair (2001a) recurrently portrayed a particular slant on ‘barbarism’, speaking of Al Qaeda as wearing ‘the badge of the fanatic’:

‘Our beliefs are the very opposite of the fanatics. We believe in reason, democracy and tolerance.

These beliefs are the foundation of our civilised world. They are enduring, they have served us well and as history has shown we have been prepared to fight, when necessary to defend them. But the fanatics should know: we hold these beliefs every bit as strongly as they hold theirs’.

This subtle difference, as Blair stressed the *fanaticism* of the enemy, is already testament to different understandings of British and American Selves. British national identity, premised on rationality, required the Other to lack the ability to think and act logically. Mired in ideology, Blair’s portrayals were centered on terrorist irrationality, in contrast to Bush’s appeals to illegitimate violence and Howard’s arguments about barbaric brutality.

The second key point of convergence in Coalition constructions of the Other centered on the notion of cowardice. After 9/11, all three coalition state leaders made repeated reference to the 'cowardly' nature of the enemy Other.

'We're facing people who hit and run. They hide in caves. We'll get them out' (Bush 2001b).

'[The events of 9/11 were] just about the most cowardly, despicable, low-life way of attacking a country imaginable' (Howard 2001a).

'[We face] an enemy hiding in dark corners of the world' (Howard 2001b).

Again, however, despite converging around this particular theme, all three states made use of it in slightly different ways with diverging degrees of emphasis. In the US, cowardice was contrasted with American bravery. Repeatedly, the actions of American heroes aboard Flight United 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania, were juxtaposed to the cowardly decision to strike and hide, hit and run, and cower in caves. The juxtaposition of the evil enemy and the good American is a theme to which we return the following section, since it frequently made use of appeals to American exceptionalism, which were not shared in other coalition states. In the United Kingdom, rather than the bravery and heroism that typified the American response, it was leadership that was offered in opposition to cowardice. In direct opposition to portrayals of the enemy, Blair insisted that the United Kingdom had never been 'a nation to hide at the back' (Blair 2003). The unusual degree of emphasis was afforded to narratives of courageous British leadership play testament to the unique geopolitical position of the UK and the cultural predisposition to welcome illusions of continued significance on the world stage. Lastly, it is worth noting that in Australia

cowardice also featured, but was a less frequent refrain for John Howard than his coalition allies, perhaps due to the decreased need for Australians to assert the strength of their nation in international affairs. Unlike the US and UK, Australia does not share a history of global leadership. Cowardice, therefore, is less politically useful in constructions of the enemy Other, due to the greater acceptance of a middle power status, into which Australia seems to have grown naturally in recent decades. Challenges to superpower status and resisting imperial decline bring very different political and discursive priorities.

On the third point of convergence, Bush, Blair and Howard all attempted and relied upon a systematic dehumanization of the enemy Other. Again, this occurred in the run up to intervention in both Afghanistan and Iraq, but was particularly accentuated in the early stages of the War on Terror, as leaders explained the nature of the terrorist threat to their respective domestic publics. Bush (2001h) spoke of 'starving' terrorists out as they 'burrowed deeper into caves'. While Blair and Howard both made reference to the 'scourge' of international terrorism. However, in contrast to Bush's recurrent framing of the enemy in animalistic and parasitic terms, Blair spoke repeatedly of the 'machinery' of terrorism and Howard its 'monstrosity' (see also Devetak 2005). Whereas Bush (2002a) spoke of the need to 'eliminate the terrorist parasites', Blair (2001e) spoke of the need to defeat 'the machinery of terrorism'. Despite these different slants, both appeals lessened associations of human qualities with the enemy, making a policy of militaristic intervention more likely and arguments in favor of diplomatic engagement difficult to sustain.

The fourth and fifth mutual themes of coalition foreign policy after 9/11 saw the construction of the enemy Other as pure evil, motivated by their Absolute Evilness (Toal 2003). It is perhaps this particular discursive theme of foreign policy during the War on Terror that has received the most widespread and sustained academic analysis to date. Coleman (2003), for example, has analyzed the impact that appeals to evil have had in terms of the possibility of counter-terrorism, while Jackson (2005b) has gone further still, making explicit the links between language and torture. Such language was most accentuated in the United States, where the largest audience existed for the resonance of these particular framings (Holland 2012b). However, in the United Kingdom, Blair was also able to use the language of evil to great effect, employing bold rhetorical contrasts to create space for grandiose posturing in a quest to defeat it. Charteris-Black (2005) has noted this strategy and Blair's associated proclivity for 'conviction rhetoric'. Reading his analysis here, in light of variations within the Coalition, shows how particular constructions of Otherness, such as appeals to evil, which were shared by Coalition states, ultimately fed into different and divergent constructions of Otherness, such as a lack of morality (in the US) and fanaticism (in the UK). Moreover, this example shows the inseparability of constructions of the Self and Other, as appeals to evil are pursued in broadly harmonious but notably distinct ways, depending on the cultural context of individual states and the particular national identity, which foreign policy is both simultaneously embedded within and constitutive of.

Sixth and seventh, the Coalition made mutual appeals to the notion that the enemy supported and promoted a perversion of Islam, rather than its true

reading, and that the rest of the world stood unified in opposition to such a perversion. The former effectively enabled a dividing line to be drawn between good and bad Muslims (Mamdani 2001), facilitating the claim that this was not a war against Islam and nor were all Muslims culpable.

‘Those were people who have no compassion for their fellow human beings. People prepared to kill innocent men, women and children. People prepared to kill indiscriminately, including killing many Muslims.

The perpetrators of those attacks in America contravened all the tenets of Islam’ (Blair 2001d).

The latter presented a united front and facilitated the argument that the Coalition represented the views of a unified and correct majority; it granted a basis on which to develop a significant claim of legitimacy. However, unity took on slightly different slants on either side of the Atlantic, as Bush emphasized the national motto – ‘Y Pluribus Unum’ (‘out of many, one’) – and American unity, in contrast to Blair’s appeals to international unity, founded on the emerging and solidifying doctrine of international community, of which he had spoken in Chicago in 1999. Here again we see mutual appeals for political reasons, pursued in slightly different ways due to the divergent national identities and cultures of Coalition states. Clearly, appeals to unity served a useful legitimizing function, enabling political leaders to claim to speak for a wide national and international community. However, the need to reassure the nation, combined with the insular tendencies of some parts of the United States, ensured that Bush spoke foremost of a domestic unity, whereas Blair’s foreign policy discourse was located within the political project he had pursued since 1999.

The above analysis shows that the Coalition converged around each of these seven themes, despite subtle differences remaining evident. And in each instance, it is possible to understand this convergence based around a combination of political necessity and pre-existing understandings of the national identity in each state, as well as understandings of the wider international community. First and foremost, however, convergence served a political function: helping to make policy conceivable on the world stage (Holland 2012b). Where the Coalition rallied around mutual framings, there was nearly always a political logic at work, whereby shared constructions made preferred policy thinkable and even necessary. Together the shared framings discussed here helped to construct a benevolent, unified coalition, in opposition to an evil, less-than-human enemy, with whom no negotiation was possible. Such shared constructions helped to render military intervention logical and necessary. In the following section, we pick up on the subtle differences in emphasis that were already evident and the distinct slants placed on shared arguments in order to explore important and accentuated appeals to divergent themes, which were informed by the unique contexts and identities of individual Coalition states.

The Fractured Self and the Elusive Essence of Evil

American Constructions of Otherness: Evil Outlaws

Despite the relatively high degree of convergence that the Coalition pursued in the construction of the Other around themes such as barbarism, cowardice and dehumanization, important divergences were also evident. These differences were essential to constructing a resonant foreign policy in the distinct domestic contexts of Coalition states, helping to legitimize and sustain the interventions of the War on Terror. They also had important implications for the type of policy that could reasonably be adopted and the scope of the policy field within which practitioners and politicians could maneuver. First, in the United States the mutually pursued construction of the Other as both being and motivated by a pure form of evil took on a noteworthy distinction from Coalition counterparts.

As the above analysis showed, American appeals to evil were often juxtaposed to claims of American heroism. This heroism included the actions of those on Flight United 93, but also the work of firefighters in the aftermath of 9/11, as well as health workers. And later, Bush frequently contrasted the heroism of the American armed forces with the evil of America's enemies. The narrower narrative of heroism in fact comprised part of a far broader understanding of American exceptionalism, which has a long history in American politics, culture and foreign policy. According to the 'myth' of American exceptionalism, which has been evident since the late eighteenth century (McCrisken 2003), the United States stands alone and isolated, unique and superior, unmarred by the degradations of the Old World and lesser nations. In this understanding, the United States possesses a virginal purity of goodness; America is kindly protected by two great oceans from the corruption that plagues older states (Gaddis 2004). According to the myth, the United States is the ultimate bastion

and defender of freedom; in her we see God's ultimate vision for the freedom of all mankind. It is against this cultural backdrop of self-identification and self-understanding that we must locate the binary construction of America's enemies as *pure evil*.

Devoid of these particular self-understandings, British and American constructions of the enemy Other as evil lacked the zeal of American counterparts. Part of this zeal was certainly religious – Bush for example turned to Psalm 23 on the evening of September 11th 2001 as he sought to comfort Americans – but it was also a fundamentally cultural construction, which fitted with the domestic American context. This was a context in which Americans believed they were 'untouched and untouchable' (see Holland 2009). Standing alone at the end of the Cold War, Americans understood that they had vanquished the Evil Empire to remain as the world's sole superpower. The events of 9/11 were framed by the Bush Administration as the unexpected and unforeseeable return of evil into the heart of American life. Within American political culture, infused with notions of exceptionalism and unparalleled goodness, appeals to Manichean binaries were exacerbated and accentuated. The War on Terror quickly and readily took on biblical tones and proportions. It was rapidly spoken of as a battle of good and evil, pure positive battling pure negative, and ultimately love versus hate. As well as embedding foreign policy with this particular cultural terrain, such appeals also served to construct and reinforce these themes and the identity to which they were linked.

The second distinct theme of American constructions of the Other revolved around another peculiarly American political and cultural condition. On leaving office, Bush would later lament his use of terms such as 'Dead or Alive', but in September of 2001, appeals to the mythology of the Old Wild West were plentiful and important (West and Carey 2006). Bush spoke of reining in terrorists, calling their hand and reining them in, as they were smoked out of their caves. Within this discourse, whether they were captured or killed did not really matter: 'whether we bring our enemies to justice, or justice to our enemies, justice will be done' (Bush 2001i). This disregard of terrorist life, through its literal and explicit out-lawing, was a logical political consequence of applying a discourse of frontier justice to the War on Terror. Having broken the law, Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney each spoke in accentuated western terms about the lack of a need to apply due legal process to enemies on the battlefield and detainees in captivity. It was at Guantanamo Bay, established in January 2002, that this language most obviously received concrete, physical realization. However, it is also possible to trace the conditions of possibility – the background ideas and identities – within which abuse and torture can occur to these initial, folksy and populist appeals to widely understood narratives of 'frontier justice' (Holland 2012a, b; Jackson 2005b; West and Carey 2006).

In the accentuated appeals and reliance on the marker of 'evil' to denote and explain the enemy, as well as the recurrent trope of frontier justice to construct an out-lawed Other, American foreign policy discourse was unique and divergent from that of Coalition allies. Both themes 'worked' in an American domestic political and cultural context that was predisposed to hearing them; they

resonated with and reproduced key features of American identity. And both themes served important political functions, making particular policies possible, whilst closing down the possibility of alternatives. Appeasing evil, negotiating with those motivated by an unyielding hatred and talking up the need to recognize the human rights of the Other were all made extremely challenging by American foreign policy discourse, which not only resonated but also dominated. Those wary of the Administration's policies were acquiesced, coerced and silenced by the rhetorical force of official language, which stacked the deck in the favor of the Bush Administration's arguments and policies (Holland 2012a, b; Krebs and Lobasz 2007).

British Constructions of Otherness: Irrational and Undemocratic

As in the United States, at least two peculiarly British framings of the terrorist threat were evident after 9/11. While the United Kingdom shared in Australian and especially American appeals to civilization and barbarism, British foreign policy took on two distinct and divergent slants in making these appeals. First, British foreign policy discourse after 9/11 was unique in the degree of emphasis it placed on democracy as a key marker of the Self and its concomitant lack in the Other. And, second, British foreign policy diverged from Coalition allies in the emphasis that was placed on rationality in the Self and irrationality in the Other. Only three days after 9/11, these themes were already being used together in Blair's (2001a) mutual construction of Self and Other:

‘And of course it is difficult. We are democratic. They are not. We have respect for human life. They do not. We hold essentially liberal values. They do not. As we look into these issues it is important that we never lose sight of our basic values. But we have to understand the nature of the enemy and act accordingly.

The people perpetrating it wear the ultimate badge of the fanatic: they are prepared to commit suicide in pursuit of their beliefs.

Our beliefs are the very opposite of the fanatics. We believe in reason, democracy and tolerance.

These beliefs are the foundation of our civilised world. They are enduring, they have served us well and as history has shown we have been prepared to fight, when necessary to defend them. But the fanatics should know: we hold these beliefs every bit as strongly as they hold theirs’.

On the first theme – democracy – Blair (2001c) repeatedly made reference to the blatant fact of British and Coalition adherence to democratic values and principles.

‘Look for a moment at the Taliban regime. It is undemocratic. That goes without saying’

It was an appeal that would serve Blair well throughout the War on Terror, as it had before 9/11, and was continued as the terror threat was translated from Afghanistan to Iraq. Blair (2002a) identified Saddam Hussein’s Iraq as a threat precisely because of its lack of democratic values. Within British foreign policy discourse therefore, a lack of adherence to democracy and ‘democratic values’, was precisely that marker which characterized the Other, but also that marker

that denoted the Other as threatening. Indeed, within British foreign policy discourse, more than pure evil, the aims of the Other were defined by democracy itself and a desire to destroy democratic values:

‘What the terrorist wants to do is to gain their way, not by reasoned argument or by democracy, but by terror. They hope to literally, not just by the act of terror but by the consequences of it, create such a conflagration that they get their way...

‘[Saddam Hussein is] a clear threat because [he] operate[s] without any sense of democratic values’ (Blair 2002a).

Within this portrayal, the Other – whether terrorist or dictator – was characterized by a lack of democracy, as being motivated by a hatred of democracy and as threatening democracy. With democracy as a core component of the British Self, these constructions had important policy implications, which Blair (2002b) spelt out for the public:

‘...when you are dealing, not with another democracy, but when you are dealing with a dictatorship, they don’t really understand diplomacy unless they think force is backing it up. Kofi Annan was making this point the other day, diplomacy not backed by force when dealing with a dictator is not merely useless, it is often counter-productive. They have to know that force will be used and that we are prepared to do that’.

Force then – military intervention – was presented and rendered a logical policy response against the backdrop of the construction of the Other as lacking democratic values, in direct contrast to the democratic British Self.

Tied to this exaggerated emphasis on democracy, British foreign policy after 9/11 was also noteworthy for its repeated appeals to the notion of British rationality and, again, its concomitant lack in Britain's enemies. At its heart, this argument, like that of appeals to democracy, was about the construction of a particular British national identity, which was both democratic and rational. Blair presented one as flowing naturally into the defense of the other:

'it is in our nature to be reasonable, to proceed very cautiously and carefully ... I think that we can proceed in a sensible way ... this is a time for cool heads, for calm nerves' (Blair 2001e).

'I very much would want those measures to be part of a process that means that we are defending the basic rights and freedoms and those freedoms are essential to our democracy' (Blair 2001b).

Throughout the run up to intervention in both Afghanistan and Iraq, Blair repeatedly revisited the need for the Coalition response to be sensible, logical and appropriate, with conflict conducted properly. Blair (2001f), for instance, went out of his way to talk up the 'careful, measured' nature of British and Coalition foreign policy. This was, simultaneously, a construction of the rational, careful and measured British Self, in direct opposition to the spectacular destruction of 9/11 and unwarranted, incalculable atrocities of the Ba'ath Party. Through combined appeals to democracy and rationality, Blair constructed the British Self and enemy Other as antithetical:

'I hope people when they look at Saddam Hussein realize that that is someone who represents the very antithesis of all the values that we stand for' (Blair 2002a).

Australian Constructions of Otherness: Hateful and Divided

Australian constructions of the Other also followed the logic of national identity and its cultural foundations. However, one unusual feature in Australian foreign policy after 9/11 did lack clues in the pre 9/11 political landscape. After 9/11, one of the most striking features of Australian foreign policy discourse was the intensity of John Howard's emotional appeals (Gleeson 2001). Howard was in Washington D.C. on September 11th 2001 and watched the smoke rise from the Pentagon out of his hotel window (DeBats et al 2007; Holland 2009). His first press conference remarks were dripping with heartfelt sympathy for Americans:

‘...the only other thing I can say to you is really on behalf of all the Australians here is to say to our American friends who we love and admire so much, we really feel for you ... we feel for our American friends ... [they have] been hurt by today's events ... like everybody else. I'm numb ... I'm unashamedly distressed as a human being about what is happening. It's just awful. And I feel so deeply for the Americans’ (Howard 2001a).

This emotional intensity was retained in the days and weeks to come. It served two important functions. First, it was used to naturalize the offer of military support for the United States in ‘anything’ they might choose by way of response. This promise came as Howard presented an emotional solidarity as flowing quite normally into the offer of practical support. He also, slowly, evolved the nature of Australian emotional solidarity from a ‘sympathy’ for American loss to

'empathy' with Americans as shared US-Australian values were presented as having come under attack (Holland 2012a,b; Holland and McDonald 2009). And, second, Howard's emotional language, such as repeated talk of love for Americans, helped to construct an especially hate-filled enemy, whom it was difficult to comprehend, let alone engage in dialogue. This was a theme that would remain throughout the War on Terror, as one year on Howard recalled the 'tears', 'compassion' and 'heartache' that defined the constructed experience of 9/11 for Australian and Americans alike (Howard 2002a).

The second divergent theme of Australian foreign policy discourse after 9/11 fed directly out of a mutual appeal to Coalition unity but was inevitable colored and conditioned by a longstanding element of the national identity, which is deeply embedded in Australian culture. Mateship is an enduring feature of Australian popular and political culture. During the War on Terror, John Howard frequently revisited narratives of mateship to naturalize Australian participation in the Coalition of the Willing (e.g. Dyrenfurth 2007; Holland and McDonald 2009). The camaraderie and commitment that the narrative presupposes of fellow Australians was enlarged to the level of the international coalition. And, again, a lack of mateship and a desire to end the values of mateship, were seen to define the enemy Other:

'[This is] a time in responding to it to understand that we have to hang onto those values which the terrorists themselves would seek to tear down ...

we must extend the hand of friendship and the hand of Australian mateship' (Howard 2001c).

Appeals to mateship tied in explicitly with the broader Coalition constructions of a united international community and an enemy, itself fractured, that sought to divide Australians:

‘The things that unite us as Australians are infinitely greater and more enduring than the things that divide us. And the things that unite us, tolerance, fair play, call it, in the Australian vernacular, mateship’ (Howard 2001d).

Howard was clear in spelling out what this meant for fighting the War on Terror with coalition allies he sought to keep close to Australia. Speaking in the United States, Howard delivered an intensely personal speech, which recounted his own family’s and the nation’s histories, before reaching a logical climax of ‘mateship’:

‘Most of all, we value loyalty given and loyalty gained. The concept of mateship runs deeply through the Australian character. We cherish and where necessary we will fight to defend the liberties we hold dear’ (Howard 2002b).

Within the context of Australian dependence upon American military security, this was a particularly useful political narrative and national identity to promote. It served to construct a particular image of the enemy Other, with a distinct emphasis on their desire to divide as well as destroy the values of Australia and her allies.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that foreign policy is a discursive enterprise; language and identity are integral components of how a state conducts itself in international relations. Two important points can be gleaned from this analysis.

First, this chapter delivers an empirical confirmation of anti-essentialist arguments. Foreign policy should not be formulated on the basis of the inherent nature of the Other, as that nature remains elusive. It is not true that the Others of the War on Terror were essentially evil, but rather this 'reality' of evilness came to be constructed through foreign policy discourse. We can see the elusive nature of identity in the varying appeals that were evident in different Coalition states as they sought to construct an Other that opposed their own understandings of respective national Selves. At times these variations were a matter of differing emphases, but in other moments wholly distinct constructions were pursued to explain and justify the War on Terror to domestic audiences. The fact that the enemy Other meant different things within a political community as close as the Coalition of the Willing serves as further proof that identity is constructed, incomplete and contestable. The chapter has shown that the identity of enemies in the War on Terror could be fixed; the notion of an essential evilness of the enemy Other ultimately proved elusive for Coalition states that pursued divergent framings. Despite concurring on the evil nature of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, the nature and key features of that evilness varied within the Coalition of the Willing. In turn, these variations served important political demands in terms of justifying intervention by creating a resonant foreign policy at home. They also however posed important policy implications for the conduct of the War on Terror, as different

identities supposed distinct aims, which required a particular array of policy measures in order to combat them.

Second, this chapter has developed a theoretical argument that builds on the work of constructivist and poststructural scholars in International Relations, as well as those working in the borders of Geography and IR in Critical Geopolitics. Laclau and Mouffe (2001) in particular, as well as those who have made use of their work such as Hansen (2007), have developed important theoretical arguments on identity formation and the language of foreign policy that are reinforced by the findings presented here. For Laclau and Mouffe, as well as Hansen, rather than pure binary opposition, identity formation occurs through a process of linking and differentiation. Identities comprise of a number of features and themes that will broadly support and complement each other, such as democracy, rationality and brave leadership in the case of Blair's Britain at the outset of the War on Terror (Holland 2012c). These features of identity only make sense however in opposition to what they are not. Thus the enemy Other becomes defined by the lack of these values, their opposites and as potentially threatening those values. This was the case in the War on Terror. Within the Coalition of the Willing we can see how key features of an American, British and Australian Self were brought together through appeals to construct a Coalition Self, but at times distinct understandings of national identity came to the fore. These were inevitably accompanied by broadly complementary but distinct and divergent constructions of the enemy Other. And these constructions had important political implications, both in terms of selling and fighting the War on Terror.

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