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U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM NARRATIVE: A WAY FORWARD

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM NARRATIVE:
**A WAY FORWARD**

by

Madeline T. Kristoff

March 2019

Co-Advisors: David W. Brannan (contractor)
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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

While there seems to be widespread agreement that the U.S. counterterrorism narrative is failing, there is little empirical evidence for what the U.S. counter-narrative strategy since 9/11 has been, nor is there an analytical framework for measuring its success or failure. This thesis investigates the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy in the post-9/11 period (2001 through 2016), and develops an effective U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy. Content analysis of 75 U.S. presidential speeches and 50 U.S. Department of State Twitter postings, and a measurement of U.S. performative power between 2001 and 2016, demonstrates that only the narrative speech factor of promoting commonality has a negative correlation with terrorist attacks in the United States. More messages that promote commonality correlates to decreased terrorist attacks. To understand when to use this messaging, the social identity analytical method was applied to a U.S. presidential speech and an Islamic State leader's speech and demonstrates that the U.S. government lacks comprehension of social in-group identification nuances. To target messaging effectively, the framework should be applied on a consistent basis, promoting commonality in narratives within a larger comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

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U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM NARRATIVE: A WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT

While there seems to be widespread agreement that the U.S. counterterrorism narrative is failing, there is little empirical evidence for what the U.S. counter-narrative strategy since 9/11 has been, nor is there an analytical framework for measuring its success or failure. This thesis investigates the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy in the post-9/11 period (2001 through 2016), and develops an effective U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy. Content analysis of 75 U.S. presidential speeches and 50 U.S. Department of State Twitter postings, and a measurement of U.S. performative power between 2001 and 2016, demonstrates that only the narrative speech factor of promoting commonality has a negative correlation with terrorist attacks in the United States. More messages that promote commonality correlates to decreased terrorist attacks. To understand when to use this messaging, the social identity analytical method was applied to a U.S. presidential speech and an Islamic State leader's speech and demonstrates that the U.S. government lacks comprehension of social in-group identification nuances. To target messaging effectively, the framework should be applied on a consistent basis, promoting commonality in narratives within a larger comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CVE	countering violent extremism
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOS	Department of State
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
ODNI	Office of the Director of National Intelligence
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While it seems to be widely agreed upon that the U.S. counterterrorism narrative is failing, little empirical evidence is available describing the U.S. counter-narrative strategy since 9/11 or an analytical framework for measuring its success or failure.[1] This research is designed to contribute toward filling that gap by investigating the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy between 2001 and 2016 and developing an effective U.S. government counterterrorism narrative strategy for the future. This thesis creates a framework for measuring the American government's post-9/11 counterterrorism narrative in the period 2001 and 2016 by using four methods: content analysis of U.S. presidential speeches, content analysis of U.S. Department of State (DOS) Twitter postings, an assessment of overall U.S. counterterrorism strategies, called performative power, and applying the social identity analytical method to two speeches delivered in November 2016.

First, this thesis analyzes a sample of 75 speeches given by U.S. presidents overseas and directed at a foreign audience between 2001 and 2016. In addition, this thesis analyzes 50 randomly selected tweets produced by the DOS "ThinkAgain_DOS" Twitter account posted between 2014 and 2016. Words and phrases from each speech and tweet are coded into one of four categories: countering perceptions, undermining adversarial leadership, positive vision, or promoting commonality. Each category is then given a weighted index score based upon the number of times words or phrases from that category are found in each speech or tweet. These weighted index scores are then averaged out by year and plotted against the number of terrorist attacks in the United States during that same year.

Next, the thesis analyzes the performative power of the U.S. counterterrorism policy between 2001 and 2016. The performative power of counterterrorism strategy

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[1] Joseph I. Lieberman, *Ticking Time Bomb: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from the U.S. Government's Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack* (Collingdale, PA: Diane Publishing, 2011), 25; William D. Casebeer and James A. Russell, "Storytelling and Terrorism: Towards a Comprehensive 'Counter-Narrative Strategy,'" *Strategic Insights* 4, no. 3 (March 2005): 4.

aims to measure the "social visibility" of counterterrorism measures to establish a correlation between the amount of "social drama generated" and terrorist attacks.[2] Once the performative power of counterterrorism policy is determined per year, that data is plotted against terrorist attacks in the United States during the same year to find a correlation using a regression analysis statistical model.

Lastly, this thesis applies the social identity analytical method to assess two speeches (one delivered by a U.S. president and one delivered by an Islamic State leader) qualitatively within an overall social context. The social identity theory framework demonstrates how and when groups change, how a group is impacted by changes in communication, and how a group's socially constructed identity may allow a group to change from terrorist tactics to non-violent political activity.[3]

Any recommendations for an improved U.S. strategy on counterterrorism narratives must be grounded in lessons learned from the U.S. narrative from 2001 through 2016. After conducting a content analysis, this thesis determined that the only speech factor with a strong statistical correlation to terrorist attacks in the United States during the same year was promoting commonality. When U.S. presidential speeches included more messages that cultivate commonality with foreign audiences, terrorist attacks in the United States in that year decreased. Although not a causal measurement, this simple statistical model demonstrates a negative relationship between these two variables. Using the social identity analytical method framework illustrates that appropriated in-group identifications continue to make a difference between terrorist groups, governments, and religious identifications more broadly, and that the U.S. government has failed to understand these nuances or to react correctly to the broader terrorist landscape.

To implement these recommendations, an interagency counterterrorism office would be best established under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The

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[2] Beatrice de Graaf, *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance: A Comparative Study* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 124.

[3] David Brannan, Kristen Darken, and Anders Strindberg, *Practitioner's Way Forward: Terrorism Analysis* (Salinas, CA: Agile Press, 2014), 63.

DHS is responsible for a variety of programs and activities abroad and domestically to counter terrorist groups and their activities. To develop a comprehensive counterterrorism narrative strategy, a collaborative, interagency counterterrorism office is best placed within the DHS. Analysts in this office would be responsible for integrating ongoing social identity analytical method analysis in all areas of social groups and movements worldwide and domestically, as well as keeping track of opportune moments for targeting narratives. This counterterrorism office would also maintain metrics on the entire U.S. government performative power on a regular basis. While this thesis only studied presidential speeches, other political leaders make legislation and deliver speeches that explain counterterrorism policies. The interagency counterterrorism office must incorporate the development of counterterrorism narrative strategy for all those who speak on behalf of the U.S. government.

U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy from the post-9/11 period from 2001 to 2016 has proved largely ineffective. Content analysis of 75 U.S. presidential speeches, 50 DOS Twitter postings, and the measurement of U.S. performative power demonstrated that only the narrative factor of promoting commonality has a negative correlation with terrorist attacks. More messages promoting commonality correlates to decreased terrorist attacks. To fully understand when to use this messaging more often, the social identity analytical method demonstrated that the U.S. government has lacked comprehension of social in-group identification nuances or how to react appropriately to the larger terrorist social context. To target messaging effectively, the framework should be applied on a consistent basis, to target narrative messages that promote commonality within a larger comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

Just as terrorism takes a narrative form, so, too, does counterterrorism strategy, which frames the context for fighting terrorist ideology. Professor Beatrice de Graaf, chair of the Utrecht University History of International Relations Section, defines counterterrorism as "a way of communicating to the audience what society should look like, what constitutes a collective threat, what actions are considered legal, and what is defined alien and hostile."[1] In other words, governments create a social contract around counterterrorism by identifying what is threatened, the source of the threat, and how far the authorities can or should attempt to counter it. Because counterterrorism adopts a narrative, terrorists receive, interpret, and alter such messages to promote their own narratives. Terrorist groups and governments alike attempt to influence audiences to combat the others' narrative and achieve their own goals.[2]

Governments often frame the problem of terrorism in multiple ways: a criminal problem, a social issue, an emergency management concern, a threat to national security or to democracy itself, or warfare.[3] The ultimate objective of fighting terrorism is less clear. Governments should question whether the goal of counterterrorism is to erase *our* fear of terrorism or to win *their* hearts and minds.[4] If the American public believes that the Islamic State has maintained its power and prestige, despite the U.S. military killing or detention of many of its terrorists and restriction of its territory in Syria and Iraq, it is difficult to argue that U.S. counterterrorism has been successful.[5] Freese postulates that a government's decisions on counterterrorism are largely influenced by public opinion.[6]

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[1] Beatrice de Graaf, *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance: A Comparative Study* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 13.

[2] James J. F. Forest, ed., *Influence Warfare: How Terrorists and Governments Fight to Shape Perceptions in a War of Ideas* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2009), 1.

[3] Ronald D. Crelinsten, "The Discourse and Practice of Counter-terrorism in Liberal Democracies," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 44, no. 1 (1998): 389–390.

[4] Beatrice de Graaf and Bob de Graaff, "Bringing Politics Back In: The Introduction of the 'Performative Power' of Counterterrorism," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 3, no. 2 (August 13, 2010): 263.

[5] Beatrice de Graaf and Bob de Graaff, 265.

[6] Rebecca Freese, "Evidence-Based Counterterrorism or Flying Blind? How to Understand and Achieve What Works," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 1 (2014): 48.

Furthermore, governments struggle to gather public support for strategies to prevent an attack that has not yet happened and about which the community is not concerned.[7] Even without an actual decline in terrorist violence, de Graaf notes, "counterterrorism disappears off the public and political agenda by the rise of new social crises, a change of government, or a decline in the shock value caused by terrorist actions."[8] Due to the impact public opinion has on developing counterterrorism strategies, mobilizing public support is essential. The United States should increase its focus on the process of countering terrorism and on the narratives it produces. This hypothesis is tested in this thesis.

The mutual counterterrorism efforts of American intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and the military on the battlefield have downgraded terrorist leadership, disturbed terrorist financing, and foiled terrorist plots.[9] Notwithstanding its military and intelligence accomplishments, the United States has not shown the capacity to counter the ideology underlying terrorism. Having spent an enormous amount of money on counternarratives and fighting radicalization since 9/11, the United States has failed in offering an alternative narrative to reduce the appeal of terrorism.[10]

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) focused Islamic State counternarrative campaigns on the group's violence, with YouTube videos and direct messages on Twitter to pro–Islamic State accounts with a stated goal "that this is actually a squalid, worthless, dirty thing."[11] Counter-messaging campaigns have also attempted to disparage the battlefield by showing hostile settings in Islamic State–controlled territories in Iraq and Syria. Both of these approaches focus on the Islamic State's means of conquest, not the narrative of what its violence aims to achieve.

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[7] Freese, 48.

[8] De Graaf, *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, 7.

[9] Bipartisan Policy Center, *Defeating Terrorists, Not Terrorism: Assessing U.S. Counterterrorism Policy from 9/11 to ISIS* (Washington, DC: Bipartisan Policy Center, September 2017), 5.

[10] Bipartisan Policy Center, 14.

[11] Greg Miller and Scott Higham, "In a Propaganda War against ISIS, the U.S. Tried to Play by the Enemy's Rules," *Washington Post*, May 8, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-secur ity/in-a-propaganda-war-us-tried-to-play-by-the-enemys-rules/2015/05/08/6eb6b732-e52f-11e4-81ea-0649 268f729e_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.10328ec89f1b.

Similarly, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy has focused on what causes a specific individual to choose to join a terrorist group or implement a terrorist attack.[12] This strategy assumes that community members or law enforcement can identify common variables in individuals and intervene early in the radicalization process to stop a terrorist attack, which thus shifts the focus onto the recipients of the terrorists' messages, rather than the content of the messages themselves.[13] This approach, however, does not address the larger problem of eroding support for the underlying narrative.

Even after terrorist leaders, including Osama bin Laden, were killed and other terrorists detained, terrorism has continued to threaten Americans and U.S. interests.[14] U.S. counterterrorism efforts, however, have done little to prevent new audiences from joining terrorist groups. Despite estimates that U.S. forces have killed at least 60,000 Islamic State fighters, the U.S. government believes the group had almost as many members in 2017 (15,000) as it did in 2014 (20,000).[15] U.S. counterterrorism policy has focused on preventing terrorist attacks without engaging the ideological narratives that validate and provoke that type of violence.[16]

While it seems widely agreed upon that the U.S. counterterrorism narrative is failing, little empirical evidence is available describing the U.S. counter-narrative

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[12] "Countering Violent Extremism Task Force," Department of Homeland Security, accessed May 25, 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/cve.

[13] Nathan A. Sales, "U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy: Next Steps for the State Department," Council on Foreign Relations, February 5, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/event/us-counterterrorism-strategy-next-steps-state-department.

[14] Bipartisan Policy Center, *Defeating Terrorists*, 6; National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2004), 363.

[15] Christopher Woody, "'We're Being Pretty Darn Prolific'—Top US General Claims 60,000 ISIS Fighters Have Been Killed," *Business Insider*, February 15, 2017, http://www.businessinsider.com/us-claims-to-have-killed-60000-isis-fighters-2017-2; Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 410.

[16] Bipartisan Policy Center, *Defeating Terrorists*, 9.

strategy since 9/11 or an analytical framework for measuring its success or failure.[17] This research is designed to contribute toward filling that gap.

A.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How effective was the U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy in the post-9/11 period (2001–2016)? What is an effective U.S. government counterterrorism narrative?

B.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore what narratives and counter-narratives are, and how to evaluate counterterrorism strategy. First, this literature review examines various definitions of terrorism, and then studies how terrorist groups use narratives. Next, it studies the field of counternarratives, as well as how governments have tried to evaluate counterterrorism strategies in the past. After reviewing the literature, it is determined that the U.S. government has thus far failed to evaluate its counterterrorism strategy effectively, a gap that this thesis attempts to fill.

1.   Terrorism

Various scholars have defined terrorism, but few agree about its causes.[18] The most prevalent definition of terrorism is from the U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations*: "The unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives."[19] Hoffman similarly defines terrorism as a strategy and a tactic "aimed at the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of

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[17] Joseph I. Lieberman, *Ticking Time Bomb: Counter-Terrorism Lessons from the U.S. Government's Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack* (Collingdale, PA: Diane Publishing, 2011), 25; William D. Casebeer and James A. Russell, "Storytelling and Terrorism: Towards a Comprehensive 'Counter-Narrative Strategy,' *Strategic Insights* 4, no. 3 (March 2005): 4.

[18] Alex P. Schmid, *Radicalisation, De-radicalisation, Counter-radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review* (The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counterterrorism, 2013), 15–17; Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 30–34.

[19] "Federal Bureau of Investigations: General Functions," Department of Justice, *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 28 (2010 comp.): 0.85, https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/granule/CFR-2010-title28-vol1/CFR-2010-title28-vol1-sec0-85/content-detail.html.

violence in the pursuit of political change."[20] These two widely accepted definitions describe terrorism as a targeted attempt to provoke fear to reach a political goal, which is how this thesis uses the term.

Terrorist groups advance their strategic objectives using a variety of communication tactics.[21] To define the violence associated with terrorism more clearly, Schmid and de Graaf reason that because acts of terrorism require an element of communication, terrorist violence is distinguishable from routine violence.[22] Jenkins also articulates, "terrorism is theater," which means that terrorist violence is meant not for the victims of the violence but for the audiences watching.[23] Mueller similarly argues that while the direct, damaging effects of terrorism are generally limited, "the creation of insecurity, fear, anxiety and hysteria is central for terrorists."[24] Building on these arguments, Weimann surmises that due to advances in communication technologies, terrorist groups exploit these new opportunities to exert psychological effects on a large scale.[25] Because terrorism is communication and meant to create fear, terrorist groups tailor their narratives to address the audiences of their violence.

Terrorism should be analyzed in terms of propaganda and communication.[26] Crelinsten argues, "Communication is an integral part of the broader context within

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[20] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, 40.

[21] Bruce Hoffman, "Countering Terrorist Use of the Web as a Weapon," *Combating Terrorist Center Sentinel* 1, no. 1 (December 2007): 1. See also Gabriel Weimann, *How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet*, Special Report 116 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2004), 5; Steven R. Corman, "The Narrative Rationality of Violent Extremism," *Social Science Quarterly* 97, no. 1 (March 2016): 17.

[22] Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf, *Violence as Communication: Insurgent Terrorism and the Western News Media* (London: Sage, 1982), 175.

[23] Brian M. Jenkins, *International Terrorism: A New Kind of Warfare* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1974), 4.

[24] John Mueller, "Six Rather Unusual Propositions about Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17, no. 4 (2005): 497.

[25] Gabriel Weimann, "The Psychology of Mass-Mediated Terrorism," *American Behavioral Scientist* 52, no. 69 (2008): 70.

[26] Alex P. Schmid, *Al-Qaeda's "Single Narrative" and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives: The State of Knowledge* (The Hague, Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2014), 1.

which terrorism emerges, waxes and wanes."[27] Forest introduces a concept of influence warfare and argues that battles are happening daily in communication formats, such as online, on radio and television, and in newspapers.[28] This format not only involves explicit strategic communications but also stories and narratives unintentionally created by counterterrorism programs. For example, abuse and prolonged detention at sites, such as Abu Ghraib or the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay, unintentionally created the myth of a grand Crusader conflict against Islam.[29] These stories are effective recruitment tools for terrorist groups.

2. Ideology and Narrative

It is necessary to differentiate the concepts of ideology and narrative. Drake defines ideology as "the beliefs, values, principles, and objectives … by which a group defines its distinctive political identity and aims."[30] Hall likewise defines ideology as a framework for people to "figure out how the social world works, what their place is in it, and what they ought to do."[31] To bring the concept into the terrorism framework, Braddock and Horgan explain that while the ideology of a terrorist group is the set of beliefs and values that define the group's political objectives and steer its members' actions, the process by which those core values are communicated is the narrative.[32] The way in which the group's fundamental beliefs and objectives—the ideology—will be channeled is through the context of the story, the narrative.

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[27] Ronald D. Crelinsten, "Analyzing Terrorism and Counterterrorism: A Communication Model," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14, no. 2 (2002): 110.

[28] Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 2.

[29] Xander Kirke, "Violence and Political Myth: Radicalizing Believers in the Pages of *Inspire* Magazine," *International Political Sociology* 9 (2015): 284. See also Casebeer and Russell, "Storytelling and Terrorism," 11.

[30] C. J. M. Drake, "The Role of Ideology in Terrorists' Target Selection," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10 (1998): 55.

[31] Stuart Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2 (1985): 99.

[32] Kurt Braddock and John Horgan, "Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counternarratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 39, no. 5 (2016): 383.

Though social science scholars have conducted research on narrative for decades, they do not agree on a definition for the term. Abbott asserts, "Narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse . . . and narrative discourse is those events as represented."[33] Alternatively, as a broader understanding of the term, Seeger and Sellnow define narratives as "fundamental processes that humans use to shape meaning, understanding and action."[34] In other words, narratives offer a structure to promote a past, present, and future. Hinyard and Kreuter conceive of narrative as a coherent story that provides context, raises questions, and provides resolution.[35] While these definitions vary, this thesis uses narrative as a representation of a story or events that provides context, meaning, and understanding.

a.   Terrorists' Use of Narratives

Terrorist groups use narratives to persuade people to change their worldview and beliefs to align with theirs. This communication strategy persuades target audiences to adopt beliefs and attitudes, thereby increasing their potential for future involvement in terrorist acts.[36] Though scholars agree that the potential for someone to engage in terrorism increases after exposure to terrorist group narratives, few have evaluated how an individual who chooses to participate in violent activity is influenced by specific terrorist narratives in a quantitative method.[37] Braddock and Horgan assert that radicalization is the process of changing people's beliefs and attitudes, within the context

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[33] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19.

[34] Matthew W. Seeger and Timothy L. Sellnow, *Narratives of Crisis: Telling Stories of Ruin and Renewal* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 17.

[35] Leslie J. Hinyard and Matthew W. Kreuter, "Using Narrative Communication as a Tool for Health Behavior Change: A Conceptual, Theoretical, and Empirical Overview," *Health Education and Behavior* 34, no. 5 (2007): 778.

[36] Jeffry R. Halverson, Harold Lloyd Goodall Jr., and Steven R. Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamic Extremism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 11–12.

[37] Braddock and Horgan, "Towards a Guide," 385. See also Richard Bennett Furlow and Harold Lloyd Goodall Jr., "The War of Ideas and the Battle of Narratives: A Comparison of Extremist Storytelling Structures," *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* 11, no. 3 (2011): 222; Steven R. Corman, "Understanding the Role of Narrative as Extremist Strategic Communication," in *Countering Violent Extremism: Scientific Methods and Strategies*, ed. Laurie Fenstermacher and Todd Leventhal (Dayton, OH: Air Force Research Laboratory, 2011), 41.

of terrorism.[38] Moghaddam argues that radicalization is like a stepladder, a progression of emotional and social change that leads to involvement in acts of terror.[39] On the other hand, McCauley and Mosalenko claim, "It is plausible that radical beliefs inspire radical action, but research has indicated that the connection is weak."[40] It is difficult to generalize how different individuals radicalize, but the power of narrative enhances the process by which terrorist groups change an individual's beliefs.

b.   *Counter-Narratives*

Counter-narratives challenge the ideologies of other narratives and offer alternatives.[41] Arizona State University's Consortium for Strategic Communication explores the importance of macro-level narratives, or systems of stories, to deter terrorist commitment.[42] Others emphasize that neutralizing a terrorist narrative requires multiple counter-narratives.[43] Although Braddock and Dillard do not identify specific features that determine the efficacy of narratives, they show that narratives are persuasive.[44] Furthermore, Moyer-Gusé uses entertainment theory to claim that persuasive narratives increase an audience's perceived similarity with the message and reduce the following:

- the perception that there is pressure for change

- counter-arguing by having trustful and familiar speakers

- the amount of content an audience can choose to avoid

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[38] Braddock and Horgan, "Towards a Guide," 385.

[39] Fathali M. Moghaddam, "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Exploration," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 2 (February–March 2005): 162.

[40] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Understanding Political Radicalization: The Two-Pyramids Model," *American Psychologist* 72, no. 3 (2017): 213.

[41] Braddock and Horgan, "Towards a Guide," 385; Henry Tuck and Tanya Silverman, *The Counter-Narrative Handbook* (London: Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2016), 4.

[42] Steven R. Corman, Angela Tretheway, and Harold Lloyd Goodall, Jr., *Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Strategic Communication to Combat Violent Extremism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 33.

[43] Christian Leuprecht et al., "Winning the Battle but Losing the War? Narrative and Counter-Narrative Strategy," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3, no. 2 (2009): 32.

[44] Kurt Braddock and James P. Dillard, "Meta-Analytic Evidence for the Persuasive Effects of Narratives," *Communication Monographs* 83, no. 4 (2016): 446.

- an audience's perceived invulnerability, or an underestimation of its own risk[45]

Forming a persuasive narrative means promoting identification (how an audience receives and interprets a message), psychological transportation (how narratives affect beliefs), or para-social interactions or relationships (how an audience interacts with and creates a relationship with the messenger) to conceal the narrative's persuasive intent.[46] An effective counterterrorism narrative can be persuasive using these techniques.

3.   Evaluating Counterterrorism Strategies

Scholars seem to agree that evaluating counterterrorism measures and strategies is difficult.[47] Nevertheless, they disagree on what to consider when evaluating counterterrorism strategies. Adams, Nordhaus, and Shellenberger argue that counterterrorism evaluation has focused on the success of all-encompassing government policies and initiatives, such as enhanced interrogations and ethnic profiling, with little attention on evaluating specific counterterrorism programs.[48] Mueller further claims that, as well as measuring objective facts including the number of attacks or victims, measuring the effectiveness of counterterrorism "should focus more on reducing fear and anxiety as inexpensively as possible than on objectively reducing the rather limited dangers terrorism is likely actually to pose."[49] In agreement, the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe notes that evaluating counterterrorism policies should

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[45] Emily Moyer-Gusé, "Toward a Theory of Entertainment Persuasion: Explaining the Persuasive Effects of Entertainment-Education Messages," *Communication Theory* 18, no. 3 (2008): 415.

[46] Jonathan Cohen, "Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences with Media Characters," *Mass Communication and Society* 4, no. 3 (2001): 245; Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic, "Fictionality and Perceived Realism in Experiencing Stories: A Model of Narrative Comprehension and Engagement," *Communication Theory* 18 (2006): 256, 272; Melanie C. Green and Timothy C. Brock, "The Role of Transportation in the Persuasiveness of Public Narratives," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 79, no. 5 (2000)*:* 701; Moyer-Gusé, "Toward a Theory of Entertainment Persuasion," 411.

[47] Cynthia Lum, Leslie W. Kennedy, and Alison Sherley, "Is Counter-Terrorism Policy Evidence Based? What Works, What Harms, and What is Unknown," *Psicothema* 20, no. 1 (2008): 41.

[48] Nick Adams, Ted Nordhaus, and Michael Shellenberger, *Counterterrorism since 9/11: Evaluating the Efficacy of Controversial Tactics* (Oakland, CA: Breakthrough Institute, 2011), 6.

[49] Mueller, "Six Rather Unusual Propositions about Terrorism," 496.

also measure the resilience in society to reject terrorist ideologies.[50] Measuring counterterrorism strategy should include an assessment of the counter-narratives produced and their influence.

De Graaf furthers this research by analyzing the performative power of a range of counterterrorism activities by government officials, as well as applying discourse analysis to find the degree to which governments are able to organize support for policies.[51] De Graaf analyzed the "role of the government in 'marketing' counterterrorism, in constructing social reality, and affecting the social impact of terrorism," and identified 14 factors to evaluate counterterrorism policies.[52] She analyzed those factors against terrorism and deaths from terrorism in the 1970s in the United States, Italy, the Netherlands, and West Germany.[53] De Graaf found that governments should create counterterrorism strategies that counter terrorists' narratives to neutralize and isolate the messages of violence.[54]

As shown in this literature review, the field of counterterrorism narratives is still in development and little is agreed upon how to evaluate strategies or develop effective strategies. This thesis assesses the U.S. counterterrorism narrative in the post 9/11 period through 2016 and makes recommendations for a more effective counterterrorism narrative to use in the future.

C.   RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis creates a framework for measuring the American government's post-9/11 counterterrorism narrative in the period 2001 and 2016 by using four methods: content analysis of U.S. presidential speeches, content analysis of DOS Twitter postings, an assessment of overall U.S. counterterrorism strategies, called performative power, and

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[50] Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community Policing Approach* (Vienna: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2014), 66.

[51] De Graaf , *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, 1, 12.

[52] De Graaf , 18.

[53] De Graaf , I.

[54] De Graaf , 250.

applying the social identity analytical method to two speeches delivered in November 2016.

First, this thesis analyzes a sample of 75 speeches given by U.S. presidents overseas and directed at a foreign audience between 2001 and 2016. This thesis builds on a Naval Postgraduate School thesis, "Message in a Battle: An Analysis of Presidential Communication Since 9/11," in which Maguire analyzed 50 U.S. presidential speeches between 2001 and 2012.[55] Based on the same sample selection criteria, this thesis added 25 speeches given between 2013 and 2016 to analyze. The speeches are chosen based on the availability of the text of the speech on a government website, the geographic location of the speech, and the audience of the speech. The chosen speeches do not include speeches aimed at a domestic audience, such as campaign speeches, inauguration speeches, or State of the Union speeches. The sample focuses on speeches delivered overseas to foreign audiences composed of student or citizen groups. Following Maguire's sample selection criteria, other presidential statements were chosen if delivered "in response to a significant national security event, such as a terrorist attack involving American citizens or interests, or the death of an adversary," like a terrorist leader.[56]

Speeches were located through the Public Papers of the Presidents series published by the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Upon review of the Public Papers volumes and White House websites, 25 speeches and statements were identified between 2013 and 2016 for content analysis, as listed in Appendix A. Appendix B details the content analysis of these 25 U.S. presidential speeches between 2013 and 2016.

In addition, this thesis analyzes 50 randomly selected tweets produced by the DOS "ThinkAgain_DOS" Twitter account posted between 2014 and 2016, which are listed in Appendix C. The content of each speech and tweet were analyzed. Words and phrases from each speech and tweet are coded into one of four categories and adapted

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[55] Jacqueline Maguire, "Message in a Battle: An Analysis of Presidential Communication since 9/11" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013), 19.

[56] Maguire, 20.

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from Maguire's research: countering perceptions, undermining adversarial leadership, positive vision, or promoting commonality.[57] Each category is then given a weighted index score based upon the number of times words or phrases from that category are found in each speech or tweet.

- Countering perceptions: When the message aims to dispute terrorist narratives, based on ideology that terrorists are defending Islam against the West with legitimate acts of war.[58]

- Undermining adversarial leadership: When the message serves to discredit terrorist leaders, diminish their authority and credibility, or reveal their hypocrisy.[59]

- Positive vision: When the message is proactive and grounded in American ideology and not in response to others' ideology.[60]

- Promoting commonality: When the message aims to cultivate common interests between Americans and others in the world.[61]

These weighted index scores are then averaged out by year and plotted against the number of terrorist attacks in the United States during that same year. The terrorist attack data is generated by the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which defines a terrorist

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[57] Maguire, 19.

[58] Leuprecht et al., "Winning the Battle but Losing the War?" 5.

[59] Michael Jacobson, "Learning Counter-Narrative Lessons from Cases of Terrorist Dropouts," *Countering Violent Extremist Narratives*, National Coordinator for Counterterrorism, 73, January 2010, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/4b7aaf56ca52e.pdf; Frank J. Cilluffo, J. Scott Carpenter, and Matthew Levitt, *What's the Big Idea? Confronting the Ideology of Islamist Extremism* (Washington, DC: George Washington Homeland Security Policy Institute and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2011), 6, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/opeds/4d4eb93e776a6. pdf.

[60] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 15; Jerome P. Bjelopera, *Countering Violent Extremism in the United States*, CRS Report RL42553 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), 27, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R42 553.pdf.

[61] Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee, *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC: National Security Council, 2007), 3, http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/state/natstrat_strat_comm.pdf.

attack as "threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion or intimidation."[62] This thesis uses data of all terrorist attacks within the United States, including jihadist and domestic right wing. The GTD is open-source and includes information from worldwide terrorist events between 1970 and 2017. Figure 1 illustrates the number of all terrorist attacks in the United States per year. This thesis attempts to find a statistical correlation between messaging and terrorist activity, as measured by terrorist attacks in the United States.

Terrorist Incidents in the United States
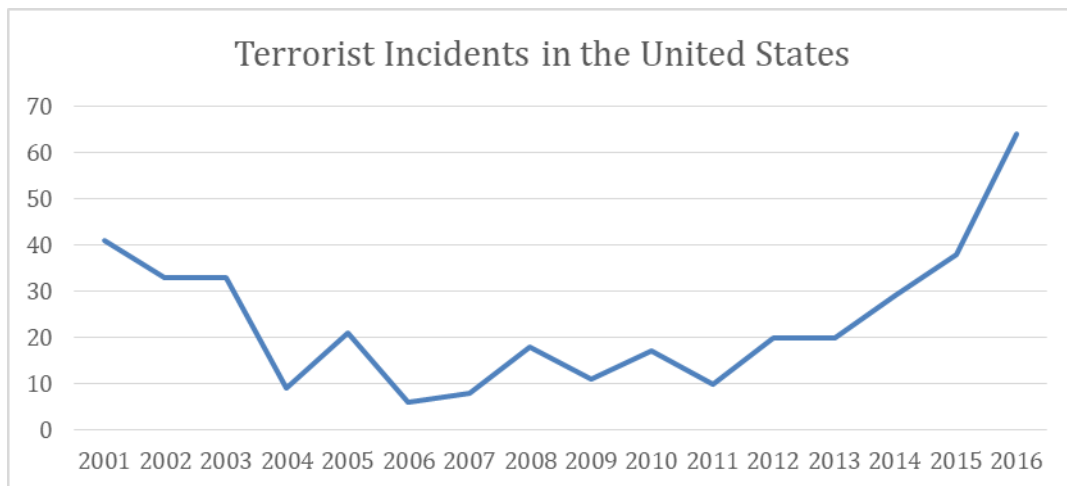
Figure 1.   Terrorist Attacks in the United States, 2001–2016[63]

A statistical relationship between variables, such as speech factors and terrorist attacks, measures the degree to which two or more variables are related to one another. In other words, correlation is a statistical measure of the degree of the relationship between two variables.[64] Finding statistical correlation between variables, however, does not mean

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[62] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, *Global Terrorism Database* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2018), 10, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/down loads/Codebook.pdf.

[63] Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2018, Global Terrorism Database [Data file], retrieved from https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd.

[64] Charles Wheelan, *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 58.

causation. A positive or negative relationship "between two variables does not necessarily mean that a change in one of the variables is causing the change in the other."[65] This thesis attempts to measure correlation between speech factors and terrorist attacks; it does not attempt to measure causation. While correlation is a useful measurement tool, the relationship can be due to other factors.[66] It is important to remember that this thesis examines the correlation coefficient to conclude if speech factors and terrorist attacks are related, but this thesis does not examine if one speech factor caused change in terrorist attacks.

Thirdly, the thesis builds upon de Graaf's work, which studied the American performative power during the 1970s, by analyzing the performative power of the U.S. counterterrorism policy between 2001 and 2016. For each of the years, the presence (coded as 1) or absence (coded as 0) of 14 factors was recorded. By answering questions about each factor in the affirmative (the factor is present in a given year, coded as 1) or the negative (the factor is not present in a given year, coded as 0), the counterterrorism performative power is determined by adding the number of factors present each year. The presence or absence of a factor was determined by looking at headlines in major national newspapers (such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*) and the sample of presidential speeches. See Appendix D for the full data.

The counterterrorism policy performative power factors are the following:

- Priority of the topic: Do political leaders make overt statements on counterterrorism?

- Level of politicization: Is counterterrorism the main concern in election campaigning or used politically to argue against opponents?

- Threat demarcation: Has the threat increased, including specific terrorist groups and also sympathizers and broader audience sympathetic to terrorism?

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[65] Wheelan, 62.

[66] Wheelan, 62–63.

- Threat definition and presentation: Is war rhetoric used? Is the tone of discourse militant?

- Link to existing discourses: Do officials or politicians make references to historical experiences of war or violence?

- Public mobilization, public counterterrorism campaigns: Did officials create a terrorist "most wanted" list?

- Creation and deployment of counterterrorism units: Were special units (not regular police forces) deployed to investigate and detain terrorists?

- Introduction of special terrorism laws/other anti-terrorism measures: Was new antiterrorism legislation introduced? Were new legal categories, new offenses, new perpetrators introduced in legislation?

- Revising and accentuating existing legislation: Was new legislation introduced not specifically aimed at terrorism?

- Staging major terrorism trials: Were terrorism trials conducted?

- Refusing to enter into negotiations, dialogue, reform, or integration activities: Were officials explicit in their refusal to engage in discussions or negotiations with terrorists?

- Large mental distance: Does a lack of shared culture or ideals exist between terrorists and the public and does counterterrorism policy capitalize on this deficiency?

- Perceived vulnerability/high risk perception for counterterrorism community: Do counterterrorism officials feel directly threatened (officials have been targeted by terrorist actions)?

- Unique level of interest and attention of counterterrorism issues compared to other issues: Does the issue have national priority over other topics (like economic issues or environmental disasters)?[67]

Once the performative power of counterterrorism policy is determined per year, that data is plotted against terrorist attacks in the United States during the same year to find correlation by using a regression analysis statistical model.

Fourthly, this thesis applies the social identity analytical method to assess qualitatively narratives within an overall social context. The social identity theory framework demonstrates how and when groups change, how a group is impacted by chances for communication, and how a group's socially constructed identity may allow a group to change from terrorist tactics to non-violent political activity.[68] Using the framework to look at terrorist violence in context allows analysts to interpret the message or messages better.[69] Analysis through the framework answers, more fundamentally, why a leader releases a speech at a certain time, or why a group grew its membership or sometimes morphs into a completely different group.[70]

Four analytical markers are necessary for the social identity theory framework: patron/client relationships, challenge/response cycles, honor/shame paradigms, and the limited good.[71] While the four analytical markers are defined in the framework separately, in reality, these markers are constantly fluctuating and interdependent. Each action, interaction, or relationship of the terrorist group involves mishmashes of honor challenges, positive or negative, both concerning their patron-client relationships and their perception of the limited good.[72] Applying the social identity analytical method allows an analyst to account for a group's behavior and interactions with other groups by

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[67] De Graaf , *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, 11–15.

[68] De Graaf , 63.

[69] De Graaf , 111.

[70] De Graaf , 121.

[71] De Graaf , 84.

[72] David Brannan, Kristen Darken, and Anders Strindberg, *Practitioner's Way Forward: Terrorism Analysis* (Salinas, CA: Agile Press, 2014), 81.

studying its social context and how the group's members comprehend themselves and their group in that context.[73]

D.   CONCLUSION

To determine how successful the U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy has been in contesting the terrorist narrative, this thesis first analyzes the U.S. narrative in the period between 2001 and 2016. Due to the lack of an agreed-upon evaluative framework for analyzing counterterrorism strategies, this thesis develops a framework based on a content analysis of U.S. presidential speeches and DOS tweets and the performative power of U.S. counterterrorism policy. After understanding what the U.S. government's narrative has been in the post-9/11 period, in Chapter III this thesis applies the social identity analytical method to analyze narratives qualitatively within their total social context. Chapter IV then concludes by proposing what elements in a counterterrorism narrative the American government should craft to counter the terrorists' narratives more effectively.

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[73] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 61.

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II. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM NARRATIVES

> Over the expanse of five continents throughout the coming years an endless struggle is going to be pursued between violence and friendly persuasion…Henceforth the only honourable course will be to stake everything on a formidable gamble - that words are more powerful than munitions.
>
> —Albert Camus[74]

To determine how effective the U.S. counterterrorism strategy has been, this thesis needs to define the U.S. narrative in the period between 2001 and 2016. To do so, this chapter analyzes three sets of data: U.S. presidential speeches, DOS Twitter postings, and an assessment of U.S. counterterrorism policy based on governmental records, presidential speeches, and major newspaper headlines. This chapter calculates the correlation coefficient between speech factors and worldwide terrorist attacks. Only one speech factor, promoting commonality, produced a statistically significant correlation with worldwide terrorist attacks, which suggests that more U.S. government narratives should include words or phrases that promote commonality.

A. U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES

A total of 954 excerpts from the selected 75 U.S. presidential speeches were categorized with one of the four identified codes: countering perceptions, undermining adversarial leadership, positive vision, and promoting commonality. Each speech could have multiple coded phrases. For example, a speech could have four phrases coded as positive vision and two phrases coded as countering perceptions. Of this sample, the greatest number of phrases was labeled *promoting commonality* (56 percent) and the least number were coded as *countering perceptions* (5 percent). The breakdown is illustrated in Figure 2; the entire data set is found in Appendix B.

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[74] Alexandre de Gramont, *Albert Camus: Between Hell and Reason, Essays from the Resistance Newspaper Combat, 1944–1947* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991), 138.

U.S. Presidential Speeches 2001 - 2016

- Countering Perceptions
- Undermining Adversarial Leadership
- Positive Vision Based on America's Values
- Promote Commonality
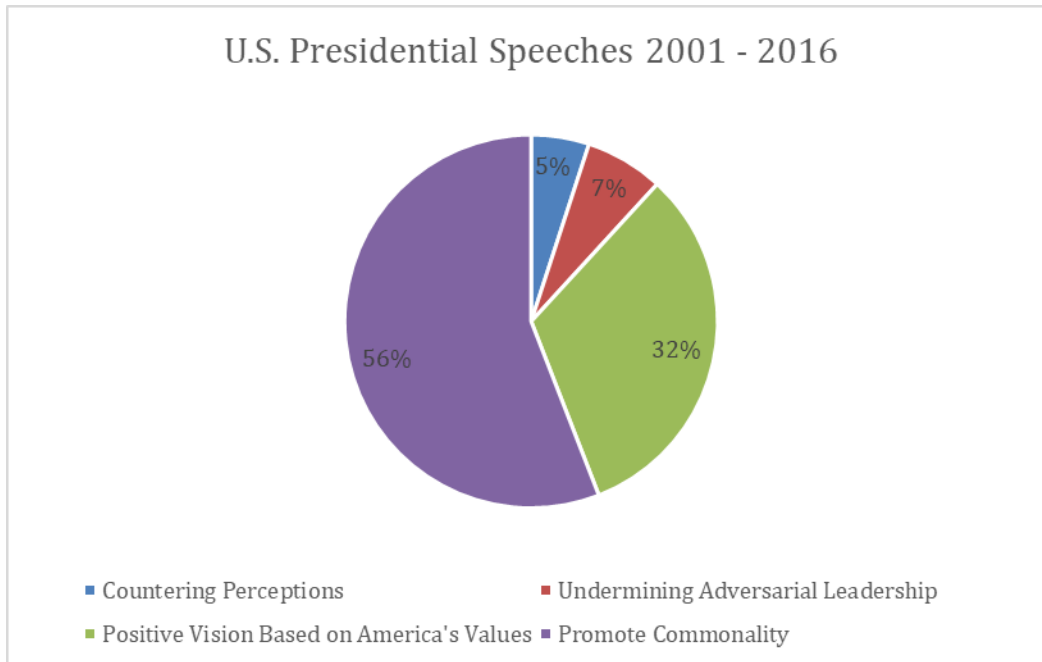
Figure 2.   Percentages of Total Excerpts Associated with Each Category[75]

Some examples of phrases from speeches coded into each of the four categories are discussed as follows to give the reader a sense of the analysis completed.

1.   Countering Perceptions

From Mali to Mogadishu, senseless terrorism all too often perverts the meaning of Islam—one of the world's great religions—and takes the lives of countless innocent Africans.[76]

This phrase was coded as countering perceptions, as it disputes the perception fueled by terrorist ideology that Islamic extremists are defending their religion.

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[75] Data compiled from speeches listed in Appendix B.

[76] Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama at the University of Cape Town" (speech, Cape Town, South Africa, June 30, 2013), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/30/remarks-president-obama-university-cape-town.

2. Undermining Adversarial Leadership

Around the world, we've seen intolerance and violence and terror perpetrated by those who profess to be standing up for their faith, but, in fact, are betraying it.[77]

This phrase was coded as undermining adversarial leadership, as it discredits terrorist leaders and reveals their hypocrisy of proclaiming to be defenders of their faith, but who in reality, are deceiving followers.

3. Positive Vision

That's because we committed ourselves to a larger ideal, one based on a creed—not a race, not a nationality—a set of principles; truths that we held to be self-evident that all men were created equal.[78]

This phrase was coded as positive vision, as it is grounded in American ideology and not in response to another ideology.

4. Promoting Commonality

Because of the work of generations, because we've stood together in a great alliance, because people across this continent have forged a European Union dedicated to cooperation and peace, we have made historical progress toward the vision we share - a Europe that is whole and free and at peace.[79]

This phrase was coded as promoting commonality because it echoes the cooperation and connections other people have with American values.

This content analysis of presidential speeches and statements indicates that presidential messages delivered to foreign audiences since 9/11 have mainly been proactively narrative (positive vision and/or promoting commonality). The majority of

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[77] Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of India" (speech, New Delhi, India, January 27, 2015), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/27/remarks-president-obama-address-people-india.

[78] Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Europe" (speech, Hannover, Germany, April 25, 2016), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/25/remarks-president-obama-address-people-europe.

[79] Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia" (speech, Tallinn, Estonia, September 3, 2014), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/03/remarks-president-obama-people-estonia.

presidential speeches in this time period include a minimum of one proactive narrative message, which posits that the U.S. government offers its own narrative more often than counter-narrative messages. This analysis echoes Maguire's findings.

Looking further at the sampled speeches, President George W. Bush delivered 45 percent of the speeches and President Barack Obama delivered 55 percent, as shown in Figure 3. As this time period only captured September 11, 2001 through December 31, 2016, this percentage is an accurate representation of their respective years in office during this time period (President Bush served seven years between 2001 and 2008 and President Obama served eight years between 2009 and 2016). Broken down by presidential terms, the data shows that both presidents maintained similar percentages of categorized excerpts, as shown in Figure 3. Of note, President Bush delivered speeches with 20 percent counter-messaging narrative factors (countering perceptions and undermining adversarial leadership) in comparison to President Obama's speeches with only 9 percent of the same. In contrast, 56 percent of President Bush's speeches contained messages of promoting commonality compared to 55 percent of President Obama's speeches.

President Bush's Speeches

- Countering Perceptions
- Undermining Adversarial Leadership
- Positive Vision
- Promote Commonality

President Obama's Speeches

- Countering Perceptions
- Undermining Adversarial Leadership
- Positive Vision
- Promote Commonality

U.S. Presidential Speeches 2001 - 2016

- Bush
- Obama
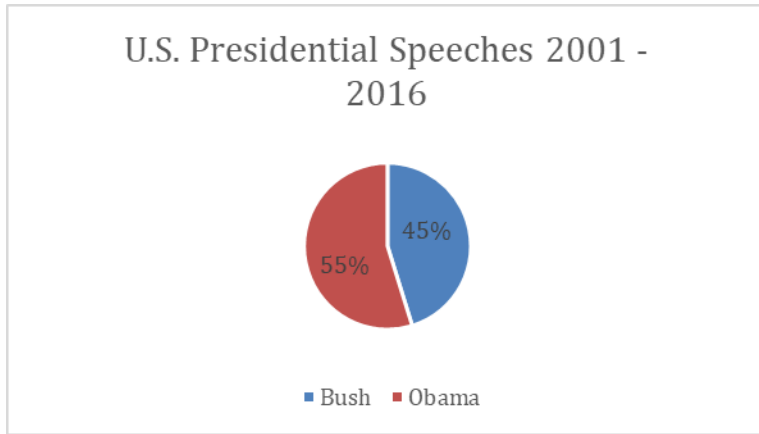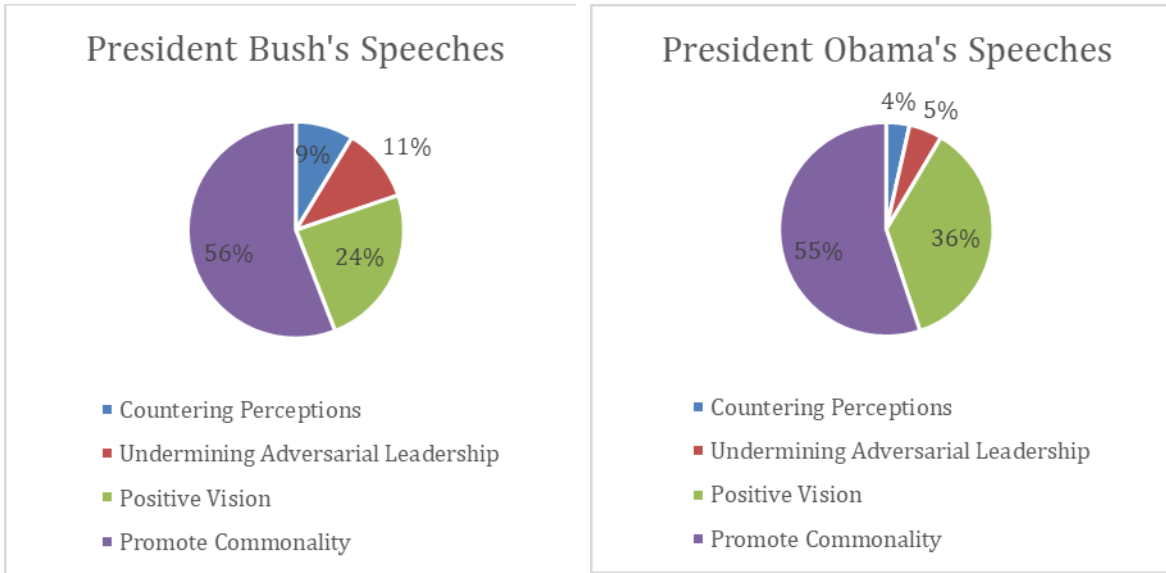
Figure 3.   Ratio of Presidential Speeches Delivered[80]

For comparison purposes, the sample speeches were also defined according to the geographic region in which they were delivered by using DOS geographic bureaus: 18 in East Asia and the Pacific, 26 in Europe and Eurasia, 20 in the Western Hemisphere, five in Africa, four in the Near East, and two in South and Central Asia, as shown in Figure 4. Significant disparity occurred in the number of speeches given in different worldwide regions. Very few speeches were delivered in Africa, the Near East, or South and Central Asia, even though during this time period, U.S. counterterrorism strategy focused on

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[80] Data compiled from speeches listed in Appendix B.

groups in these regions, such as al Shabaab, Al Qaeda, and the Islamic State. If the United States was targeting counterterrorism narratives at these groups, it stands to argue that speeches should be delivered to populations in the regions of the world where recruitment to these groups is high.
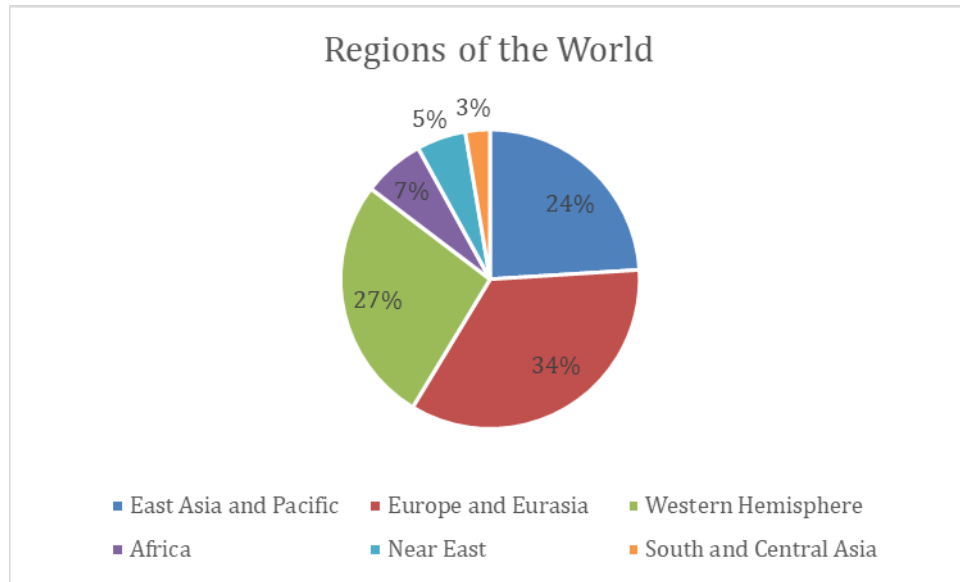
Figure 4.   Ratio of Geographic Regions in Which the Sample Speeches Were Delivered[81]

This data can also be used to see trends over time, as illustrated in Figure 5. The coded data was subsequently analyzed by year to determine how many excerpts and phrases from speeches per year were coded in the same four categories. This data was then plotted against the number of terrorist attacks in the United States, and a statistical regression model was used to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between proactive or counter messaging in speeches and terrorist attacks. This chapter uses simple correlational research design to determine how strongly different variables are related to each other; in this instance, how strongly speech factors are related to terrorist attacks in the United States. Correlational studies only describe whether variables are related to each other; no conclusions about causality are made.

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[81] Data compiled from speeches listed in Appendix B.
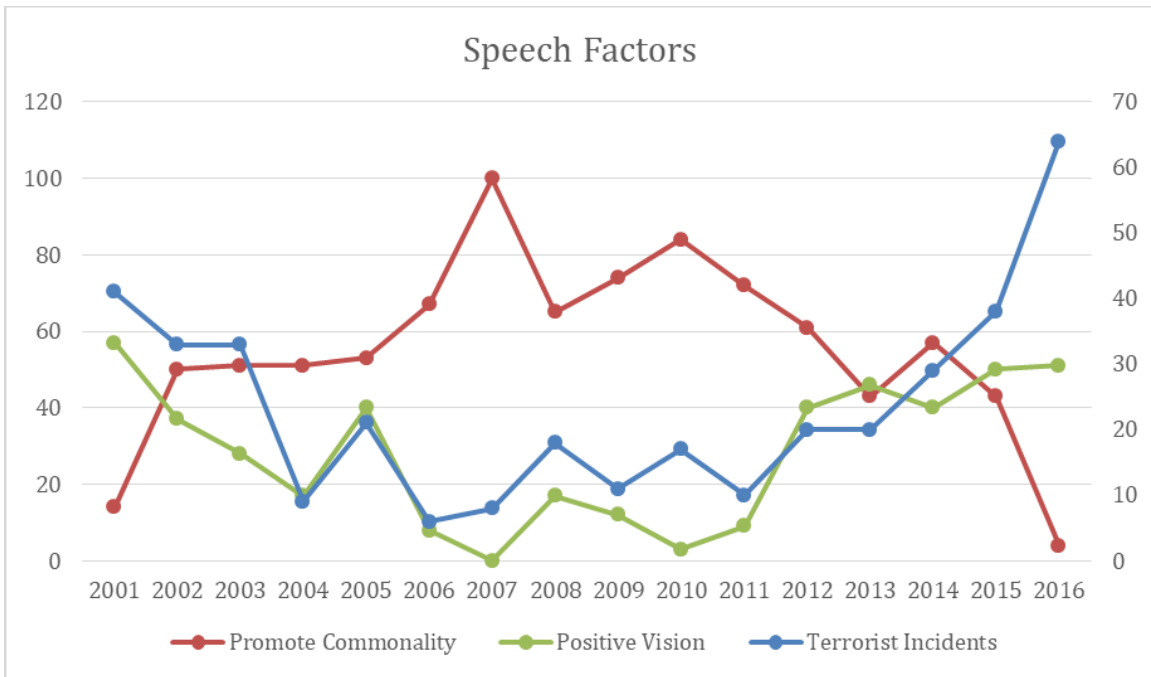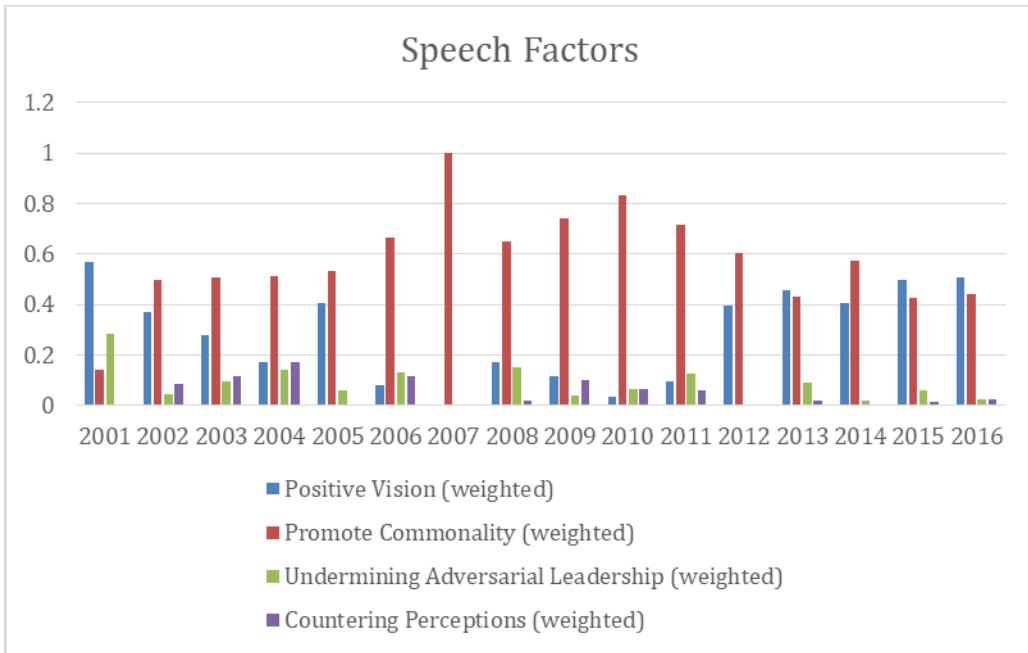
Figure 5.   Speech Factors over Time[82]

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[82] Data compiled from speeches listed in Appendix B.

Overall, counter-messaging (phrases coded as counter perceptions or undermining adversarial leadership) did not affect terrorist attacks in a statistically significant manner. No statistically significant correlation was found with the counter-messaging categories, though both categories showed a negative correlation.[83] In other words, when U.S. presidents gave speeches with high scores for counter perceptions or undermining adversarial leadership, the number of terrorist attacks in the United States decreased during that year. Two proactive messaging weighted indexes, however—positive vision and promoting commonality—had statistically significant correlations, as seen in Figure 6.[84] When U.S. presidents gave speeches with a high score for positive vision, the number of terrorist attacks in the United States increased, though this number was not a very strong correlation coefficient. In contrast, when U.S. presidents gave speeches with a high score for promoting commonality, the number of terrorist attacks in the United States decreased. This correlation coefficient was very strong. This correlation is meaningful because speeches that include messages of commonality, as well as messages that echo the cooperation and connections other people have with American values, have a strong negative relationship with terrorist attacks in the United States.

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[83] Countering Perceptions, r = -0.3309, p-value is .2283 (not significant). Undermining Adversarial Leadership, r = -0.0091, p-value is .9743 (not significant).

[84] Positive Vision and Terrorist Attacks, r = .7761, p-value is .00067. Promoting Commonality, r = -0.652, p-value is .00844.
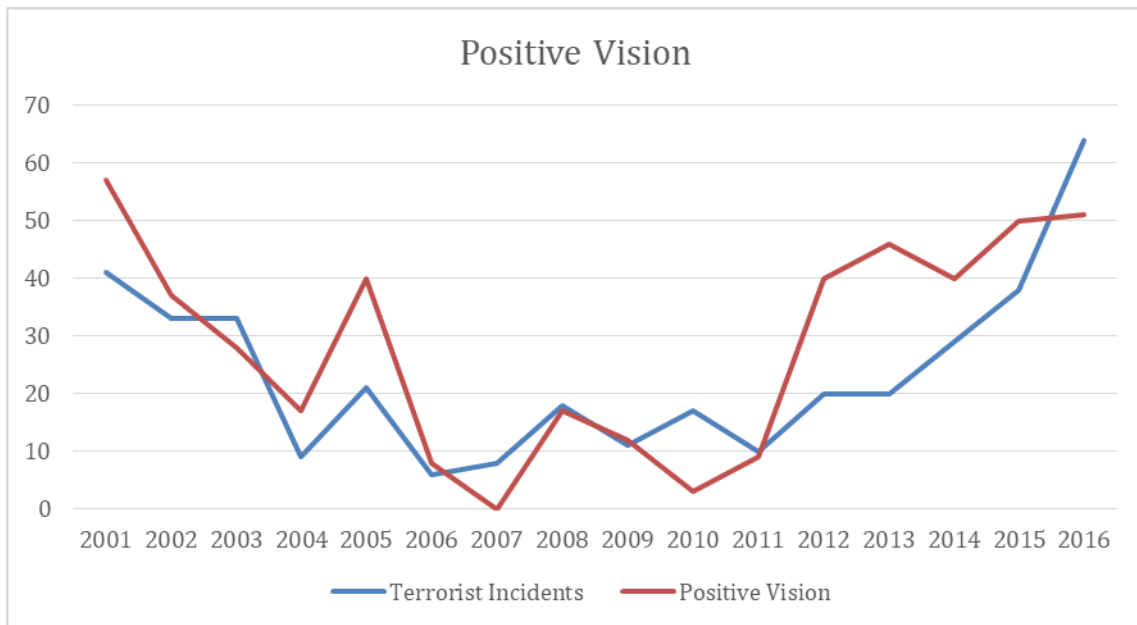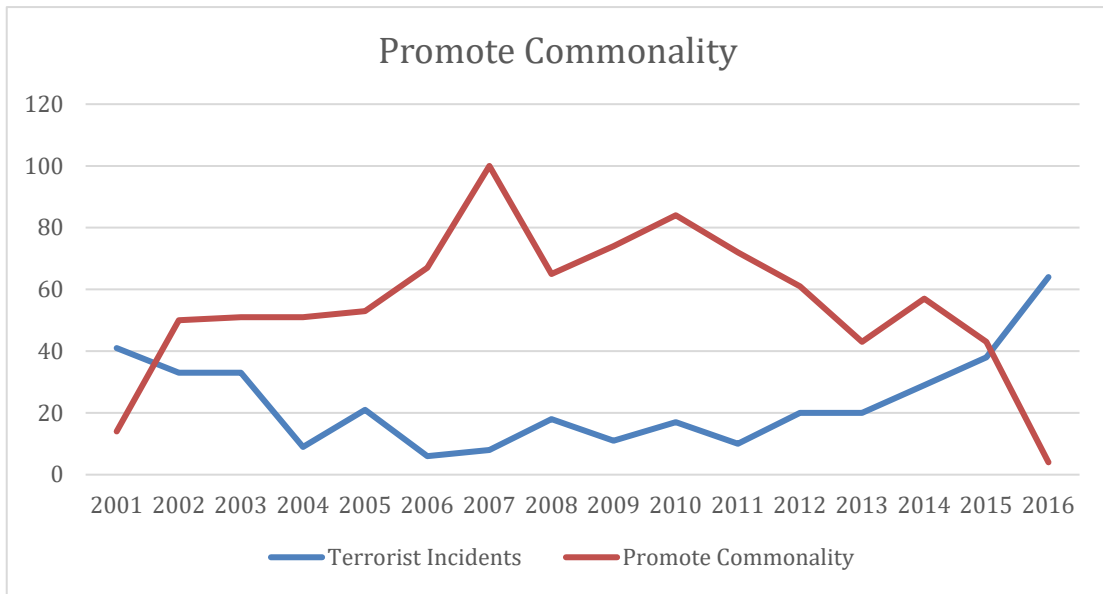
Figure 6.   Statistically Significant Speech Factors (Positive Vision and Promoting Commonality) between 2001 and 2016[85]

[85] Data compiled from speeches listed in Appendix B.

This thesis examines correlation between variables and not causation. The statistical models used in this thesis were simple regression models to calculate correlation. Future researchers could use more advanced statistical models to define further the relationship between speech factors and the likelihood of terrorist attacks occurring. An assumed gap in time occurs between the delivery of a speech and a terrorist attack occurring or the delivery of a speech in response to a terrorist attack. To mitigate this gap, the speech factors were plotted against terrorist attacks that occurred in the following year in the United States. The only speech factor that had a statistically significant, positive relationship with terrorist attacks was positive vision. When U.S. presidents gave speeches with messages of positive vision, terrorist attacks in the United States in the following year increased.[86] This measurement of correlation, by looking at the number of terrorist attacks occurring in the United States in the following year, may be a better indicator of the gap of time between speech delivery and a terrorist attack occurring, though this thesis focuses on the relationship between speech factors and terrorist attacks in the United States occurring in the same year.

This data analysis does have caveats. Only one researcher read the speeches and coded phrases according to an understanding of the categories as described in Chapter I. More robust content analysis may include multiple researchers coding the content to ensure personal bias is not skewing the data analysis. Additionally, this chapter tested the correlation between messaging and worldwide terrorist attacks per year (from the GTD), but found no statistically significant relationship with that indicator.[87] Future researchers may want to study other indicators of terrorist activity (such as recruitment numbers) to see if a statistical correlation exists between U.S. messaging and terrorist activity.

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[86] Correlation between positive vision and terrorist attacks in the United States occurring in the following year (r = 0.8109, p-value = 0.0002, significant). Correlation between weighted score of positive vision and terrorist attacks in the United States occurring in the following year (r = 0.6475, p-value = 0.009, significant)

[87] Correlations between worldwide terrorist attacks and: positive vision (r = .4681, p-value = .0785, not significant); promoting commonality (r = -0.1589, p-value = .5738, not significant); undermining adversarial leadership (r = -0.413, p-value = .12601, not significant); counter perceptions (r = -0.4995, p-value = .05828, not significant)

The GTD also includes terrorist attacks in the United States per year, including those perpetrated by right-wing extremists. The messaging in speeches analyzed by this thesis only focused on messaging directed to foreign audiences. The inclusion of terrorist attacks conducted by right-wing extremists in the United States could be skewing the data. Seth Jones of the Center for Strategic and International Studies notes, "the number of attacks from right-wing extremists since 2014 has been greater than attacks from Islamic extremists."[88] Because this thesis included all terrorist attacks inside the United States, such an increase in attacks conducted by right-wing extremist groups could have affected the correlation analysis.

The differentiation in the proactive messaging requires some analysis. Speeches with high scores for positive vision correlate with a higher number of terrorist attacks, while speeches with high scores for promoting commonality correlate with a lower number of terrorist attacks. In the future, more messaging should include narratives that promote commonality to reduce the number of terrorist attacks. However, this could also be because the majority of speeches during this period that included messaging promote commonality (56 percent of total excerpts). Additionally, other factors need to be considered, such as the launch of a major U.S. military offensive in Iraq or Afghanistan that could have inspired attacks or the rise of right-wing domestic terrorists in the United States.[89]

In conclusion, measuring the U.S. government's counterterrorism messaging in the post-9/11 time period provides a basis for lessons learned. Analyzing both qualitative data (showing that U.S. presidential speeches mostly provide a proactive message) and quantitative data (showing that a strong negative relationship exists between messages of promoting commonality and terrorist attacks) will help to develop better, more targeted recommendations for U.S. counterterrorism strategies in the future.

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[88] Seth Jones, "The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States," Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 7, 2018, https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states.

[89] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, *Ideological Motivations of Terrorism in the United States, 1970–2016* (College Park, MD: University of Maryland, 2017), 2, https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_IdeologicalMotivationsOfTerrorismInUS_Nov2017.pdf.

B. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE TWITTER POSTINGS

The DOS launched a "Think Again Turn Away" campaign on Twitter in December 2013, as an effort to enter the war of ideas on social media. The "Think Again Turn Away" Twitter account had, at its peak, over 7,300 followers and tweeted about six to seven tweets per day.[90] The account used two approaches: tweeting counter messaging material and addressing prominent terrorist accounts. The Islamic State, in contrast, "released 845 audiovisual campaigns between January 2014 and September 2015, or more than one every day for a year and a half."[91] Of these audiovisual productions, more than 15 percent emulated Western popular culture films, video games, and music video clips, such as The Matrix, Call of Duty, American Sniper, and Grand Theft Auto.[92] When ISIS videos show executions, "40 percent feature highly salient cultural images … transform[ing] victims of terrorism into actors in Western popular culture products, aimed at engaging with their global audiences and making terror popular."[93] The content released by the DOS fails in comparison to the quality produced by the Islamic State.

After releasing a video, "Welcome to ISIS Land," the DOS was mocked mercilessly for using footage produced by the Islamic State as a tongue-in-cheek way to subvert the idea that recruitment is worthy.[94] This approach failed miserably, as it seemed the U.S. government adopted the terrorists' handbook. Worse, it showed that the U.S. government lacked a basic understanding of groups like the Islamic State, which were purposefully using these exact scenes of execution, mimicking Western popular culture, as recruitment propaganda.[95] Other examples demonstrated the U.S. government's failure to understand the context of its messaging or the broader terrorist landscape.[96] Failing to

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[90] Rita Katz, "The State Department's Twitter War with ISIS Is Embarrassing," *Time Magazine*, September 16, 2014, http://time.com/3387065/isis-twitter-war-state-department/.

[91] Javier Lesaca, "On Social Media, ISIS Uses Modern Cultural Images to Spread Anti-Modern Values," Brookings Institution, September 24, 2015. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2015/09/24/on-social-media-isis-uses-modern-cultural-images-to-spread-anti-modern-values/.

[92] Lesaca.

[93] Lesaca.

[94] Miller and Higham, "In a Propaganda War against ISIS."

[95] Katz, "The State Department's Twitter War."

[96] Katz.

understand the context surrounding these terrorist groups, the U.S. government's narrative messaging was not only a waste of time and money, but counterproductive.

The "ThinkAgain_DOS" Twitter account was disabled in March 2016 and past postings were removed from the Twitter website. While the Library of Congress was collecting tweets posted beginning in 2006, none has been made public yet.[97] The Internet Archive's Wayback Machine captures snapshots of websites in time, including the "ThinkAgain_DOS" Twitter account, though not in its entirety. For the time period 2014 through 2016, the Wayback Machine maintained archives of the account by day, with a total of 129 days of archived material for the "ThinkAgain_DOS" account.

A random calculator tool selected 50 days, of which the first Twitter posting of the day was chosen. The 50 DOS "ThinkAgain_DOS" Twitter postings were categorized with one of the four identified codes (counter perceptions, undermining adversarial leadership, positive vision, or promoting commonality), with the greatest number labeled *countering perceptions* (43 percent) and the least number coded as *positive vision* (7 percent). The breakdown is illustrated in Figure 7; the entire data set is found in Appendix C.

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[97] Library of Congress, *Update on the Twitter Archive at the Library of Congress* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2017), 1, https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/files/2017/12/2017dec_twitter_white-paper.pdf.
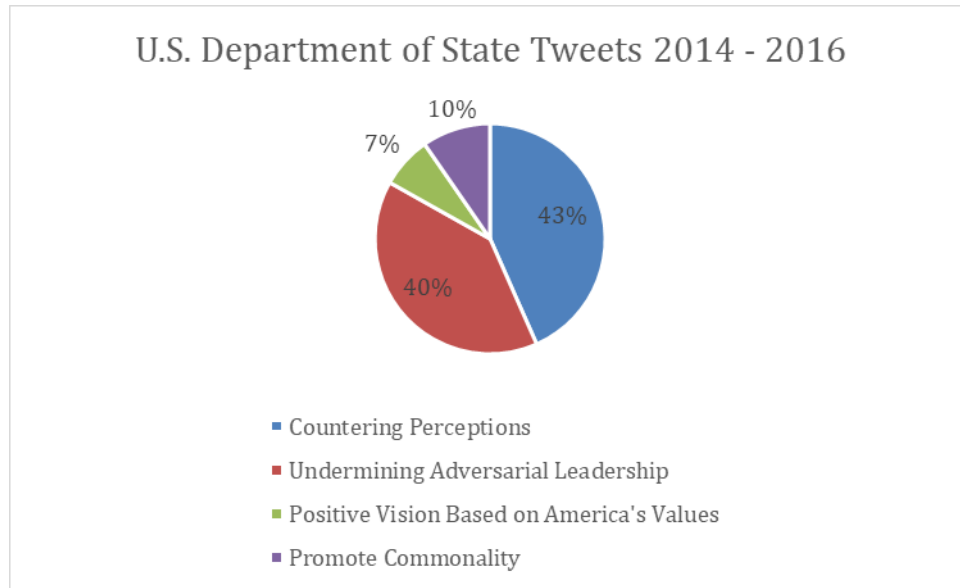
Figure 7.   Percentages of Tweets Associated with Each Category[98]

Tweets are significantly shorter than speeches (140 characters), which makes content analysis challenging. Tweets are often a sentence or two with context being provided in prior or subsequent tweets. This thesis was constrained by choosing the first tweet of each day to analyze. No further tweets were analyzed. For example, if a DOS tweet was in response to someone else's tweet, this thesis only analyzed the content of the DOS tweet. If the DOS was retweeting someone else's tweet, that content was not analyzed.

In sharp contrast to the content analysis of U.S. presidential speeches, the DOS' Twitter account mostly used counter-messaging (aimed at countering perceptions or undermining adversarial leadership). Eighty-three percent of DOS tweets used counter-messaging phrases, in comparison to U.S. presidential speeches, of which 88 percent used proactive messaging phrases, directed at providing a positive vision or promoting commonality with the United States. This percentage could validate many arguments that

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[98] Data compiled from tweets listed in Appendix C.

the Twitter campaign was ineffective because it regularly engaged in petty disputes with fighters and supporters of terrorist groups.[99]

Due to the archival restraints on the sample size, the thesis could not conduct statistically significant correlation research of content analysis of the Twitter postings with terrorist attacks. The sample size was simply too small. Future researchers could aggregate more data related to each tweet, analyze the number of re-tweets each posting received (to show further influence as re-tweets are found by more than just the DOS account followers) or find more archived Twitter material. Additionally, the correlation could be analyzed to determine relationships between narrative messaging factors and another measurement of terrorist activity, such as terrorist group recruitment numbers or violent incidents.

C.   U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM PERFORMATIVE POWER

The performative power of counterterrorism strategy aims to measure the "social visibility" of counterterrorism measures to establish a correlation between the amount of "social drama generated" and terrorist attacks.[100] The 14 factors described previously to measure governmental counterterrorism activities determine "the performative power of counterterrorism policies."[101] This thesis constructed an assessment of the 14 factors by studying governmental records, the sample of presidential speeches, and headlines from major national newspapers (the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*). The presence (coded as 1) or absence (coded as 0) of each of the 14 factors is established per year. The sum of these factors is indicated per year on a timeline from 2001 to 2016, and can be found in Appendix D.

Every year was separately examined in terms of the role these factors did or did not play. For example, to assess the factor, "Priority of the topic," this thesis answered the question, "Do political leaders personally and explicitly express themselves on the

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[99] See Katz, "The State Department's Twitter War"; Miller and Higham, "In a Propaganda War against IS"; Ben Jonsson, "Why is America #Losing the Twitter War with ISIS?" National Interest, March 8, 2016, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/why-america-losing-the-twitter-war-isis-15433.

[100] De Graaf , *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, 124.

[101] De Graaf , 133.

counterterrorism issue?" If a headline in a major national newspaper (the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*) in a calendar year included the president, vice president, or congressperson making a statement about counterterrorism, it was considered a factor present for the year (coded as 1). Sometimes an indicator of performativity, such as the staging of terrorism trials, lasted longer than one year. That factor was coded for more than one year at a time. The performative power (ranging from 1 to 14) was then analyzed against the number of terrorist attacks in the United States occurring in the following year, based on GTD data, as illustrated in Figure 8. The GTD data includes all terrorist attacks within the United States, regardless of the type of terrorist group.
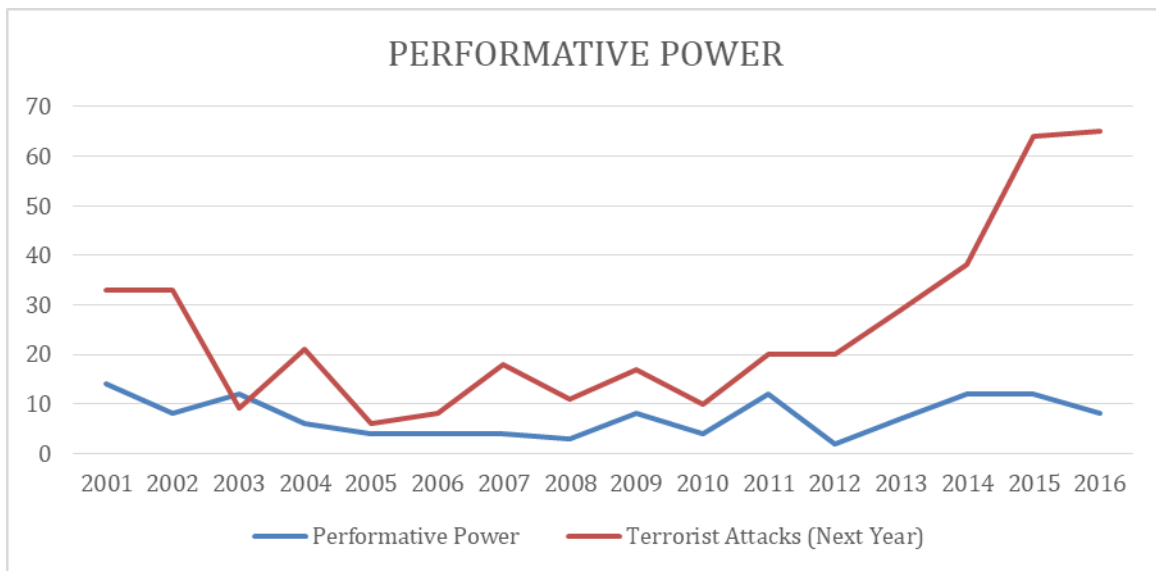
Figure 8.   Performative Power of U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy[102]

Although technically a positive correlation (the higher the performative power of counterterrorism strategies, the more terrorist attacks also increase), the relationship between performative power and terrorist attacks was not statistically significant.[103] This finding is in contrast to de Graaf's study of the United States in the 1970s, where she found that a "decline in the performative effect of counterterrorism policy preceded a

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[102] Data compiled from sources listed in Appendix D.

[103] r = 0.4817, p-value is .0690, not statistically significant.

distinct reduction in the number of terrorist actions in the following year."[104] This thesis is unable to prove that the performative power of counterterrorism policy can contribute predictions for the number of terrorist attacks in a country.

This thesis focuses on the time period between 2001 and 2016, during which the predominant U.S. counterterrorism measures targeted al Qaeda and the Islamic State. De Graaf does note that the "correlation only applies when the terrorist groups at stake operate within the same society and against the same government that initiated the countermeasures."[105] The terrorist attack data compiled from the GTD, however, includes terrorist attacks conducted by all types of terrorist groups. The data in this thesis might have had a stronger correlation if the measurement of terrorist attacks inside the United States had only included attacks conducted by, or inspired by, the Islamic State or al Qaeda instead of the total aggregate data. In an attempt to mitigate this measurement bias, this thesis also plotted U.S. performative power against all terrorist attacks worldwide (data from GTD). While the correlation was positive (the higher the performative power of counterterrorism strategies, the higher the number of terrorist attacks worldwide), the relationship was, again, not statistically significant.[106]

Other explanations may shed light on this data. Other counterterrorism measures with belated consequences may account for the decrease in terrorist attacks, such as local police department missions, community intervention, or counterintelligence measures. Additionally, this thesis did not attempt to measure intensity of the different 14 factors. This thesis used a presence or absence binary measurement for each factor. In other words, this thesis did not account for the fact that certain years could have been more intense (more terrorism trials or higher levels of public mobilization in a certain year). Future researchers may be able to provide more detailed accounts of performativity by using a ranking scale to measure intensity of factors or monthly or weekly counts, to enhance the statistical value of the data.

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[104] De Graaf , *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, 138.

[105] De Graaf , 140.

[106] r = .2362, p-value is 0.3967, not statistically significant.

D.   CONCLUSION

Any recommendations for an improved U.S. strategy on counterterrorism narratives must be grounded in lessons learned from the U.S. narrative from 2001 through 2016. This thesis analyzed U.S. presidential speeches, DOS Twitter postings, and a comprehensive measurement of U.S. performative power during this time period. The only speech factor with a strong statistical correlation to terrorist attacks in the United States during the same year was promoting commonality. The only speech factor with a strong statistical correlation to terrorist attacks in the United States in the year following the speeches was positive vision. When U.S. presidential speeches included more messages that cultivate commonality with foreign audiences, terrorist attacks in the United States in that year decreased. Although not a causal measurement, this simple statistical model demonstrates a negative relationship between these two variables. When U.S. presidential speeches included more messages with a positive vision, terrorist attacks in the United States in the following year increased.

When crafting a comprehensive counterterrorism narrative, the U.S. government may be wasting its time with counter-messaging narratives (such as countering perceptions or undermining adversarial leadership) because these factors had no correlation, positive or negative, with terrorist attacks. This result further suggests that the DOS' Twitter campaign was useless, with the majority of its tweets containing such counter-messaging narratives. Having laid out these quantitative analyses of counter-messaging effects, the next chapter examines a qualitative analysis of a broad counternarrative framework using the social identity analytical method.

III.   A FRAMEWORK TO EVALUATE U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM NARRATIVES

The secret of war lies in the communications.

—Napoleon Bonaparte[107]

The quantitative analyses in the prior chapter did not account for the overall context of terrorist activity. Developing a comprehensive counterterrorism narrative strategy requires a framework to interpret U.S. counterterrorism narratives within their total social context. It is critical to evaluate narrative messages in the totality of the social reality. According to Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, the "tactics, targeting, the level of violence, willingness to negotiate, support structures, political agendas, and strategic objectives are all framed by the social realities within which terrorists exist."[108] This thesis first explains the SOCIAL identity analytical method, and then applies the social identity theory framework to analyze both the U.S. government narrative and that of a terrorist group, the Islamic State, to determine whether this framework is a useful evaluative tool.

A.   DEFINITION AND APPLICATION OF FRAMEWORK

1.   Social Identity Analytical Method (Social Identity Theory and the Analytical Markers)

The social identity theory framework demonstrates how and when groups change, how a group is impacted by chances for communication, and how a group's socially constructed identity may allow a group to change from terrorist tactics to non-violent political activity.[109] Using the framework to look at terrorist violence in context allows analysts to interpret the message or messages better.[110] Analysis through the framework

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[107] Michael B. Colegrove, *Distant Voices: Listening to the Leadership Lessons of the Past, Napoleon Bonaparte's Maxims, Quotes and Life in His Own Words* (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2005), 29.

[108] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *Practitioner's Way Forward*, 59.

[109] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 63.

[110] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 111.

answers, more fundamentally, why a leader releases a speech at a certain time, or why a group grew its membership or sometimes morphs into a completely different group.[111]

Four analytical markers are used in the social identity analytical method: patron/client relationships, challenge/response cycles, honor/shame paradigms, and the limited good.[112] While the four analytical markers are defined in the framework separately, in reality, these markers are constantly fluctuating and interdependent. Each action, interaction, or relationship of the terrorist groups involves mishmashes of honor challenges, positive or negative, concerning both their patron-client relationships and their perception of the limited good.[113] Applying the social identity analytical method allows an analyst to account for a group's behavior and interactions with other groups by studying its social context and how the group's members comprehend themselves and their group in that context.[114]

This chapter analyzes two speeches through the social identity theory framework: one by the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and one by then-U.S. President Barack Obama, delivered between November and December 2016.

2.   Apply Social Identity Analytical Method to Islamic State Speech

On November 2, 2016, the Islamic State released a speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, entitled, "This Is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us," and on November 11, the Islamic State's English-language magazine, Rumiya, printed an English transcript of the speech.[115] Placed in context, in November 2016, Iraqi troops were about to enter Mosul for the first time since the Islamic State had seized it more than two years prior. The speech calls on Islamic State fighters to hold their ground in Mosul, in the face of Coalition and Iraqi troops.

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[111] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 121.

[112] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 84.

[113] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 81.

[114] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 61.

[115] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, "This Is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us," *Rumiya* no. 3(2016): 4–9.

The limited good in this context is the physical and political control of the land in and around Mosul, a city in Iraq that holds major symbolic significance.[116] al-Baghdadi declared the caliphate of the Islamic State in Mosul in 2014. It was also the last major urban center under Islamic State control in Iraq at this time. In this November 2016 speech, al-Baghdadi is reiterating to his in-group that, for him, nothing has changed. He restates that the goals of the Islamic State remain the same: fight the Shia; fight the Alawites. This speech is a good example of al-Baghdadi, the leader, attempting to maintain the in-group's attachment to the Islamic State, to forestall the group's members from questioning or reevaluating the meaningfulness of in-group membership.[117] This speech is also a message to the out-group, which proclaims the in-group commitment in the face of adversity and distinguishes who is and who is not part of that group. The speech provides an in-group narrative for those fighting, but also to those just living under the rule of the Islamic State. It clearly delineates how the in-group distinguishes between what out-groups may mistakenly categorize as similar.

al-Baghdadi is also encouraging Islamic State supporters around the world to remain steadfast in fighting, in addition to calling for attacks in Saudi Arabia and Turkey or beyond. If individuals are unable to come to fight in Syria or Iraq, al-Baghdadi reminds supporters that martyrdom in Libya or the West is just as glorious, which gives the larger in-group a purpose, an honor paradigm. This call to multi-national Islamic State support suggests the global nature that the in-group seeks to advance. The Western nation-state divisions are not authoritative to the Islamic State in-group. Rather, the patron/client relationship between al-Baghdadi, the Islamic State, and the people willing to fight for and live under their rule, regardless of national location, is the determining identifier within the in-group.

The speech includes many references to early Islamic history, another honor paradigm for members of the current group. These are assurances by al-Baghdadi that

[116] Thomas E. Ricks, "The Significance of the Battle for Mosul's Great Mosque: This is Where Modern Iraqi History Meets the Medieval," *Foreign Policy*, June 20, 2017, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/20/the-significance-of-the-battle-for-mosuls-great-mosque-this-is-where-modern-iraqi-history-meets-the-medieval/.

[117] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *Practitioner's Way Forward*, 71–72.

those Islamic State fighters who are unwavering in the fight for Mosul will be celebrated in the historical, religious narrative.[118] Al-Baghdadi's words suggest that the fight for Mosul is a re-enactment of the Battle of the Trench, fought in A.D. 627.[119] The speech's title itself quotes a Quranic verse, the Surah al-Ahzab.[120] In the months prior to the release of this speech in 2016, many Islamic State followers online equated the battle for Mosul to the battle between the Prophet Muhammad and the Jewish clans, the Ahzab.[121] The in-group narrative is that the Prophet Muhammad overcame enormous disadvantages on the battlefield with clever tactics.[122] The in-group will maintain confidence from this analogy between past and present that, as Muhammad succeeded against all odds, the Islamic State will triumph.

al-Baghdadi refers twice to this Battle of the Trench, in addition to its title. The first reference reminds supporters that the challenging, righteous path is "a sign of the clear conquest that Allah [God] has promised."[123] The coalition fighting the Islamic State, one of many out-groups, outnumbers its fighters immensely, which further strengthens comparisons to the Battle of the Trench. These fights are essential to purify the ranks of believers, indeed, that "most of them were not to be believers."[124] The second reference to the Quranic verse urges Islamic State fighters to remain resolute, that those who become "weak in waging jihad" are trading paradise for short-lived benefits in this world.[125] This clear messaging is directed toward the in-group to retain its members

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[118] al-Baghdadi, "This Is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us," 5.

[119] Note: alternate translations also refer to "Battle of the Ditch."

[120] "Koran 33:21–33:31," Noble Quran, accessed January 15, 2019, https://quran.com/33/21-31?translations=20.

[121] Graeme Wood, "The 'Caliph' Speaks," *The Atlantic*, November 4, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/11/caliph-baghdadi-mosul-isis-iraq-syria/506567/.

[122] "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an Vol. 14, Section 2: The Treachery of the Hypocrites Exposed," Al-Islam, accessed January 28, 2019, https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-14/section-2-treachery-hypocrites-exposed.

[123] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, "This Is What Allah and His Messenger Promised Us," 4.

[124] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, 5.

[125] Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, 8.

and try to redress any concerns that may cause some of its members dissatisfaction, such as impending destruction in battle.[126]

If al-Baghdadi is concerned enough about rallying his troops, it may be seen as an opportunity for the United States to push messaging that challenges the imbalance between members of the Islamic State in-group and the Coalition troop out-group. First, it is important to understand the Islamic State members' "dominant sources of social identification and how they compare in status and strength with other competing sources of social identification."[127] Al-Baghdadi's speech in November 2016, in an attempt to rally troops to stay in Mosul and fight, shows that it may be time to try to challenge their other sources of social identification, to the point where Islamic State members decide that their membership in the terrorist group is no longer a positive. The challenge and response paradigm is not one only between the Coalition and Islamic State, however. Effective messaging is not going to be in admitting the out-group is right but in de-categorization, re-categorization, or cross-categorization of members of the in-group to something else, perhaps, into a non-violent yet counter Coalition group. The challenge is for the United States to respond with a counter-narrative that not only clarifies that membership in the Islamic State does not add positive value to identity, but also suggests alternatives to the Islamic State that do not require the members to perceive themselves to be traitors.

With this speech, al-Baghdadi is presenting himself as the leader of the underdogs, who aims for triumph both on the battlefield and for superiority over terrorists worldwide, and establishes potential, future patron/client relationships. After the Battle of the Trench, the Prophet Muhammad established himself and Islam as a superior force, above the Prophet's enemies in Mecca and opposition factions within Medina.[128] The in-group narrative is that a victory by the Islamic State in Mosul over Coalition troops

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[126] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *Practitioner's Way Forward*, 71–72.

[127] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, 69.

[128] William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 96.

would raise the enduring stature of the Islamic State on a worldwide scale.[129] Rival Sunni terrorist groups would also, in the in-group narrative, then recognize that al-Baghdadi deserves their obedience on the basis of doing what is seen as tactically impossible.

Because al-Baghdadi made this speech in anticipation of receiving the subservience of rival terrorist groups after an Islamic State victory in Mosul, it could have been an opportune time for the U.S. government to present a counter-message to other rival terrorist groups to highlight tensions and outright hostilities against the Islamic State. President Obama repeatedly made comments that the Islamic State had killed mostly Muslims.[130] The speeches delivered by al-Baghdadi, however, clearly distinguish what is and what is not a "true" Muslim; certainly, Shia Muslims are outside this group. Al Qaeda followers, even though they are Sunni Muslims, were pushed out of the in-group because they would not submit to the leadership of al-Baghdadi. The U.S. government analysts are completely missing some subgroups. The counter narrative is thus inaccurately applied because the U.S. government has failed to understand the in-group nuances that the in-group members understand.

3.   Apply Social Identity Analytical Method to U.S. Presidential Speech

On December 6, 2016, then-President Barack Obama gave remarks during the Coalition and Iraqi troop fight for Mosul in Iraq at MacDill Air Force Base entitled, "The Administration's Approach to Counterterrorism. While the overall speech was not directed at the Islamic State nor directed at an overseas audience, the speech is a good example of an American response to the fight for Mosul.

First, President Obama presents an honor challenge to the members of the Islamic State, by framing the group as a "terrorist network and an insurgency."[131] By defining the out-group in these terms and refusing to describe them even as a group, the president is rejecting their in-group definition as a caliphate or state, thereby questioning their entire

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[129] Wood, "The 'Caliph' Speaks."

[130] "Obama on ISIS," Wilson Center, August 5, 2016, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/obama-isis.

[131] Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Administration's Approach to Counterterrorism" (speech, Cape Town, Tampa, Florida, December 6, 2016), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/06/remarks-president-administrations-approach-counterterrorism.

mission. Similarly, President Obama refuses to acknowledge the Islamic State in their words, as the culmination of a centuries-old fight to return to the glorious days of the Prophet. In contrast, he describes the rise of the Islamic State as due to a failing Iraqi government and armed forces, a dictator in Syria, and social media.[132] The president is attempting to dissuade members of the Islamic State that they belong to anything special. In fact, they belong to a network of people that simply have grievances against poorly run governments and he is challenging the group members' patronage network.

President Obama does not even name the Islamic State leader, al-Baghdadi, in the speech, and offers an honor challenge to the leader and his patron/client relationships. Instead, he calls against "false prophets [who] are peddling a vision of Islam that is irreconcilable with tolerance and modernity and basic science" and "thugs and murderers," and confronts the group's integrity.[133] These definitions have the added benefit of reminding the President's in-group, in this case, the U.S. armed forces, that they have the upper hand as the "strongest fighting force the world has ever known."[134] Thus, the troops are rallied and the ego of the in-group bolstered to continue to stay and fight. Not only is the U.S. military more powerful than the Islamic State "network," but also "they don't pose an existential threat to our nation, and we must not make the mistake of elevating them as if they do."[135] The limited good in this instance is the opinion of the larger out-group. It is a reminder to the American public that the Islamic State does not fundamentally threaten the United States. Short-term losses may occur in the field of battle, in Iraq or Syria, but the United States will survive, stronger than ever.

Secondly, President Obama lays out a narrative about his in-group, the American people. He defines Americans as being "defined by hope, and not fear."[136] The in-group is strengthened by the repeated assurances that the history and legacy of the United States is unwavering. The president also acknowledges that the in-group is not defined by

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[132] Obama.

[133] Obama.

[134] Obama.

[135] Obama.

[136] Obama.

religion. He challenges the Islamic State's social identity as the leader of Muslims by reminding us, "they do not speak for over a billion Muslims around the world, and they do not speak for American Muslims, including many who wear the uniform of the United States of America's military."[137] The President reinforces that Muslims have different social identities; that they can have stronger identities than that of the Islamic State. There are stronger social identities, especially that of being an American, and further, being a member of the American military. It is challenging to the Islamic State, which has sought to advance a global network in-group that defies the authoritarian nature of Western nation-state divisions. The President is issuing a challenge to that network by reinforcing the superiority of the United States as a nation-state, and the American military as the defender of that nation-state. This statement, however, misses the distinction that the Islamic State makes between "true" Muslims and others, by continuing to group all Muslims together.

In an attempt to define the in-group further and present an honor challenge to the Islamic State, President Obama clearly distinguishes the out-group, terrorists, from anyone else who believes in "the universal right to speak your mind and to protest against authority … [or living in] a country where you're judged by the content of your character, rather than what you look like, or how you worship, or what your last name is, or where your family came from."[138] This distinction is in stark contrast to reports of the Islamic State punishment for civilians who broke the laws or defectors.[139] By describing the Islamic State's rule as authoritarian in nature, the President is challenging its notion of the glory days of Islam by publicly shaming those leaders who refuse these universal rights. Similarly, the President is sending a message to the patrons of other terrorist groups, such as governments claiming leadership over terrorist groups who rival the Islamic State that the United States will not crumble in the face of the Islamic State. Moreover, if these patrons, and their client terrorist groups, do not present an existential

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[137] Obama.

[138] Obama.

[139] Rukmini Callimachi, "The ISIS Files," *New York Times*, April 4, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/04/world/middleeast/isis-documents-mosul-iraq.html.

honor challenge to the United States, the U.S. government may be open to non-violent alternatives.

Group members must receive a positive social identity from their group that is distinct from other groups; if not, the group will fail to exist.[140] After the United States failed to capitalize on the narrative opportunities presented previously in 2016 by suggesting non-violent alternatives to the Islamic State for its in-group members, former Islamic State members are now joining al Qaeda ranks, following rapid battlefield failures to maintain caliphate ground.[141] Even more bizarrely, former Islamic State fighters are joining forces with the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), a collection of mostly Shiite militias in Iraq. On face value, that type of collaboration should never happen. However, after deeper analysis, both sides can reap tangible benefits. Islamic State fighters, shunned by families and friends, can re-enter Iraqi society, while the PMF are able to expand into Sunni areas.[142] Had the U.S. government been conducting this ongoing analysis, it may have been able to target narrative messaging to ensure former Islamic State fighters joined a different positive-value, non-violent group, instead of another terrorist group.

B.   CONCLUSION

Narrative messages must be interpreted within their total social context. As presented in the fight over Mosul that began in November 2016, the two sides presented two opposing narratives, one of a U.S. president and the other of an Islamic State leader. Using the social identity analytical method framework to analyze the narratives illustrates that appropriated, rather than ascribed, in-group identifications continue to make a difference between terrorist groups, governments, and religious identifications more broadly, and that the U.S. government has failed to understand these nuances or to react

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[140] Brannan, Darken, and Strindberg, *A Practitioner's Way Forward*, 75.

[141] Jason Burke, "Al-Qaida Moves In to Recruit from Islamic State and Its Affiliates," *Guardian*, January 19, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/19/al-qaida-recruit-from-islamic-state-affiliates-isis.

[142] Vera Mironova and Mohammed Hussein, "Islamic State Fighters Are Back, and This Time They're Taking up Arms with Shiite Militias," Foreign Policy, October 15, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/15/islamic-state-fighters-are-back-and-this-time-theyre-taking-up-arms-with-shiite-militias/.

correctly to the broader terrorist landscape. In the next chapter, this thesis proposes the recommendations for implementing a new comprehensive counterterrorism narrative.

IV.   RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION, AND CONCLUSION

U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy from the post-9/11 period from 2001 to 2016 has proved largely ineffective. A content analysis of 75 U.S. presidential speeches and 50 DOS Twitter postings, and a comprehensive measurement of U.S. performative power, suggest a reason for that failure: the only narrative factor with a negative correlation with terrorist attacks was promoting commonality. Increased messaging with this factor is correlated to a decrease in terrorist attacks. To understand when to use this messaging more fully, this thesis applied an evaluative framework, the social identity analytical method, to two speeches, one delivered by the Islamic State leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2016 and one delivered by U.S. President Obama in December 2016, which demonstrated that the U.S. government has neither succeeded in understanding the terrorist in-group identification nuances nor in appropriately reacting to the larger terrorist social context. This analysis showed that to target messaging effectively, the framework should be applied on a consistent basis. Although this thesis did not show a relationship between performative power and terrorist attacks, this metric helps to show how narrative fits into a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

A.   RECOMMENDATIONS

1.   Promote Commonality

The content analysis presented at the beginning of this thesis determined that promoting commonality was the only narrative factor that has a negative correlation with terrorist attacks. The United States should deliver narratives that promote commonality and echo the cooperation and connections other people have with American values. For example, a speech could highlight shared visions of a common future, values, and principles like peace and progress, security and human dignity that the world could advance together. When the U.S. government wants to target individuals who are already questioning the value of maintaining membership in a terrorist group, the United States may target such individuals with proactive narrative messaging and promote

commonality. This messaging could cause an individual to reevaluate whether attachment to the out-group with which the terrorist group competes (in this case, the U.S., or Western culture) were more positive than membership of the in-group (the terrorist group). If so, that individual could be persuaded to re-categorize, de-categorize, or cross-categorize to an alternative.

Narratives will likely be viewed as an honor challenge by the terrorist in-group or by their patrons or clients. It is critical to understand who will respond to what part of the narrative message and how the out-group will view it. For example, if members of the terrorist in-group are questioning or reevaluating their membership in that in-group, there can be incentives to defect from the in-group that may potentially cause the disintegration of the group. The U.S. government should capitalize on these opportunities by providing an incentive, a narrative that causes individuals to question their membership. It is therefore necessary to understand why individuals choose to join the Islamic State and countering the narrative presented by the in-group leader to maintain membership.

2. Counterterrorism Policy Needs to be Comprehensive (Performative Power)

The way in which governments create narratives is significant as part of the overall counterterrorism performative power. When governments create narratives, it should be framed within an overall counterterrorism strategy. Both the type of counterterrorism policy and also the message that policy communicates to terrorists is critical. A strictly technical approach to measuring effectiveness, such as taking the number of terrorist attacks in a given year as a result of certain policies, is often too limited in understanding the full context. The performative power of counterterrorism strategies and a government's attempts to market its counterterrorism policy are important in this battle of perceptions.[143]

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[143] De Graaf , *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance*, 230.

3. Conduct the Social Identity Analytical Method

Terrorist groups are simply organizations made up of people. As a result, they can be analyzed, understood, and countered by using evaluative tools like the social identity analytical method framework. To identify the optimally effective target for delivering narratives that promote commonality, the U.S. government should have researchers conducting the social identity analytical method on the various terrorist groups. The government must know which commonality narrative features are most effective to tell to whom at what time, which can only be fruitful if the government understands the larger social context in which terrorist groups exist.

B. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Create an Interagency Office

An interagency counterterrorism office would be best established under the DHS. The DHS is responsible for a variety of programs and activities abroad and domestically to counter terrorist groups and their activities. It is better suited than the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), which focuses on intelligence analysis and has restrictions on activities it can engage in domestically, or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which has the lead on terrorist activities domestically but does not have the same clout or audience internationally. The DHS was created to oversee and coordinate comprehensive national strategies "to safeguard the country against terrorism and respond to any future attacks."[144] Creating an interagency counterterrorism office would be similar to the development of the National Vetting Center in February 2018, led by the DHS, which coordinates multiple federal agencies to vet individuals who seek to enter or remain within the United States.[145] To develop a comprehensive counterterrorism narrative strategy, a collaborative, interagency counterterrorism office is best placed within the DHS.

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[144] "Creation of the Department of Homeland Security," Department of Homeland Security, September 24, 2015, https://www.dhs.gov/creation-department-homeland-security.

[145] "The National Vetting Center," Department of Homeland Security, April 2, 2018, https://www.dhs.gov/news/2018/02/06/national-vetting-center.

2. Integrate Social Identity Analytical Method Analysis

Analysts in this office would be responsible for integrating ongoing social identity analytical method analysis in all areas of social groups and movements worldwide and domestically, as well as keeping track of opportune moments for targeting narratives. Due to the complex nature of this type of analysis, the social identity analytical method forces the researcher to specialize, or to acquire a deeper knowledge of a smaller number of groups. When analysts are fluent in the social identity analytical method analysis, the identification of opportunities, knowing what message is possible, and choosing the type and category will not be a bureaucratic and slow process. This counterterrorism office would also maintain metrics on the entire U.S. government performative power on a regular basis.

3. Achieve Unified Action across Agencies

Under one office, the interagency office would be comprised of officers from the DOS (for external social groups) and Department of Justice (FBI, for internal social movements), with liaisons from the Executive Office and the Department of Defense and Congress. While this thesis only studied presidential speeches, other political leaders make legislation and deliver speeches that explain counterterrorism policies. The interagency counterterrorism office must incorporate the development of counterterrorism narrative strategy for all those who speak on behalf of the U.S. government.

Budgeting would not change. The proposed interagency office would be filled with already existing positions. The U.S. government would divert regular ongoing training funding to train its analysts on the social identity analytical method. Lastly, instead of producing narratives that have no correlation to a decrease in terrorist attacks (counter-messaging, such as undermining adversarial leadership or countering perceptions), the U.S. government can change its narrative messaging to promoting commonality, which has a negative correlation with terrorist attacks. See Table 1 for a summary of these policy recommendations.

Table 1.   Summary of Policy Recommendations

Recommendation	Implementation Timeline	Consequence
1. Write narratives that promote commonality, because it is the only narrative factor with a statistical negative correlation with terrorist attacks.	Immediately	No increase in budget. Change the narratives that are being produced to more of promoting commonality and less factors that do not affect terrorist attacks.
2. Maintain metrics on overall performative power.	October 1, 2019 (beginning of Fiscal Year 2020)	No increase in budget. Transfer pre-existing counterterrorism analysts to this position. Divert annual training funds to provide analysts with training on performative power.
3. Conduct Social Identity Analytical Method analysis on all social movements and groups worldwide.	October 1, 2019 (beginning of Fiscal Year 2020)	No increase in budget. Transfer pre-existing counterterrorism analysts to this office, housed at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Divert annual training funds to provide analysts with training on the framework.

C.   CONCLUSION

U.S. counterterrorism narrative strategy from the post-9/11 period from 2001 to 2016 has proved largely ineffective. Content analysis of 75 U.S. presidential speeches, 50 DOS Twitter postings, and the measurement of U.S. performative power demonstrated that only the narrative factor of promoting commonality has a negative correlation with terrorist attacks. More messages promoting commonality correlates to decreased terrorist attacks. To understand when to use this messaging more fully, the social identity analytical method demonstrated that the U.S. government did not completely comprehend social in-group identification nuances. It also did not know how to react to the larger terrorist social context appropriately. To target messaging effectively, the framework

should be applied on a consistent basis, to target narrative messages that promote commonality within a larger comprehensive counterterrorism strategy.

APPENDIX A. LIST OF U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES SELECTED FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS (2013–2016)

Date	Location	Title
3/23/13	Tel Aviv, Israel	Remarks of President Barack Obama to the People of Israel
4/18/13	Boston, Massachusetts	Remarks by the President at Interfaith Service in Boston, MA
6/17/13	Belfast, Northern Ireland	Remarks by President Obama and Mrs. Obama in Town Hall with Youth of Northern Ireland
6/19/13	Berlin, Germany	Remarks by President Obama at the Brandenburg Gate—Berlin, Germany
6/27/13	Goree Island, Senegal	Remarks by the President at Civil Society Organization Meeting
6/30/13	Cape Town, South Africa	Remarks by President Obama at the University of Cape Town
3/26/14	Brussels, Belgium	Remarks by the President in Address to European Youth
4/24/14	Tokyo, Japan	Remarks by President Obama to Miraikan Science and Youth Expo
4/27/14	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Remarks by President Obama at the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Center
9/3/14	Tallinn, Estonia	Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia
11/14/14	Rangoon, Burma	Remarks by President Obama at Youth Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall
11/15/14	Queensland, New Zealand	Remarks by President Obama at the University of Queensland

Date	Location	Title
1/27/15	New Delhi, India	Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of India
4/9/15	Kingston, Jamaica	Remarks by President Obama in Town Hall with Young Leaders of the Americas
4/10/15	Panama City, Panama	Remarks by President Obama at the Civil Society Forum
7/26/15	Nairobi, Kenya	Remarks by President Obama to the Kenyan People
7/28/15	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Remarks by President Obama to the People of Africa
11/20/15	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Remarks by the President in YSEALI Town Hall
12/19/15	San Bernardino, California	Remarks by the President After Meeting the Families of the Victims of the San Bernardino Shooting
4/25/16	Hannover, Germany	Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Europe
5/24/16	Hanoi, Vietnam	Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Vietnam
6/13/16	Washington, D.C.	Remarks by the President After Briefing on the Attack in Orlando, Florida
8/3/16	Washington, D.C.	Remarks by the President at the Young African Leaders Initiative Town Hall
9/6/16	Vientiane, Laos	Remarks of President Obama to the People of Laos
11/16/16	Athens, Greece	Remarks by President Obama at Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens, Greece

APPENDIX B. U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES AND CONTENT ANALYSIS (2013–2016)

Date	President	Title	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
3/23/13	Obama	Remarks of President Barack Obama to the People of Israel	0	0	6	.2	11	.37	13	.43	30
4/18/13	Obama	Remarks by the President at Interfaith Service in Boston, MA	1	.07	3	.2	7	.47	4	.27	15
6/17/13	Obama	Remarks by President Obama and Mrs. Obama in Town Hall with Youth of Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	10	.59	7	.41	17
6/19/13	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at the Brandenburg Gate - Berlin, Germany	0	0	1	.05	8	.38	12	.57	21
6/27/13	Obama	Remarks by the President at Civil Society Organization Meeting	0	0	0	0	3	.60	2	.40	5

Date	President	Title	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
6/30/13	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at the University of Cape Town	1	.04	0	0	12	.52	10	.43	23
3/26/14	Obama	Remarks by the President in Address to European Youth	0	0	1	.05	3	.17	14	.78	18
4/24/14	Obama	Remarks by President Obama to Miraikan Science and Youth Expo	0	0	0	0	2	.40	3	.60	5
4/27/14	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Center	0	0	0	0	2	.50	2	.50	4
9/3/14	Obama	Remarks by President Obama to the People of Estonia	0	0	0	0	6	.43	8	.57	14
11/14/14	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at Youth Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Town Hall	0	0	0	0	7	.50	7	.50	14

Date	President	Title	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
11/15/14	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at the University of Queensland	0	0	1	.03	16	.47	17	.50	34
1/27/15	Obama	Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of India	0	0	2	.08	6	.25	16	.67	24
4/9/15	Obama	Remarks by President Obama in Town Hall with Young Leaders of the Americas	0	0	0	0	7	.70	3	.30	10
4/10/15	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at the Civil Society Forum	0	0	0	0	10	.71	4	.29	14
7/26/15	Obama	Remarks by President Obama to the Kenyan People	0	0	4	.14	14	.50	10	.36	28
7/28/15	Obama	Remarks by President Obama to the People of Africa	2	.06	1	.03	17	.51	13	.39	33
11/20/15	Obama	Remarks by the President in YSEALI Town Hall	0	0	0	0	4	.50	4	.5	8

Date	President	Title	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
12/19/15	Obama	Remarks by the President After Meeting the Families of the Victims of the San Bernardino Shooting	0	0	0	0	1	.50	1	.5	2
4/25/16	Obama	Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Europe	1	.04	2	.07	13	.48	11	.41	27
5/24/16	Obama	Remarks by President Obama in Address to the People of Vietnam	0	0	0	0	12	.48	13	.52	25
6/13/16	Obama	Remarks by the President After Briefing on the Attack in Orlando, Florida	1	.25	1	.25	0	0	2	.50	4
8/3/16	Obama	Remarks by the President at the Young African Leaders Initiative Town Hall	0	0	0	0	2	.33	4	.67	6
9/6/16	Obama	Remarks of President Obama to the People of Laos	0	0	0	0	13	.65	7	.35	20

Date	President	Title	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
11/16/16	Obama	Remarks by President Obama at Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens, Greece	1	.03	0	0	19	.56	14	.41	34

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APPENDIX C. LIST OF U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE TWEETS AND CONTENT ANALYSIS

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
3/21/14	#alShabaab resorts 2 recruiting a grandfather as suicide bomber, clear indication of desperation	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
4/25/14	@Dawla_NewsMedia this saying exposes #ISIS lies for the vast majority of those tortured and killed by #ISIS are Muslims	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
6/7/14	@Islamic_States this poor fellow should seek the German rapper @AbuMamadou to realize that becoming a terrorist has dire consequences	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9/21/14	#ISIS claims to speak for Muslims, but it is a lie. They are their killers	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
9/22/14	Approx 30 Al Shabaab members surrendering per day, taking advantage of Somali amnesty program	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
10/8/14	Canadian Muslims: #ISIS fighters are repugnant to followers of Islam	1	.5	0	0	0	0	1	.5	2
10/10/14	Reports: #ISIS executes female former Iraqi MP Iman al-Salman - kidnapped a month ago, killed, body thrown in well	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
10/13/14	Taliban victim survives, thrives, becomes youngest person to ever win Nobel Peace Prize	0	0	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	2
10/14/14	Syria: Small guerilla groups angry at crimes against Syrian people, hunting own & killing #ISIS	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
10/15/15	#ISIS sympathizer attempts to justify #ISIS enslaving, violating non-Muslim females [image of re-tweet "Taking female kafirs as salves is ibadah (an act of worship)…"]	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10/20/14	Kobane: #ISIS lost many men, heavy equipment, but civilians still trapped under #ISIS attack	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
10/21/14	Jordanian Queen: Worst #ISIS crime has been associating Islam with extremism	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/21/14	Reports: Coalition airstrikes kill 3 high-level #ISIS leaders, including deputy to Baghdadi [image of ISIS organizational chart]	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
12/26/14	Iraq: #ISIS cut Internet service to Mosul, Anbar, & Ninewa to keep news, pics of their victims from view	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/30/14	Somalia: major Al Shabaab leader now in government hands - $3M reward offered for his capture	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
2/22/15	Brother of Kayla Mueller, aid worked killed as #ISIS hostage: "May God keep you from any more harm, any more hurt."	1	.5	0	0	0	0	1	.5	2
4/11/15	ISIS executes 300 prisoners in Qaim, Iraq, tribal chief says	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5/3/15	"Take me home, Dad—please take me home. Get me out of here." British women who moved to Syria	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
5/29/15	"Desperate" #ISIS fighters set Beiji oil refinery ablaze as Iraqi security forces advance	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
6/5/15	Boko Haram: "a mindless, godless group as far away from Islam as you can think of," said #Nigeria President @Mbuhari	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
7/13/15	Parallel can be drawn between #ISIS treatment of looted works of art and what the Nazis did: Lawyer	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8/29/15	@UNESCO chief: #ISIS seeks to "deprive the Syrian people of its knowledge, identity, and history." #HeritageInPeril	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
10/21/15	War crime researchers probing #ISIS over Yazidi massacre	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
10/23/15	UN reports death or injury of 774 Taiz women between March & October 2015 at hands of Houthi and Saleh militias	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10/25/15	"Scholars (must) protect our youth and keep them from being entrapped by message of extremists," Dr. Al Arabi	1	.5	0	0	0	0	1	.5	2
10/30/15	#ISIS arrested and executed 21 militants of Caucasian nationalities near Aleppo for desertion	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
11/3/15	"At least 12 children have been reportedly killed by Islamic State radicals." Saeed Mamuzini, media officer for KDP	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
11/6/15	Raqqa man: #ISIS fighters ask me to get them out; last year I helped four Jordanian fighters escape Daesh	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
11/7/15	Somali journalist killed by #AlShabaab was driven to show positive side of Somalia	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
11/9/15	#LetGirlsLearn program coming to Pakistan #FLOTUS	0	0	0	0	1	.5	1	.5	2
11/10/15	Egyptian police killed a top #ISIS operative in the capital implicated in a string of attacks	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
11/12/15	U.S. Ambassador at Nigerian govt spokesperson training: coordinate your efforts to counter #BokoHaram propaganda	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
11/15/15	National Hockey League paid tribute to #Parisattacks victims with colors of French flag	0	0	0	0	1	.5	1	.5	2
11/16/15	Nigerian army repels #BokoHaram attack in #Borno town; 7 terrorists killed, weapons captured	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/3/15	#ISISagainstWomen [image of woman crying with words "tied the women to the back of a pickup truck and dragged them through the streets until they were covered in…"]	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/4/15	Officials say more than 60 prisoners, mostly Afghan security personnel, were freed in joint U.S.-Afghan operation	0	0	1	.5	0	0	1	.5	2
12/10/15	"The overwhelming majority of American Muslims and Muslims worldwide, are men, women and children of peace." @DHSgov Sec Jeh Johnson	1	.5	0	0	1	.5	0	0	2
12/13/15	Pentagon: #ISIS's Abu Saleh dead; was the director of terror group's finances & coordinator of profits	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
12/15/15	Pakistan: 837 terrorist hideouts destroyed, main installations dismantled in military operation	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
12/20/15	#ISIS terrorists kill Iraqi teacher for refusing to disseminate #Daesh propaganda	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/21/15	#Daesh "has made Yazidi women into flesh to be trafficked in," 21-year-old Yazidi woman tells UN Security Council	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/25/15	#NoToDaesh [image of imam with words: "The recruiters wouldn't leave him alone. They were on social media with him at all hours, they tweet him at night, irst thing in the morning." US Imam on trying to help boy being wooed by ISIS recruiters"]	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
12/26/15	#NoToDaesh #DefeatingDaesh [image of footprint in mud with words "#WHYTHEYLEFTDAESH"]	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
12/29/15	#DefeatingDaesh #CoalitionProgress [with infographic: $$$ Destroyed, hundreds of Daesh oil refineries, wells, fields and trucks to limit profits from oil sales, listed sanctions against individuals & businesses trading with Daesh, stopping oil refinery	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
	equipment reaching Daesh-held territories, improving border security around Iraq and Syria to curtail oil smuggling, preventing sales of antiquities]									
1/4/16	Researcher: #ISIS ramping up propaganda efforts to mask its recent major losses. #DaeshLiesExposed	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
1/12/16	[Image of President Obama speaking with woman in headscarf at table with words: "Nations are stronger when people of all faiths feel that they are welcome, that they too, are full and equal members of our countries." #ReligiousFreedom]	0	0	0	0	1	.5	1	.5	2
2/8/16	#DaeshDefectors #WhyTheyLeftDAESH [Image of man's face wrapped in scarf with words: "Saleh worked as a translator for DAESH. His job was to convince hostages that they were safe up to the moment of their execution. After witnessing such cruelty, he fled from DAESH afraid for his own life."]	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2
2/12/16	"Joining #ISIS will not make you successful… it's just going to make you an outcast." #OpenYourEyes	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Date	@ThinkAgain_DOS Twitter Post	Counter Perceptions	Counter Perceptions Index	Undermine Adversarial Leadership	Undermine Adversarial Leadership Index	Positive Vision	Positive Vision Index	Promote Commonality	Promote Commonality Index	Total
2/17/16	U.S. providing more than $195M in humanitarian aid for #BokoHaram affected populations, including IDPs & refugees	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
3/4/16	Philippines military kills 24 #ISIS supporters during raid on extremist stronghold, says spokesman. #DefeatingDeash [misspelling in tweet]	1	.5	1	.5	0	0	0	0	2

APPENDIX D. PERFORMATIVE POWER OF U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Priority of the topic: central	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Level of politicization: high	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Threat demarcation: broad	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Threat definition and presentation	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
Link to existing discourses of threats & enemy images	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Public mobilization, public CT campaigns	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
Creation and deployment of CT units	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Intro of special terrorism laws/ other anti-terrorism measures	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revising and accentuating existing legislation	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Staging major terrorism trials	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Refusing to enter negotiations, dialogue, reform, integration activities	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Large mental distance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
Perceived vulnerability: high risk perception for CT community	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Unique level of interest & attention of CT issues	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0

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