

Obama's Counterterrorism Policy and the Washington Post's Editorials: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Media-State Interaction

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Abstract

American mass media's relation with the US government in foreign policy decision-making has been the subject of numerous studies in the interdisciplinary field of political communication. This paper reexamines the interaction between the media and the government in the US foreign policy decision-making process, analyzing the possible congruity and/or incongruity between The Washington Post's commentaries and former US President Barack Obama's anti-terrorism campaign. A Critical Discourse Analysis of two Obama statements on counterterrorism, one Washington Post Op-Ed and one editorial suggest that there is an agreement between Obama's speeches and the corresponding newspaper articles in topics such as choosing defense over offense, changing the conventional war trend, deploying troops, closing down GTMO, avoiding torture and the violation of American citizens' privacy, freedom of press, avoiding giving too much importance to terrorists, and increasing air marshals on flights. Hence, this study confirms the theory of Robinson, which argues that the media-state relation, i.e. the relationship between The Washington Post's commentaries and President Barack Obama's statements, is a bidirectional process in which both American elite media and the US government are involved in attempting to influence the other party under certain conditions.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Media-State Interaction, Obama's Counterterrorism Policy, Robinson's Media-State Theory, The Washington Post

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1. Introduction

Mass media whether print, broadcasting, online, or social media, have been under the increasing examination of both scholars and practitioners in the field of communication as a means of collecting, processing, producing, disseminating, sharing and exchanging information and news for the use of peers, the public, experts and officials. In keeping pace with media's ever rising influence in the modern life, academic studies have stepped beyond the field of communication to include other fields of human knowledge. American mass media's relation with the US government in foreign policy decision-making has also come under the focus of the academic community in politics, international relations (IR), political economy, etc. As a result, the news media have been the subject of studies in the resourceful interdisciplinary field of political communication.

Discussions regarding the interaction between media and state have dominated research, including work done by, McCombs & Shaw (1972), Entman (1989), Bennett (1990), McCombs & Reynolds (2002), McCombs (2005), Herman & Chomsky (1988), Robinson (2002), Louw (2006), Willis (2007), Bennett (2011), Biria & Mohammadi (2012), Alkatiri (2013), Zahariadis (2016), and Solomon (2018). This paper aims to explore the interaction between the media and the government in the foreign policy decision-making of the United States. Considering that the research on different aspects of this mutual interaction could develop a deeper insight into the functions of the media within the American establishment, this paper attempts to provide an updated analysis of mainstream newspapers' relation with the US government. The Washington Post is one of the oldest and most influential American print media, which has historically had a significant record in following up on political developments. The anti-terror campaign

was one of the major political agendas of the Obama administration that was widely covered by the US mass media including the Post.

The Washington Post was founded in 1877 by Stilson Hutchins to promote the agenda of the Democratic Party. Historically, it has been the subject of studies on presidential elections, terrorism, climate change, sexism, etc. (Entman, 1991; Van Dijk, 1998; Reta, 2000). Hence, The Washington Post is regarded as one of the mainstream American print media that could offer a clear picture of the relation between media and politics in the United States.

Analyzing the interaction between The Washington Post and Obama's anti-terror campaign could dissect the media-state relation. The findings are to help answer questions on how the American elite interplayed with the Obama administration on a daily basis in terms of countering terrorism, what policy recommendations the Post gave to Obama's anti-terrorism campaign, and whether these recommendations were implemented by the Obama administration. Norman Fairclough's three-layer Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) was used as the method (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; 2009) to conduct the research. Among The Washington Post's commentaries on Barack Obama's anti-terrorism strategy, the research focuses on the commentaries on his first press conference and first address regarding the issue and critically analyzes the counterterrorism discourse in two corresponding commentaries through the use of political communication theories.¹

1. This paper is based on a PhD dissertation by the author, which analyzed eight Obama statements and 13 corresponding commentaries published in The Washington Post and The New York Times on his anti-terrorism remarks. To observe the journal's submission standard of length, an abridged version was reproduced by sampling the first two Obama speeches and the two corresponding articles of the Post.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical findings from the field of political communication on the relation between media and state were employed to explain, analyze and understand the relation between The Washington Post's editorials and Obama's anti-terror campaign.

With regard to the relation between news media and the policy decision making in the United States and globally, two major theories, among others, have theorized on *Who is influencing whom?* – Agenda-Setting and Indexing. On whether media can affect foreign policy decision-making, Mintz and DeRouen (2010, p. 160) suggest that two concepts have been offered: CNN Effect and Manufacturing Consent. Also Robinson's Policy-Media Interaction Model (2000) and his Media-State Theory (2001) were reviewed because they provide for a duplex process in which both the American elite media and the US government set out to influence the other party.

On the role of media in policy making, the agenda-setting model of McCombs and Shaw (1972) as well as McCombs and Reynolds (2002, p. 1) suggests the specific ability of the news media "to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda". Agenda setting places more weight on the media's end in a media-policy continuum. Likewise, CNN Effect is a concept dealing with the role of mass media in deciding the foreign policy orientation and military intervention. The coverage of global news networks like the US-based Cable News Network (CNN) has influenced foreign policy decision-making and international relations (Joon, 2008). In established works, Livingston (1997), Harmon (1999), and Belknap (2002) probed the CNN and how its reporting influenced US military operations overseas. Ever since, the term CNN Effect has been generalized and used for the overall media effect on politicians.

Due to shortcomings of agenda-setting, the Indexing Theory of Lance Bennett, centering on news content and press-state relationship was reviewed as an alternative theory in the research. Indexing "states that the range of debates on public affairs appearing in the news is indexed to the range of debates present in mainstream government discourse" (Edy, 2008, p. 329). Indexing Theory gives more credit to the role of (government) elites at the opposite end of the media-policy continuum. His premise (Bennett, 1990) and (Bennett, 2011) at its core "predicts that news content on political and public policy issues will generally follow the parameters of elite debate" (Lawrence, 2012).

In a world of mediated politics (Bennett & Entman, 2001) and with the 'media-ization' of politics (Louw, 2006), mass media, notably the 24-hour satellite TV channels and the .com industry have impacted the decision-making process at the domestic and foreign policy levels. Media-ization is "associated with the media-driven process that affects politics" and patterns in political communications (Mazzoleni, 2008, p. 447). Consequently, the media have been transformed from an information provider to one of players in the domestic and international policy-making processes.

Scholars in the middle of the spectrum regard the media-state relation as a two-way process (Robinson, 2002), in which both the American elite media and the US government take part and attempt to shape the behavior of the other end under particular conditions. Robinson's Policy-Media Interaction Model (2000) is based on Bennett (1990); Bennett and Entman (2001) had asserted that media had little or no influence on policy decision-making. Robinson moderated Bennett's strong statement by suggesting that the media are non-influential in policy decisions when there is

“consensus” on a specific issue among the elites. However, he believed in the possibility of media influence under conditions of elite “dissensus” and policy uncertainty at the domestic and international levels. Robinson (2001) states that his Media-State Theory is a two-way process in which both the American elite media and the US government take part and attempt to influence the other party.

To demonstrate the manner in which the media-state interaction takes place between The Washington Post and Obama’s anti-terror campaign and, hence, to help answer the research questions, the researchers first focused on the Agenda-Setting Theory and Indexing Theory. Next, Robinson’s Media-State Theory, along with his Policy-Media Interaction Model, were employed as a moderate way between these polemic ends to track the two-way media-state relation.

3. Methodology

To investigate the congruity, or lack thereof, between The Washington Post articles and Obama’s anti-terror campaign, a functional methodology is required to analyze the texts. The Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) put forward by Fairclough (2009) was selected for the purpose of this study from existing critical discourse analysis approaches (CDA) for three outstanding advantages. DRA has a clear structure, it is original in that it is one of the pioneering CDA approaches inspiring several studies, and it has an order of consistency and its data analysis is reliable (Imani, 2015).

DRA is based on Fairclough's (1989, 1995) three-stage approach to the critical discourse analysis as follows:

1. **Description** of the formal properties of the text, seeing it as a product.
2. **Interpretation** of the relationship between text and interaction, seeing the text as a product of a process of production.
3. **Explanation** of the relation between interaction and social context with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects. (Imani, 2015)

4. Findings and Discussion

This paper is based on the critical discourse analysis of two Obama's speeches / statements on counterterrorism along with two related Washington Post Op-Eds/editorials, which indicate a congruity between the government's policies and the media under certain conditions. The DRA's three-stage approach probed counterterrorism discourse in President Obama's statements, as well as the corresponding commentaries in The Washington Post. What follows is an analysis of this discourse in terms of description, interpretation and explanation, which support the two-way media-state relation.

4.1. Obama Speech 1: Press Conference on Security Following Christmas Terror Attempt (Obama, 2010)

4.1.1. Description and Interpretation:

The press conference was held on 05.01.2010 regarding measures taken following the terrorist attack by Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal

al-Balawi on 30 December 2009. The speech develops two themes: failure of the security apparatus, for which Obama takes full responsibility, and orders his team to find the reason for the failure via a thorough review of security, and of the government's counterterrorism policies. His speech mainly addresses 'the Americans and the government agents'. One of the features of this text is lack of the use of the pronoun *we* (Obama and Americans) and significant use of pronoun *I*, followed by strong verbs. While this pronoun was also found in the first text, the use of *I* is highlighted and centralized in the second speech. Other forms of pronouns used are *we* (the government) and *they* (terrorists).

a) I (Obama):

This pronoun is followed by strong modals, verbs of demand, and words of power, authority, and knowledge. The use of the first person singular pronoun with its assigned verbs, e.g. "I will accept that", implies a heightened sense of authority and an image of a strong leader that does not avoid taking responsibility for the security system's failure. It also creates an image of Obama as an honest, e.g. "let me be clear" and "I will announce", as well as a determined, e.g. "I want" and "I demand", and precise, e.g. "that's exactly what I want", person, all of which are proper characteristics for a reliable leader who can be trusted.

b) We (Obama and the government):

This is the greatest portion, and it is filled with verbs of assurance, accounting for new policies and actions taken against terrorist attacks. A large number of *we* (the government) pronouns is a direct sign of taking responsibility and measures on the part of Obama and his team – probably hopelessly at this time – to ensure people that they are trying to fix the mistake. He repeatedly states

that "we can prevent future attacks". The phrase "to disrupt, dismantle and defeat their networks", is used with a strong tone, to highlight the features of authority and determination.

Tone of voice seems to be desperate and helpless because seven CIA agents – acting as the government's powerful hand in attacking terrorists – were killed, casting doubts on whether the government can protect its own agents against terrorists, let alone the people. This speech also reflects on the recommendation by the first Washington Post editorial to increase defenses, i.e. "we'll enhance our defenses".

c) We (Obama and people):

The use of "we" (Obama and people) is missing. This can be due to the nature of the attack which was made on government's agents as an issue that is not related to the public directly. Moreover, Obama is probably showing he is ready to take responsibilities for the security system's failure rather than share them with people. Another possible explanation might be the fact that Obama prefers to talk about what he, as the most powerful statesman in the USA, is supposed and expected to say about his measures rather than unity among people.

d) They (terrorists):

Here, Obama is talking about the enemy, but the matter is more highlighted than in his previous speeches on terrorism. The enemy here is very dangerous, cunning, and thus complicated and difficult to defeat. In this sense, the government needs to adopt new policies to be able to resist an evolving and developing enemy.

He also uses the metaphor taking root. The tree metaphor represents slow growth and yielding fruits. Tree roots gradually go

deeper in the ground, and if a tree is not cut, it will be harder to destroy. While they are constantly evolving and adapting, the government's policies must also evolve and adapt. This section partly acts as a disclaimer for the failure of the security apparatus by picturing the enemy as too complicated and subtle, and partly acts as a justification to adopt new policies.

4.1.2. Explanation:

Using a powerful and authoritative language as a conventional image-making or image-saving strategy may have an opposite meaning, i.e., the speaker is desperate and in sheer need of saving his image and power. Thus, Obama tries to create a powerful image in order to improve his tarnished one. He might be trying to defend this image against overt and sharp criticisms during the previous few days, trying to stabilize his power. Two attacks, within an interval of a few days, one of which was successful, put Obama in a difficult situation, portraying him as incapable of providing the people with safety and protecting American lives. The attack was made at the beginning of his career when he was still under a lot of criticism for being black, and was even claimed to be a Muslim, or not born American.

Obama stated that he tasked his team of experts to find the reasons behind the security failure and to fix them. The urgency of this act can send a second indirect message that any advice and comments from experts outside Obama's team of experts will not be ignored, and will even be welcomed. In such a demanding situation, considering all of the comments and advice put forward by elites such as those writing for The Washington Post seems natural and understandable.

Moreover, referring to the concerns and worries also raised in the first article (WP1), e.g. systemic failure, concern about recruiting militants by Al-Qaeda, weakness of the defensive system as a result of paying too much attention to offence, weakness of his allies, and concerns over new security technologies replacing well-trained professionals, demonstrates the influence of the first text on the second one. Obama agrees with the concerns mentioned in that article and answers the raised questions.

Firstly, regarding the security failure, he repeatedly suggests a thorough review of the security system by his expert team. Secondly, he provides a long list of reforms to "enhance [the] defensive" system. Thirdly, regarding recruiting militants by Al-Qaeda, he says that he is planning to close down websites accessible to Al-Qaeda members. Fourthly, on the issue of the weakness of his allies, he proposes deepening cooperation with international partners. Finally, using more air marshals on flights was listed as one of his latest strategies as a response to the concern on new technologies replacing professionals.

Altogether these imply the great influence of the newspaper article (WP1) on his speech and policies, while the first article – to be analyzed – partly agreed with some of his policies and aimed to free the government from too much responsibility.

Table 1: Summary of Obama Speech 1

Words	1,343
Date	05.01.2010
Context	Following the attack killing 7 CIA agents
Features of the Created Image	Heightened sense of authority, strong, responsible, honest, determined, precise, reliable, trustable, consistent, and determined At the same time it appears to be one of desperation and helplessness
Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A report on system failure (taking blame and responsibility and making efforts to make things right by sticking to the position of power and not trying not to lose his powerful position) 2. Counterterrorism policies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. increasing air travel security system: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. New screening and security for all flights ii. more explosive detection teams at airports; iii. more air marshals on flights iv. review and update terrorist watch list system b. Closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO) as a source for Al-Qaeda recruitment
Pronominal Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I (Obama) 2. We (Obama and his government) 3. They (Terrorists)
Main Tone	Assuring, promising, demanding, optimistic, helpless
Main Purpose	Gaining people's trust and avoiding criticisms; defending his position; highlighting the difficulty of defeating the complicated and evolving terrorist acts
Political Approach	Increasing defensive measures; increasing air marshals; closing GTMO;
Audience	Americans and government agents

4.2. The Washington Post 1: Al-Qaeda has a new strategy. Obama needs one, too. (Hoffman, 2010)

The Washington Post Op-Ed (**WP1**) was written on January 10, 2010 by Bruce Hoffman, a professor of security studies at Georgetown University and a senior fellow at the US Military Academy's Combating Terrorism Center, and tackled Obama's speech on January 5, 2010.

This article titled **Al-Qaeda has a new strategy. Obama needs one, too** approves and disapproves with parts of Obama's policies. It suggests that Obama needs a new strategy because Al-Qaeda is using a new one. This is exactly what Obama said in his speech. Hence, according to the article, following the strategies proposed by Obama in Text 1 as a continuation of the old policies founded by George W. Bush may not be effective enough to confront Al-Qaeda. As seen in this speech and in the following speeches, Obama clearly states that he needs a new strategy since Al-Qaeda is using new strategies, and that is exactly what Bruce Hoffman says when writing that Al-Qaeda is evolving, so the USA needs to evolve too. This shows an obvious relationship between this article and Obama's policies.

A thematic analysis of the editorial's comments suggests that the government is too obsessed with insignificant details. Regarding Obama's statement on the connection between the two attacks, this article proposes that the new strategy used by terrorists is one of killing gradually instead of killing at once. In other words, they are trying to "overwhelm, distract and exhaust" the government and their resources by:

1. Bombarding them by too much information to be handled,
2. Costing them too much money,

3. Weakening the USA's allies,
4. Destabilizing new regions,
5. Recruiting from new non-Muslim countries, and
6. Finding new gaps in the US defense system

The Op-Ed also comments that Al Qaeda has to be completely destroyed, in approval of Obama's statement in Text 1. The author also believes that the USA must stop terrorist recruitment, as Obama clearly said that the government is aware of this problem and is looking for ways to prevent it from happening, like by closing GTMO. The article reads: "the national security architecture built in the aftermath of Sept. 11 addresses yesterday's threats – but not today's and certainly not tomorrow's. It is superb at reacting and responding, but not at outsmarting. With our military overcommitted in Iraq and Afghanistan and our intelligence community overstretched by multiplying threats, a new approach to counterterrorism is essential". This is in line with what Obama states in his next speech (Text 2): "We ended the war in Iraq, and brought nearly 150,000 troops home. We pursued a new strategy in Afghanistan, and increased our training of Afghan forces".

Finally, the article refers to the cost of war as one of the strategies used by the terrorists to weaken the USA. As can be seen in Obama's speech, it is one of the main justifications used by him to employ drones, despite public criticism, and to withdraw US troops from Iraq, Yemen, and Syria, contrary to the republican agenda. It seems that this article not only partly guides the direction of Obama's policies, but it also paves the way for Obama to justify his future policies even if they are not totally approved by the newspaper. Hence, a mutual relation can be observed here between Obama using the media for his own goals and the media influencing his policies.

Table 2: Summary of WP1

WP1	01.10, 2010
Comments	Adopting new policies against the evolving nature of terrorists is necessary, Closing GTMO is necessary, Finding new gaps in U.S defensive system is necessary, Bush's policies must be discontinued, Giving too much importance to terrorists needs to be avoided, Spending too much money on fighting with terrorists puts the country in a bad economic situation, Avoiding weak allies is necessary, Destabilizing new regions helps terrorists.

4.3. Obama Speech 2: Address on Drones and Terrorism at the National Defense University (Obama, 2013)

4.3.1. Description and Interpretation:

This address was delivered on 23.05.2013. It was at a time when Obama was under criticism for being the first president who authorized the killing of US citizens identified as potential terrorists, as well as for authorizing drone strikes, which were said to be inexact and imprecise and would lead to civilian deaths. The speech has special features not found in the previous text (Text 1). For instance, the length of the speech and its detailed explanatory language – (i) to denounce some of Bush's counterterrorism policies, i.e. a feature that was missing in previous texts but was suggested by both WP1 and WP2, (ii) to explain the reasons of not accomplishing a number of policies promised by Obama in previous speeches, and (iii) to justify Obama's new policies – make this speech unprecedented. Moreover, introducing the two themes

of ending the traditional war and beginning a new war — as suggested by WP1 and WP2 — as well as addressing new groups including the media, the critics, and Muslim American citizens are two other special features of this speech as will be discussed below.

After a first reading, the speech seems to be addressed to the American people in general. However, a closer reading reveals that it divides Americans into different groups of Muslims, non-Muslims, the media, and the critics. It urges all of them to unite under the government policies. In this speech, an extensive account of the government's policies is divided into three periods or eras: prior to George W. Bush's presidency, during Bush's presidency, and during Obama's presidency. The speech starts with a brief history of counterterrorism policies in America from before the September 11 attacks in 2001, and up to 2013.

The main pronouns identified in this speech are as follows:

a) I (Obama):

When Obama uses the pronoun "I" – just as in the previous text – he uses strong verbs, e.g. "demand", and "authorized", along with strong words to imply his strong position and decision-making power, e.g. "commander-in-chief", and "president". This pronoun bears the same strong tone of the previous text; however, the frequency of use of this pronoun varies in the two presidential texts:

Text 1: Frequency = 1,343 words ÷ 15 cases = 1 in every 89 words. (High)

Text 2: Frequency = 5,900 words ÷ 26 cases = 1 in every 227 words. (Low)

There seems to be a meaningful relation between the purpose of the speech and the frequency of "I". Text 1 has the highest

frequency of I's, and it was delivered when seven US agents had been killed in a terrorist attack at the beginning of Obama's presidency. Text 2 has the second highest frequency of I's, and was written when Obama was introducing and justifying his new policies two years after being elected, while he had established his position but was declaring new policies. Hence, in Text 1, there seems to be the highest need for Obama to use a strong "I" pronoun to portray an image of himself as a strong, trustworthy, and above all, responsible leader, who not only does not avoid responsibilities, but also accepts mistakes and is determined to fix them. At the time of Text 2, there was no particular criticism against him vis-a-vis terrorist attacks, yet he needed the tone to justify his new policies such as using drones, a controversial topic at the time.

One more reason to use this pronoun, it seems, is that Obama tries to show he – like other presidents – has a limited power constrained by Congress and ethics, to explain why he had not been able to successfully remove terrorists or fulfill some of his promises, such as closing down GTMO. He admits that he cannot do everything he plans on doing. This rhetoric, i.e. claiming to be limited in Text 2 as opposed to his assertive decision-making power in Text 1, might be a reaction to criticism dominating the media at the time, questioning why he did not fulfill his promises, e.g. closing down GTMO, or might be a reflection of the media criticizing him for being obsessed with the terrorist attacks and suggesting he take things more easily (Text 1). Either way, this shows the mutual relation and influence between the government's policies and the media.

The third reason to use "I" might be to highlight the end of Bush era misguided policies, and the start of a new era, e.g. "when I took the office". Given that this feature was missing from Obama's early

speeches, as he aimed to continue his predecessor's security policies but was highly criticized by the media, e.g. WP1 and WP2, this reflects the influence of the media on governmental policies.

The fourth reason to use "I" with strong words denoting power and position, e.g. "as president" and "as commander-in-chief", seems to be the depiction of an image of Obama as a great, trustworthy, and reliable leader whose new policies are assuring security for the good of Americans. This is also a way to legalize the war as a way for him to perform his responsibilities. He is an elected official by the people, and he does what it takes – even if it is unethical – to save his people as his main responsibility and people must support his decisions as their commander-in-chief and elected president if he goes for war. This is the aspect of his speech that can influence the media and public opinion to win their support.

b) We (Obama and the Americans):

This part is longer in Text 2 than in Text 1, which implies a meaningful relationship between the context of speech and the use of this pronoun. In Text 1, there was no need to refer to the role of the people, as the context had to do with the attack on CIA agents, which was a serious government issue, and the role of the people was not relevant. In Text 2, there was a dire need to gain the support of people at the beginning of Obama's term in office, and hence a long section was dedicated to publicize and promote a sense of belonging and unity with the government among the people. However, this pronoun in the speech is used rather differently, implying a different role played by it.

"We" in this text is less abundant but consists of a longer part than in Text 1. It is inclusive to all Americans in the first text

without distinguishing them; however, in this speech it is more distinctive by referring to Muslims, non-Muslims, the media, government agents, and so on. Does this show a reduction in Obama's popularity among Americans over time that requires addressing each group more specifically, e.g. due to controversial new policies like using drones, or lack of fulfilling some of his promises like GTMO? Nonetheless, putting the government on the side of the people always plays an essential role of securing popular support behind government policies. However, the shortness of this part implies that at the time, people preferred to hear what the government was doing to protect them rather than how fruitful a unity with government can be.

Obama, *firstly*, starts by linking all Americans in their historical suffering from terrorism. Then, he moves on to the questionable decision that all Americans are choosing between "war and peace" that has preoccupied the Americans. This section seems to be a reflection of contradictory viewpoints in the USA about the war. Although Obama states that he favors peace and that the war on terrorism must end like all wars, he immediately states that there is no way out of this war, suggesting that terrorists will kill people if America withdraws from war. Then, he subtly justifies that America must fight this war, even though many lives may be lost. He justifies that by saying that even if some lives are lost as a result of war, more lives will be lost as a result of avoiding war because terrorists do not back off. Thus, he chooses war at the end of the speech: "we know a price must be paid for freedom ...". In fact, he does not seem to want to end war and achieve peace. Rather, he wants to end the conventional war and start a new war as suggested in WP1 and WP2.

Secondly, he frequently refers to the identity, values, and

international position of Americans. He states that his policies are not only in line with American values and identity but are also dedicated to maintain the US position in the world. This part takes an encouraging and emotional tone by referring to the standing, identity, and values of Americans, e.g. "the decisions that we are making now will define the type of nation - and world - that we leave to our children" and "That's who we are", in order to convince people to accept his new policies.

Finally, he talks about the relation between terrorism and Islam. He calls terrorism today a battle of ideas and ideologies rather than a battle of military operations. He addresses US Muslim citizens and states that he is not at war with Islam, and that the other Americans shouldn't be either. He tries to create a sense of belonging among Muslim and non-Muslim Americans. This was a new policy by Obama, which was missing in previous speeches. The issue of Islam and terrorism has always been one of the hottest and most controversial topics in America, among the people, the media, republicans and democrats. Hence, this policy – welcomed by some or frowned upon by others – can be another instance of one of the government's main policies that received little media attention as there was no reference to this issue in previous newspaper articles.

Another feature of this part is using metaphors of 'road' or 'journey', e.g. "served as our compass / crossroads / change its course / on the path". The metaphor of a road or journey illustrates a persistent phenomenon. This metaphor implies travelers, a leader, crossroads, a map, a compass, and a destination, which respectively refer to the people, Obama, being undecided in choosing war against peace, or choosing using drones vs. sending troops to war zones, the Constitution, the government's decisions, and victory.

The strong metaphor accompanied by strong modals such as “must” implies that people have to trust their president in their journey towards victory, as he knows the way best. His decisions, which are within the framework of the Constitution, act as the compass. In this journey the people must trust his decisions, e.g. choosing war against peace, or using drones against sending troops. Otherwise, they will take the wrong turn and will get lost on their journey. Other features of this metaphor are being patient and united, because a journey is usually a long process, and requires the cooperation of all people. Hence, not only does he try to win people's trust in his policies, but he also demands unity and patience from them. As will be discussed later, this is one feature of Obama's speeches that seems to influence the media in supporting his policies.

c) We (Obama and his government):

This is the biggest part of the speech and thus the most important, the same as Text 1 when Obama was introducing and highlighting his policies. Therefore, one expects the same scenario in this speech but with an overemphasized tone, i.e. introducing his new policies, justifying them, and briefing people on them.

Soon after he mentions taking office, e.g. "after I took office", his policies are presented using a 'we' that refers to his administration. This means that he is trying to share everything with his team: his satisfaction with his progress, e.g. "we have a great standing in the world", and his security achievements, e.g. "in sum, we are safer because of our efforts". There are, of course, losses too, but he tries to justify rather than escape them, e.g. "there is a price for everything". There are instances of unaccomplished promises, but they are justified too, e.g. "not all presidents can...". In the end, this is a quite a victorious situation considering the

limitations and restrictions of his power and his successes. He continues certain Bush administration policies, e.g. "hardening targets, tightening transportation security, giving law enforcement new tools to prevent terror", but stops at Bush's unethical policies, e.g. "expanded surveillance that questioned citizens' right to privacy, torture to interrogate enemies, and detaining individuals in a way that ran counter to the rule of law". However, he is still struggling to resolve some policies that he had promised to stop, e.g. closing down GTMO, while managing to reduce the number of the prisoners significantly. Finally, he introduced his new policies, e.g. "using drones, and binding ties with strong allies". These changes have had good results, e.g. "commitment to moral values, and having a strong standing in the world".

One of the new policies offered by Obama – as the first president to authorize it – was killing American citizens involved in terrorist activities, like Anwar Awlaki, by using drones. Using drones will be discussed in a separate part below. Thus, this policy can be seen as Obama's legacy, just as GTMO was Bush's legacy. And this is definitely a very controversial topic because of its novelty, which raised a lot of debates and formed a lot of opinions at the national and the international levels. Killing American citizens involved in terrorist activities is only one side of the story. In fact, killing innocent [American] people in the process of the operation (four people died in the process of killing Awlaki), as well as secret deals with the countries in which these operations took place, resulted in disagreements among the media and public opinion. Therefore, he tries to justify it by highlighting and magnifying the menace of terrorists, especially if they come from US citizens: "deranged or alienated individuals - often US citizens or legal residents - can do enormous damage, particularly when inspired by larger notions of violent jihad; that's the current threat -

lethal yet less capable Al-Qaeda affiliates: we have to take these threats seriously, and do all that we can to confront them” and by marginalizing other issues. Ironically, there are other articles that support the policy and others that reject it. This shows how elite media was divided into two groups over the main US policy of killing American citizens, which illustrates the influence of the government on part of the media.

On using drones to attack terrorists, the media, e.g. WP1 and WP2, have commented that offense is not preferable to defense for three reasons: it is costly, dangerous for US soldiers, and may distract the government's attention from defense. Obama, in this speech, maneuvers on these three ideas, saying that offense is too dangerous for US troops, that it brings about international controversies and costs too much. Then, he introduces drones. This new policy, he maintains, is the solution using conventional offense without bearing its criticisms. While he was investing in comments made by the media, he did not really change his original policy of abandoning offense, and rather introduced a new method to conduct it. As largely witnessed, offense has always been the main stock-in-trade of US policies, because it not only brings a large income for its military industry, but is also a means of controlling other countries.

Yet, it seems that while the media plays an effective role in directing some policies, they do not really have much influence on the main policies of the country. Interestingly, one of the articles – as will be discussed below – highly supports this policy, while another article condemns it. They do not seem to have so much control on this pre-planned policy that was kept classified and not unveiled, neither to the public nor the media.

Another feature in this section – like "we" (Americans) – is justifying the war as the ultimate solution against terrorists. He uses two strategies to justify war: (i) it is a “just war” and the USA enjoys the right to war as self defense: “We are at war with an organization that right now would kill as many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first. So this is a just war -- a war waged proportionally, in last resort, and in self defense”, and (ii) damages are insignificant when compared to the gains: “some civilian casualties. Now ... much of the criticism ... here at home and abroad understandably centers on reports of civilian casualties. There’s a wide gap between US assessments of such casualties and nongovernmental reports”. Obama does not intend to end the war, but he is trying to end the conventional war by which troops are sent to other countries, and replace it with a new war, using drones to kill the enemy; an ideological war.

Besides using drones, he talks about a war of ideologies that needs a different approach. Weapons and military forces are not an ultimate option in winning this war. The government needs to win the hearts of people, not their bodies. Instead of killing people, he wants to get them on his side by helping them and making them realize that the USA is not their enemy, e.g. by helping poor people in Syria, inviting Muslims citizens to join the government, and by promising Iranian people a utopia [ref. Text 1]).

d) We (Obama and Bush administrations):

There were negative and positive aspects to George W. Bush’s policies. Obama wants to follow the “sound” policies and avoid the unsound ones. Still he uses “we” to refer to Bush’s policies. In other words, there is no noticeable transition between “we” in the first and the second sense at first sight. Using “we” both for Bush’s

wrong policies of torturing people, violating privacy rights, sending US troops to war zones, as well as his own good policies of returning US troops back home, commitment to privacy rights, and banning torture, illustrates him as a responsible part of the government – considering the fact that Bush was from an opposing party. Moreover, referring to both good and bad aspects of Bush's policies portrays him as a just and fair person. This feature is not only supported by the media, but was in fact suggested by the media.

e) They (journalists):

Obama states that he is supporting the press and the media by referring to the features that are highly respected by them. He uses words such as “democracy” and the definition of American values as a country of freedoms “openness and freedom on which our way of life depends.” By using the phrase “that’s who we are”, he tries to link the media with the Americans, and to connect Americans to the government. He is trying to secure the media on his side. However, he seems to be wiser than two years earlier, when he made promises he was not confident of whether or not he could keep. This time, he states conditions for the matter such as “reviewing the existing guidelines” and “Congress authorization”.

4.3.2. Explanation:

Firstly, Obama tries to be transparent in his policies due to the strong criticism he has faced. However, there are many dark aspects to his speech. He talks about “drones” but he does not reveal their secret nature, and he talks good about Muslims, but he does not clarify how he is planning to achieve this goal. Secondly, he tries to win people's support by defining American people and

their way of life, e.g. "who we are, defines us" and "the most superpower" and defining the enemy, e.g. "who he was" and "define them". It seems that he is trying to define a new identity for the people, an identity in which war is the best option to protect their values and destroy their enemies. Thirdly, at first glance, it seems that he is against war, but he is not. He is against a conventional war. He is not against ending the war; rather he is against the conventional dispatching of troops to other countries. He is not against the war, but he is against spending money and lives using old methods.

Fourthly, he uses words denoting emotion by talking about the history of terrorist attacks as a strong element to bind people together. Binding and connecting people who have suffered the same losses from terrorism is a strong discourse tool. Talking about the return of the US troops is another strong emotional strategy to win people's support of drones. Then, he talks about the need for war. Even though it seems he talks about the importance of peace, in fact he is justifying the war. War is the main US policy. It is with war that it can sell weapons, and control the world. He puts people in a difficult position and at a crossroads between war and peace at the beginning of the speech, but gradually convinces people that war is a good option in the new way, that is "using drones". War has injuries, deaths, and failures, and therefore, he makes a disclaimer: the war may not be successful, as nobody can claim to kill all evils. One notes that this is another reason to wage more wars in future.

The USA has a history of failure in wars. Vietnam and Afghanistan are two instances. However, US officials have managed to manipulate public opinion by justifying that the current war is the only right option considering the situation, after they

claimed that the previous war would be the last and final war. This war is different from the previous wars, as the war in Iraq was different from the one in Vietnam, and the war in Afghanistan was different from both, and still they had the same outcome: "In Vietnam, hundreds of thousands of civilians died in a war where the boundaries of battle were blurred. In Iraq and Afghanistan, despite the extraordinary courage and discipline of our troops, thousands of civilians have been killed. So neither conventional military action nor waiting for attacks to occur offers moral safe harbor, and neither does a sole reliance on law enforcement in territories that have no functioning police or security services - and indeed, have no functioning law".

Moreover, he tried to legalize his policies within the framework of law by frequently referring to Congress as the main decision-making power behind the scene, as well as his being bound to ethical limitations. Therefore, Obama suggests that he is a man of law and ethics.

One of the main textual features of this speech is its use of the "road" metaphor, which demands the cooperation, patience, and support of the people. Another feature is large parts dedicated to refer to Muslims and Islam. This can show (a) the belief that Islam and terrorism are closely related in Obama's mindset, something Obama frequently tries to deny; however, when someone tries too hard to deny something, e.g. the relation between Islam and terrorism, it can mean that he basically believes in it and (b) a desperate need for a solution to stop terrorist activities inside the country, as military operations did not succeed as expected.

Table 3: Summary of Obama Speech 2

Words	5,900
Date	23.05.2013
Context	Following authorization of using drones, as well as killing US citizens identified as potential terrorists
Image	Just, reliable, at peace with Islam, tied down to values, responsible, ethical and moral
Themes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of US policies since 9/11/2001: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bush's policies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. sound policies ii. unethical policies b. Obama's policies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. continuing old policies (e.g. improving defensive system) ii. Transitions to democracy in places like Egypt, Tunisia, Libya iii. Strengthening the anti terrorism movement in Syria iv. Training security forces in Libya v. justifying new policies (e.g. using drones) vi. reason for not fulfilling old promises (e.g. closing GTMO)
Pronominal Use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I (Obama) 2. We (Obama and his administration): 3. We (Obama and Bush administrations) 4. We (Obama and the people) 5. They (Journalists)
Main Tone	Assuring, promising, demanding, Justifying
Main Purpose	Gaining people's support of his new policies, justifying them, proving the critics to be wrong in their reports against them, inviting people to unite under them
Political Approach	Using drones, Islam, quitting Bush's unethical policies, sending troops home, cutting down the costs of war; trying to close down GTMO
Audience	Americans (Muslims, non-Muslims, the media, the critics)

4.4. The Washington Post 2: Obama renews his anti-terrorism strategy (Washington Post, 2013)

The Washington Post article, written by its editorial board on Speech 2 (WP2), dated 23 May 2013, clearly supports Obama's speech as "a self-evaluation, course correction and proposed way forward". It approves his commitment to some of his promises, such as ruling out "enhanced interrogation techniques" as "an important accomplishment", and hopes that Obama will be able to resolve his different ideas with Congress to close the Guantanamo Bay prison.

As the thematic review of the editorial reveals, it agrees that Obama is right in saying "drone strikes, if properly limited, offer an important means of self-defense, in many cases less dangerous to civilians than is more traditional military force". It also approves "a key to U.S. security is patiently supporting transitions to democracy in places like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya and strengthening the opposition in Syria, while isolating extremist elements. . . training security forces in Libya".

Table 4: Summary of WP2

WP2	23.05.2013
Themes	Ruling out "enhanced interrogation techniques" is humane, Closing Guantanamo Bay prison is a must, Using drone strikes is logical and reasonable, Transitions to democracy in places like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya is encouraged, Strengthening the anti-terrorism movement in Syria and training security forces in Libya seems to be a good way forward

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted on two statements by former US President Barack Obama on terrorist events, as well as two Op-Ed/editorials published by The Washington Post (WP) commenting on Obama's remarks. The study applied Fairclough's three-layer CDA Model (1) to identify the addressed audience by extracting the pronouns, (2) the themes of the speeches by topical analysis of the sentences and paragraphs, and (3) the tone and purpose of the speeches by positive and negative adjectives and modals. The summary of each speech was tabulated. Next, the comments of the newspaper articles on each speech were analyzed by identifying their agreement and/or disagreement with the policies expressed in the speeches. The Post's comments were also tabulated. Finally, the newspaper comments were compared with the themes in Obama's statements to detect a congruity and/or lack of congruity between the media and policy-making.

The findings of the study bring to light the existence of a relation between Obama's speeches and the corresponding newspaper articles. There seems to be an agreement between the Obama administration's policies and The Washington Post's commentaries in the following:

- choosing defense over offence,
- changing the conventional war trend,
- deploying troops, closing down GTMO,
- avoiding torture and the violation of American citizens' privacy,
- freedom of the press,
- avoiding giving too much importance to terrorists, and
- increasing US marshals on flights.

Obama echoed the Post's recommendations to reduce the costs of war in order to justify using drone attacks, inviting the columnists to a private meeting to announce his policies, or having the media widely publish the idea of closing down GTMO. The relation between The Washington Post Op-Ed/Editorial and President Obama's statements seems to be a two-way process, in which both elite US media and the government take part, and attempt to resonate with the other side.

Building on Robinson's Policy-Media Interaction Model (2000) and his Media-State Theory (2001), The Washington Post's comments had little or no influence on Obama's policy decisions when there was 'consensus' on a specific issue among elites, such as increasing military measures. However, The Post had a stronger say over policy decisions under conditions of elite "dissensus" and policy uncertainty at both domestic and international levels, such as putting too much focus on offense will limit the defensive system.

Based on the findings of the study, which analyze the interaction of elite American media and the US government, a revised model of state-media interaction can be generated by unearthing additional conditions affecting the process. As a result, following the analysis of the Post's editorials/Op-Eds and Obama's anti-terrorism statements two complementary contexts are identified as follows:

First, it appears that a consonance among media elites can prove to be one of the conditions to guarantee media influence. The extent of harmony and cohesion of mass media in a specific foreign policy issue is understandably expected in order to be influential in directing statesmen to acknowledge the news agenda. It goes without saying that free and vigilant media plays the lofty role of securing the common good of society and humanity and that diversity of ideas is vital for upholding general welfare. Whereas

the researchers by no means intend to deny media pluralism as a platform of comprehensive and sustainable development in a given society, the media, in its capacity as the voice of peoples, can legitimately communicate their views effectively to the political decision-making circles by adopting a concerted and unified stance, and to hold officials accountable.

Second, it also seems that the level of government policies, and whether they are of domestic or foreign significance, can determine the degree of media congruity. To be a national or international issue is anticipated to establish which side of the media-state continuum gains the upper hand in pulling the strings over a foreign policy decision. When it is a domestic issue of national impact, the media is expected to have a stronger say, compared to foreign or international issues. However, on the occasions where the latter has repercussions on the former, the media steps in with more warrant to influence politics. In a glocalised world, there is an increasing number of international developments that are influencing domestic agendas and, therefore, leading to the growing influence of media on political circles.

From a different perspective, the US policies can be categorized into various groups. The first categorization is **substantive-level policies vs. soft** policies. As Robinson (2011) argues, for substantive-level policy issues, media influence is likely to be the most marginal. In other words, those policies with high potential costs (both economic and political) are the least likely to be strongly influenced by media pressure (Livingston, 1997; Robinson, 2002). On the other hand, 'soft' foreign policy decisions, such as where to supply humanitarian aid, seem to be more significantly influenced by media.

The second categorization is, according to Robinson (2001),

where there is **consensus** and **dissensus** among elites regarding a policy. Hence, the policies are either subject to elite consensus or elite dissensus. As Robinson (2001) argues the media's influence is the least in case of consensus among elites, and the highest in case of dissensus. Some studies have tested them and approved this idea. Wolfsfeld (1997) and Entman (2004) both identify elite dissensus as a key situational variable that allows greater media independence.

Therefore, the media-state congruity would be the most while media influence would be the least on substantive-level policies subject to elite consensus. Nevertheless, the media's influence can be the most regarding soft policies subject to dissensus among elites. For instance, the researchers would like to highlight GTMO as an example to the former case in which the president, media and people could not convince Congress to close down GTMO. Avoiding highlighting the role of terrorists can be considered one of those soft policies easily influenced by media recommendation in the first speech.

Under certain circumstances, Obama was in agreement with the media, while in others an overt lead of the government to the media was observable. Regarding closing down GTMO a unified voice between the government and the press could be traced; while regarding returning the troops home, a clear shift in policies was seen, as seen in the media. It was informative to find out that regardless of the unity between the government and media, there was no change in some policies (e.g. closing down GTMO). Hence, it seems that the major policies in the USA are determined by a body which is more powerful and stronger than the government, media, and public opinion together.

To research the detailed technicalities of this phenomenon require further studies.

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